

REFUGE RECOVERY INVENTORY

The written inventory process of Refuge Recovery is one of the most important and transformative aspects of the entire program. Looking back on our history plays a pivotal role in our ability to understand addiction, its causes, its release, and the path that we must follow. We will want to get started on it right away, and should not take it lightly. We will need to be honest, forthcoming, and diligent in the process.

On the path of recovery, we must understand that addiction always creates suffering, and recognize and accept all the ways it has caused suffering in our lives. Only then can we find freedom. Without full acceptance and disclosure, recovery will not be possible. We cannot skip this step or procrastinate; we must be completely thorough in our inventory process—our recovery depends on it.

The inventory is a must, even for those in long-term recovery. Even those who have completed a “Fourth Step” and feel they have already addressed many of these issues will benefit from working through the inventory. The Refuge Recovery inventory covers much more ground, and, when fully understood, offers a framework for overcoming all addictive behaviors and ending our suffering. It should be completed by anyone who hopes to benefit from the Refuge Recovery program.

For those new to recovery or who have been struggling with relapse, the inventory process will provide you with the proper insight and framework to fully abstain from your addictive behaviors. The process helps us see our addiction as a strategy for avoiding pain and enhancing pleasure. This strategy does not work. It is not our fault, but it is our responsibility to begin the hard work of recovery, and to become willing to turn toward the pain and confusion we have been running from and to meet it with kindness, forgiveness, and compassion.

INVENTORY PROCESS

We begin by taking an honest and detailed look at all of the suffering we have created and experienced in our addiction and associated behaviors. The best way to begin is to put pen to paper and start writing.



1. Addiction creates suffering.

We take stock of all of the suffering we have caused and experienced as a result of our addiction. We answer all of the questions as honestly and thoroughly as possible, omitting nothing. We turn toward the truth of our addiction history, allowing ourselves to feel and experience whatever pain and regret arises. We see clearly how our strategy to avoid pain and enhance pleasure has failed us and created much suffering in our lives. We get over any denial we may still have. We understand that renunciation and abstinence are the foundations on which we will build a new life. We take refuge in the freedom of recovery. We practice mindfulness and compassion as tools to help us through the challenging moments we will surely face.



2. The cause of addiction is repetitive craving.

We acknowledge how our inability to tolerate pain, discomfort, and all things unpleasant has led to our repetitive craving to avoid, change, and control the conditions of our lives. We see how, driven by an unquenchable thirst—a relentless need to avoid pain and increase pleasure—we traded temporary relief for long-term harm and suffering. As we uncover the truth of the pain and dissatisfaction we have been running from, we can begin to heal. We become aware of the causes of our suffering and let go of our addictive behaviors. Answering the questions in the inventory, we may find that much of our pain and wounds took root long before we began engaging in our addictive behaviors. Many of us have experienced abuse, trauma, or neglect, and, finding no support in our pain, turned to addictive behaviors. Directing forgiveness practices toward ourselves during this process is crucial. Mindfulness and compassion practices will also be critical tools to help us through the challenges we face as we turn toward our truth.



3. Recovery is possible.

We begin to find trust and refuge in the process of recovery. We begin to see that we have the capacity to overcome addiction, and find ourselves more and more confident about the path on which we've embarked. We take refuge in our own potential (Buddha), the path of recovery (Dharma), and our community of fellow, like-minded individuals who will challenge and inspire us (Sangha). We cultivate the qualities of faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom, and begin to utilize these five faculties to realize for ourselves the possibility of recovery. We begin to see for ourselves how our own actions can bring us freedom.



4. The path to recovery.

We begin to develop and practice the Eightfold Path as a guide for living. The cultivation of the Eightfold Path is a life-long endeavor. These eight practices are rooted in three sets of training: wisdom, ethical behavior, and meditation. The inventory process lays out the basic framework for recovery: the suffering of addiction, the cause, its release, and this path we now follow. As we go forth from this new perspective, we create positive change in the world and provide a refuge for all those we meet along the way.

The inventories in the Refuge Recovery book will get you started on the path to recovery. As Refuge Recovery continues to grow, we plan to develop full inventories for all Four Truths and the entire Eightfold Path. Stay tuned for more info at www.refugerecovery.org.

WHAT IS BUDDHISM?

Buddhism is a practical and applicable humanist psychology that teaches us that we all have the power to relieve suffering through our own efforts. The core teachings of Buddhism are the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, in which the practices of mindfulness and compassion play key roles.

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is defined as present-time, nonjudgmental, investigative, kind and responsive awareness. To be mindful of the present-time experience of our thoughts, intentions, and actions, we must continually train and redirect our attention to the here and now. Mindfulness teaches us to see clearly and respond wisely.

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness

1. Mindfulness of body/breath
2. Mindfulness of feeling tone
3. Mindfulness of mind states
4. Mindfulness of mind objects/truth

WHAT IS COMPASSION?

Compassion is a quality of the heart that enables us to care about pain and suffering. As we train in compassion practices, we gain the ability to choose how we respond to pain. We aspire to meet all experience with a kind and friendly attitude. We learn to meet our pain and suffering with compassion and forgiveness. We begin to meet happiness and pleasure with non-attached appreciation. We come to hold all our experiences with equanimity, acknowledging that our happiness and freedom is dependent on our actions, not on our wishes.

FOUR HEART PRACTICES

1. Kindness
2. Compassion/Forgiveness
3. Appreciation
4. Equanimity

Refuge Recovery follows the traditional Buddhist model of the Four Noble Truths:

1. Addiction creates suffering

"We take stock of all the suffering we have experienced and caused as addicts"

2. The cause of addiction is repetitive craving

"We investigate the causes and conditions that lead to addiction and begin the process of letting go"

3. Recovery is possible

"We come to understand that recovery is possible and take refuge in the path that leads to the end of addiction"

4. The path to recovery is available

"We engage in the process of the Eightfold Path that leads to recovery"

The Eightfold Path

1. Wise Understanding
2. Wise Intention
3. Wise Communication / Community
4. Wise Action
5. Wise Livelihood / Service
6. Wise Effort
7. Wise Mindfulness
8. Wise Concentration

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