

PRINCIPLE SIX

In fellowship with others we develop honest, intimate relationships, where we celebrate our progress and continue to address our weaknesses.

Living in Fellowship: I Cannot Succeed Alone

Congratulations on getting this far in your journey to maintain sexual integrity. I know it's taken courage, perseverance, and commitment. In many ways it may have been harder than you anticipated. You've experienced many feelings that may be new to you. You've had to humble yourself in admitting the full truth about your history, your thoughts, and your offenses. But with God's help, you've done it. You've told your story of sexual sin. You've decided you want to get well and have surrendered your life to Christ. You've accepted accountability from a sponsor and perhaps have begun working with a counselor. You're willing to make amends to those you have harmed. I pray you're beginning to have a deeper sense of God's power and presence in your life.

Principle Six guides you into a way of living that involves genuine connection with others, instead of the isolation you've probably known. The foundation for this work comes from one of my core teaching principles:

Fellowship is equal to freedom from lust.

It's probably hard for you to believe this promise. You may have been alone for years as you've hidden your sexual secrets from others. You've never known the joy of a supportive community. Your shame kept you from connecting with others, while it continued to fuel your lust and sexual sin. (You also probably can't imagine a life free from fantasy and lust, which have felt like your constant companions for as long as you can remember.) Principle Six offers a path out of your isolation, which, in turn, is the road to sexual integrity.

Hopefully, you're already enjoying some of the benefits of fellowship through your L.I.F.E. Recovery Group. You're bonding with other Christian men who've faced similar struggles and seek to live in sexual freedom and purity. You're beginning to experience both the grace of God and the grace of other Christians who will love you despite your mistakes.

Assignment One - Practicing the Program

Assignment One of Principle Six covers the basics of cementing this new way of life into daily practice. In this first lesson I'll actually be focusing on the *last* idea of the Principle itself: "We celebrate our progress and continue to address our weaknesses." I'll outline some specific, behavioral ways of walking the talk of transformation. **This assignment deals with the nuts and bolts of what the Twelve Steps community calls "practicing the program."** Developing true fellowship with others must be built on this foundation.

I'm sure you've become convinced that recovery doesn't just happen. Unless you actually do things differently, your behavior and attitudes won't change. Two slogans from Twelve Step language describe this reality: "*If nothing changes, nothing changes*" and "*If you keep doing what you've always done, you'll keep getting what you've always gotten.*"

Assignment One details a variety of specific ways to do things differently. I've already mentioned them as part of different discussions from other Principles, but it's important to outline them clearly here. Think of this list as a "paint by numbers" plan of recovery. By this point you consistently should be:

- Caring for yourself physically (adequate exercise, rest, healthy diet, etc.)
- Attending L.I.F.E. Recovery Group meetings
- Calling someone from your group every day
- Reading this workbook and some other helpful literature
- Enforcing healthy boundaries around your rituals and acting out behaviors
- Practicing honesty with yourself and others
- Taking responsibility for your actions
- Addressing your unhealthy attitudes and character defects
- Accepting accountability from your sponsor
- Participating in therapy if necessary
- Asking God's help for your journey each day

Obviously, you won't be doing each of these things perfectly every day, but this list is a blueprint of goals for your daily life. How are you doing?

The next two pages contain worksheets you can use as a daily inventory to measure your progress. I suggest you make copies of these two pages and put them in your notebook or journal. Each day, evaluate yourself in the five areas described and record your "Inventory Score" as indicated on the chart.

Writing Exercise: Daily Inventory

Complete the Daily Inventory on the following pages and record your score on the chart. Continue this practice each day for the next six weeks. Observe the pattern of your scores. Remember, the higher the score, the better. (Think about bowling instead of golf.) Look at each of the five categories as well as your total score. Are your numbers increasing or decreasing over the days and weeks? If your scores don't show progress, you may be in danger of reverting to old behaviors and attitudes. If that's the case, perhaps you need to revisit the earlier Principles. Share your measurements with your sponsor and L.I.F.E. Recovery Group each week.

DAILY INVENTORY OF HEALTHY LIVING

Evaluate yourself daily in these five core areas using the scale shown below. The items listed are just suggestions; add others that might be appropriate for you. Give yourself an overall score for each area. Record those five scores on the Daily Inventory Chart.

0 1 2 3 4 5

Doing poorly Doing somewhere in-between Doing very well

<u>PHYSICAL AREA</u>	<u>BEHAVIORAL AREA</u>
Nutritious eating	Sobriety
Adequate rest	Attending meetings
Exercise	Calling sponsor/recovering friend
Attending to medical needs	Healthy work habits
Recreation	Financially responsible
Self-care (grooming)	Hobby
Caring for possessions (living space, car)	Not switching to other addictions
Dieting (if needed)	Giving healthy compliments

<u>RELATIONAL AREA</u>	<u>PERSONAL AREA</u>
Connecting intimately with someone safe	Serene, instead of depressed or anxious
Considerate with spouse	Receiving counseling
Available to children	Healing from core wounds
Participating in supportive community	Aware of feelings and needs
Helping others struggling with sexual sin	Reading recovery literature
Maintaining honest relationships	Able to express feelings and needs
<u>SPIRITUAL AREA</u>	<u>DAILY SCORE</u>
Prayer	PHYSICAL AREA
Bible study	BEHAVIORAL AREA
Personal devotional time	RELATIONAL AREA
Corporate worship	PERSONAL AREA
Deepening spirituality	SPIRITUAL AREA
Church involvement	

[Overall score in each area should be between 0 and 5.]

DAILY INVENTORY CHART: WEEKLY

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	TOTAL
Physical								
Behavioral								
Relational								
Personal								
Spiritual								
TOTAL								

[Total daily score will be between 0-25. Total weekly score will be between 0-175.]

DAILY INVENTORY CHART: SIX WEEKS

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Sunday						
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
WEEKLY TOTAL						

