

STEP THREE CEREMONY

NOTE TO SPONSORS:

The materials needed to perform the ceremony are the AA BIG BOOK, the AA TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS. For the OPTIONAL sections of the ceremony you will need five candles, the book CAME TO BELIEVE. The Step Three Ceremony is a commitment for both the sponsor and the newcomer to 'carry the program' to all who suffer from our disease. Ceremonies are part and parcel of all humanity. In this version of 'The Guide to Step Sponsoring' there are various optional ceremonies that make the moment more memorable, more personal. However, 'keep it simple' sometimes dictates that a sponsor uses a more sparing ceremony. Therefore, optional portions are labeled so.

STEP ONE

(Sponsor reads aloud): H.O.W. offers each of us a wonderful opportunity to develop and hasten an attitude change known as EGO reduction. The use of the disciplines of setting and maintaining bottom-line behavior, phone calls, reporting to sponsors and attending meeting all combine to reinforce our growth. In H.O.W., action is the magic word. Until we so humble ourselves through the aforesaid acts, there is no evidence of our EGO reduction or our surrender to anyone or anything outside of ourselves.

(Sponsor) I wish to thank you for asking me to be your sponsor. You must believe that I have and will continue to need you as much as you need me.

(Sponsor) Let us now join hands and pray: God, if it be your will, help us to commit ourselves to these steps in accordance with thy will.'

OPTIONAL (Sponsor) You see before you five candles. Each candle signifies a step toward arresting the progression of our disease. The first two represent TRUTH AND REALITY. Without these two qualities, we would not be recovering sex and love addicts.

(Sponsor-lighting first candle) The candle of truth is the keynote of all our endeavors. It is the guiding light of all who strive to stop the advancement of sex and love addiction. It is the unrelenting force that permits no double standard. Its attainment brings the satisfaction of inward peace. The sex and love addict must make truth his watchword. He must fearlessly face the truth to avoid the ever-present pitfall of self-deception.

(Sponsor-lighting second candle) This is the candle of reality and it is a new light. It opens the door to a new life. It holds a promise of new understanding. It offers a chance for personal renewal. It makes a statement that goes beyond fantasy and it holds the dream of a better tomorrow. Without the light of reality we are destined to remain in that sick, shadowy world of past mistakes and unrealistic dreams of false tomorrows.

ASK YOUR NEWCOMER the following questions so that s/he may re-take the First Step.

'We have spent a great deal of time getting in touch with our feelings. Can you

recall how you felt on your first day of the H.O.W. program?’

OPTIONAL READING: Page 45 paragraphs 4 and 5 in I CAME TO BELIEVE. ‘Can you honestly say you are interested in the H.O.W. Program as a way of life?’

‘What do the words ‘personal powerlessness mean to you?’

‘Step One asks that you learn to ‘let go.’ Do you feel you have learned to let go? What does it mean to you?’

‘It is said that we have an obsession. Explain what that means to you.’

‘Do you recognize the symptoms when your life is unmanageable? What do you do when you feel things are getting unmanageable?’

‘What does the word compulsion mean to you? Do you feel you are compelled to do anything?’

‘Do you feel that obsession and compulsion are part of your life? How? What have you done to control these aspects of your life? Do you feel you are satisfied with your present remedy for their control? How do you relate to the following questions?’

How long have you been seeking remedies for your obsession?

What did you often do when you felt your behavior was getting out of control? What happened to all the ideas you tried?

What did you do when you noticed you were different?

Did you ever realize you had a dreadful disease?

Did you ever try sheer willpower?

Are there other methods you would like to investigate to manage your compulsive behavior?

Do you think there is a solution to your problem today?

(Sponsor) You must be deeply convinced that you are a sex and love addict and that there is no hope for you other than H.O.W. You must also remember that H.O.W. worked because we spent time at an activity called EGO reduction. In H.O.W., we practice EGO reduction on a daily basis-are you ready to have a diminished EGO?

(Sponsor) Is H.O.W. a life or death matter for you?

(Newcomer) Read page 24 in the 12 & 12, the last paragraph “Under the Lash...”

(Sponsor) Are you willing to admit that you are totally powerless over sex and love and that it has made your life unmanageable?

(Newcomer) Read page 21 in the 12 & 12 (Step One)

(Sponsor) You've accepted powerlessness, compulsion and surrender as a concept to working the program. What must you do now?

(Newcomer should realize that recognition of these concepts is not enough. ACTION, EFFORT AND WILLINGNESS are next. This is the transition to Step Two.)

(Sponsor) You have just taken the First Step.

OPTIONAL (Sponsor) At this point I ask that you light the **third candle**

which is the candle of SURRENDER. As you do so I will read the invocation.

(Sponsor) In H.O.W., surrender is the first and most important act necessary to launching you into the other steps. Without the surrender of your sex and love addiction, your ego and your will, all else is hopeless. When you surrender you suspend such negative emotions as disbelief and grandiosity and you open yourself up to the process of learning who you are and where you fit into the scheme of things.

STEP TWO

ASK YOUR NEWCOMER the following questions so that they may re-take Step Two: **(Sponsor)** Read aloud the introduction to Step Two. Page 25 in the 12 & 12 Book.

Ask: 'what does this step mean to you?'

(Sponsor) Do you believe that a power outside of yourself will restore you to sanity and help you? **(Newcomer)** Read page 32-33 in the 12 & 12 Book, "To clergymen, doctors..."

(Sponsor) H.O.W. contains a basic paradox. You don't have to believe in anything. Anything outside of ourselves, larger than ourselves is enough to get us to the next step. The idea is not to take back your old ideas and rely on yourself. H.O.W. does ask that you have an open mind. How open are you?

(Sponsor waits for response) Have you always been willing to listen? Why did this change in your life?

(Sponsor) Does indifference play an important part in your life? How? What about disappointment? Did this reinforce your compulsiveness?

(Sponsor) Step Two mentions FEAR. Can you discuss your fears?

(Sponsor) Our fears and lack of power are self-centered and selfish in origin. But this selfishness and self-centeredness can be replaced by a partnership with a Higher Power. Faith in your Higher Power must replace fear and then God will give you power. You can then follow God's will and exercise your will by asking, "Thy will, not mine be done." A further explanation of this is on page 44-45 in the AA Big Book, 'We Agnostics'. Will you read it please?

(Sponsor) Defiance often comes between us and a Higher Power. Can you describe your defiance as it related or relates to your Higher Power?

(Sponsor} Most of the time our problems with a Higher Power came from debating the question of whether or not He was there to help us. The 12 & 12 discusses this idea. Let me read from page 26-27 in the 12& 12 "At this juncture..."

(Sponsor) Now would you turn to page 12 in the AA Big Book? "Despite the living...." Read it and then we'll discuss it.

(Sponsor) Are you willing to go to any lengths to get rid of your old ideas?

(Sponsor) Step Two is a rallying point. It puts us on the right path. It opens us up enough to realize that what we were was an insane entity. It puts right our relationship with God who was and is the window through which we look to see ourselves as we once were and as we shall be if we forget Him. Discuss your relationship to God as it is today. How do you relate to the word INSANITY? Do you believe God can restore you to sanity?

(Sponsor) You have just taken the first Two Steps.

OPTIONAL (Sponsor lighting fourth candle) Let us now light the candle of acceptance. As you light it, I shall read the invocation: "Without acceptance you could not have progressed this far. Acceptance is seeing things as they really are. Acceptance is an understanding that we have spent our lives denouncing everything and now we must open up our hearts as well as our minds and accept. We must accept the will of God and accept that only He can restore us to sanity."

STEP THREE

(Sponsor) Before we go further I would like to read something from page 569-570 In the AA Big Book, 'Spiritual Experience'.

(Sponsor) You know that you have had this spiritual experience. THE POWER IS WITH YOU NOW. A spiritual awakening can be compared to planting a seed. Growth does not begin when you can see the flower breaking its way through the earth. It begins at the moment the seed is planted. Your spiritual awakening began at the moment of surrender in Step One when the H.O.W. program was implanted within you. At that moment you received the power.

(Newcomer) Reads page 62-63 In the AA Big Book (Selfishness, self-centeredness)

(Sponsor) I'd like to ask you a few questions:

How was your vision of life like a locked door?

(OPTIONAL page 86-87 In CAME TO BELIEVE, 'God Is good')

How shall you keep God in your life?

(Sponsor should tell newcomer what they have done to keep God ever present). Do you feel you are aware of the danger in self-sufficiency?

Step Three calls for us to make a decision. We must decide to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God. Are you willing to make that decision?

(Sponsor) You realize that faith does not automatically mean that you have let God into life. But our willingness is already demonstrated In the way we work at casting out our old ideas and turn ourselves over to the H.O.W. program to relieve our sex and love obsession.

(Sponsor) Let us spend some time now pray that God will take over our lives and actively guide us. Will you read the prayer on page 63 the AA Big Book while I bow my head?

(Newcomer) Reads the prayer on page 63 in the AA Big Book (in second paragraph beginning "God, I offer myself ...").

(Sponsor) Now I will read it to you and you may pray for His intercession.

(Sponsor) We have just made a contract with God. The prayer says nothing about sex and love. It is an agreement to do 12th Step work in exchange for the removal of our difficulties. RELIEVE ME OF THE BONDAGE OF SELF. We have turned it over: sex and love addiction is no longer an active part of our lives. Now we must get out and help others.

(Sponsor) We must also always be mindful that the present is eternity and that eternity is right now! H.O.W. has taught us to live for today and to work at

loving God, ourselves and others. God loves us enough to remove our obsession. If He can love us, can't we love ourselves? If we learn to love ourselves then it will be easier to love and forgive others.

OPTIONAL READING "I may be able to speak the languages of men and even of angels, but if I have no love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or a clanging bell. I may have all knowledge and understand all secrets. I may have all the faith needed to move mountains but if I have not love, I am nothing. I may give away everything I have, and even give up my body to be burned. But If I have not love, it does me no good. Love is patient and kind: love is not jealous, or conceited or proud: love is not ill-mannered, or selfish or irritable: love does not keep a RECORD OF WRONGS; love is not happy with evil but is happy with truth. Love never gives up; its' faith, hope and patience never fail. When I was a child, my speech, feelings and thinking were all those of a child, now that I am an adult, I have no more use for childish ways. What we see now is like the dim image in a mirror. Then we shall see face to face. What I know now is only partial. Then it will be complete, as complete as God's knowledge of me. Meanwhile these three remain: FAITH, HOPE, and LOVE and the greatest of these is LOVE."

(Sponsor) You have just taken the Third Step.

OPTIONAL (Sponsor) Will you please light the **fifth candle** as I read the invocation:

`This is the candle of knowledge and it opens the door wide. We now know that God is on our side. We can see and hear His pronouncements in our lives. We recognize what it is that we may do and what only He can do. We acknowledge the greatest gift He has given us knowing ourselves.
