

# One Day at a Time

"That's it, I'm done!" we said, sometimes only minutes after sexually acting out. We lowered our heads in shame and vowed with tears in our eyes—never again. We often repeated this vow to our partners. Our days of watching porn and acting out were over.

Yet after only a few months, a week, or even a few hours, we found ourselves back at it again. We doubled down on our solemn vows. Maybe picked up a self-help book or perused porn recovery forums, believing we could think our way out of the problem—and solve it on our own. But we failed to recognize that our best thinking got us here.

Countless, painful failures taught us that we lacked the willpower to keep our promise. It didn't matter how many times we slipped or how strongly we wanted to pick ourselves up. Some of us knew that one more slip would end our relationship, break up our family, or worse, drive us to the edge of insanity or death. And still, we acted out.

When we have a cold we can't wish away the illness. We can't say, "Be gone, flu!" If we want to get better, the only choice we have is to take our medicine. The same is true for the illness of addiction. We addicts may have lost our ability to control our acting out behavior, but we can always choose to take our medicine.

In the spirit of wanting recovery, we arrive at a simple decision: "I will do everything in my power to stay sober, *just for today.*"

That's it. No laundry list of rules, no extravagant promises. We found that keeping our plan simple goes miles toward its success. A full year without porn might seem like climbing Everest. But one single day? All of us have stayed sober for just one day—that we can do.

Here is one method that works for us. We remind ourselves "one day at a time," especially when the urge to sexually act out flares up. Right then, we commit to stay sober for the next 24 hours. If that seems out of reach, we set our goal for the next hour, or the next ten minutes. The idea here is to pump the brakes on our sexual urges before we plunge off the cliff. We pause before we act.

In the minutes we buy ourselves, we take action with the calm urgency of a firefighter putting out a blaze. We might leave the house—to escape the sexual temptations on our devices. We earnestly ask our higher power for help. We pick up the phone and call a fellow member. Or attend a SPAA meeting. As we talk with a fellow member about our common struggle, we may remember the painful consequences of our acting out behavior and the countless reasons to stay sober. Often just a few minutes of fellowship can save us from a relapse. "Oh right," we say to ourselves. "Maybe spending all day watching porn isn't such a brilliant idea."

When we're struggling to put together one single day of sobriety, this method may seem beyond our grasp. But it gets easier with practice. Eventually it becomes second nature to pick up our program tools rather than chase every sexual urge that flares up. The urge will pass. It always does.

One phone call, prayer or meeting is often the difference between sobriety and suffering. But there are days when obstacles threaten to sink us. Our partner leaves the car on empty; we're unexpectedly laid off; someone we desire rejects us. We may become irritable or restless, itching for relief. Or we may find ourselves swept away by a tide of bills, e-mails, and deadlines, and simply forget the single most important thing to our health and recovery. Oh, right—our plan!

We remind ourselves of our decision to do *anything* possible to stay sober *over that day*. Jump onto a second meeting? Why not. Call a SPAA member? They'd like to hear from you.

"I don't have time for this stuff," we've said. We're busy people. Some of us are neck-deep in exams. Others run businesses. The work day is over, but our kid is screaming their adorable little head off in the next room. The house is on fire!

At moments like these, when we feel we can't squeeze in so much as a text to a fellow member, we remind ourselves of one certain fact: we don't have time *not* to reach out. Instead of focusing on the minutes of work or family time we might lose to our spiritual program, we think of the hours we save from not viewing porn or sexually acting out. The choice is ours: it's reach out... or act out.

One by one, we stack our sober hours like bricks to build a solid foundation for our recovery. We survive those hard 24 hours—through picking up our spiritual tools. And more often than not, the sexual urge that had dominated our mind usually passes like the rain. That is all our urges are: the weather.

For many of us, our recovery depends in large part on taking things one day at a time. We may have broken every promise to ourselves and our partners in the past, but through rigorous honesty and a willingness to go to any length, we learned to say what we do, and do what we say. One day at a time.