



New Life Online

Issue 1 – July 2017

WWW.GAMBLERSANONYMOUS.ORG.UK

Gamblers Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who have joined together to do something about their own gambling problem and to help other compulsive gamblers to do the same.

This journal is written by compulsive gamblers who want to share their experiences.

Opinions expressed may not necessarily be those of the fellowship.

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Editors Message

What is the NLO?

The NLO is a new online only version of the New Life magazine. This is designed to bring new issues more regularly than the printed version and also to contain the longer therapies that are more difficult to print.

Does the NLO mean that there will not be a printed New Life any more?

Of course not! The printed New Life will still be out regularly. The NLO is designed to give more issues available per year.

Will it always be in this format?

That is up to you, the readers. If you have any comments or contributions please send them in to newlife@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

How can I access the NLO?

It is available on the GA website currently, but if you have any different ideas please contact us.

Any questions or comments?

We would love to hear from you, so please get in touch.

Tony's Therapy. Grab a nice warm glass of milk and enjoy!

I am a 57 year old compulsive gambler and would like to share my therapy.

I was introduced to gambling at the age of 13 by my Uncle Tom on a Saturday afternoon. I used to see him after playing rugby and he would often be sat there with a tin of beer watching horses on the TV. He'd be enthralled with his newspaper and little pieces of paper with names and numbers on. I spent many a Saturday making excuses to visit my uncles to learn more of this world.

My Uncle was forthcoming with information on this subject and I became intrigued.

I was good in school at maths and it wasn't long before I became well versed in odds, bet types and calculating bets etc. The thought of possibly winning money for nothing really got my juices flowing. I was young and naïve and I thought that this was fun. What harm could it do?

How wrong I was! Over the next 40 years it got to the point that I could not get through most weeks without having a bet of some description. The consequences didn't matter; all that mattered was getting my fix.

Like a lot of teenagers before leaving school, I had a paper round. I soon found out that the owner of the newsagent had shares in a racehorse, as well as greyhounds at the local dog track. I wanted to know more about this life.

Over the coming months thanks to my helpful newsagent, I was able to pick out horses and other types of bets. I occasionally won a few bob, but more often than not, it went straight back.

I also started fantasizing and lying to him about some of my wins by claiming I was placing bets through an imaginary relative. I had asked him for an extra round to have money for my new 'hobby', even as I was telling him of my good fortune.

During this time I moved onto comprehensive school, and my studies were starting to suffer. I had an English teacher who I found out liked to bet and we got on famously. He even trusted me to take his hand written bets and money to the bookies on the corner during school lunch hours. All this and I was only 14 years old.

By now I had been introduced to card games which I played before and after school instead of doing homework. I was even playing at the local vicarage with a friend, John, who was the vicar's son. He was a bit of a rebel though I used to look up to him as he also loved this gambling life. We often played in the evenings talking about horses and bets whilst studying the Sporting Life and Chronicle until all hours.

Whilst at comprehensive school I also had a 'fantastic' idea of being a bookmaker so I decided to run a book on the 'Miss World' competition. I thought I was on a sure fire winner. I took most of the money on 2 outcomes, and thought wow if any of these two don't win, I've scooped the lot. Unfortunately that year the favourite won, and I ended up having to work the next 4 weeks at the paper shop for nothing.

To make matters worse, I got found out by my form teacher and was hauled in to the headmaster for encouraging gambling in school and my parents were duly informed. To add insult to injury, the winner miss GB got disqualified later, but I paid my debts and was not to be deterred. I carried on playing cards at every opportunity and even started playing Subbuteo football after school with my mates for money. I left school in 1974, under achieving as a consequence due to my other “interest”.

After leaving school, not knowing what I was good at, I got a job as an office junior in a small run family ship broker’s office. The pay started at 12.50 a week, but I was keen to impress the boss and showed a better attitude to work for the first couple of years. I became a real people pleaser and quite popular, but under the surface my other interest was still lurking. I couldn't wait to reach 18 and be able to walk into a bookie and bet for myself with the grown-ups.

On my 18th birthday my parents bought me a brand new Claud Butler racing cycle. It was my pride and joy! Unfortunately, I had it stolen within a year as I stupidly left it outside a betting shop on my way back to work. I was devastated and lied to my parents by telling them I left it outside a nearby grocery shop. I was so relieved when they believed me.

Life at work was getting better. I got more responsibilities and even passed my driving test, albeit on the 4th attempt, and was soon given the keys to a company car. Part of my duties included taking money to the ships in the form of what was called ‘cash’ to Master which paid for crew wages etc.

However over the years, when I was short of funds i.e. no money for a bet, I used to ask the cashier at work for more money than the Master had stated. I took this money home on a weekend and actually began to 'borrow' some of it, or sometimes all, to have a bet on a Saturday

I saw nothing wrong with this as long as I could replace it on time.

Unfortunately this did not happen on every occasion, and I was soon pressing friends / family to lend me money. I was making up all kinds of stories to cover my tracks and enable me to make up the difference.

Around the same time I had 'found' some new friends who were also interested in racing and betting, and it quite quickly became a way of life for me. I moved out from home and moved into a flat with some gambling mates. I never went on holidays like most folks. My “holidays” were spent on a race ground or at a dog track. I spent many an hour in the betting shops and was quite often the last one out.

My wages from work were never enough for this, so the next step for me was going to the bank and arranging an overdraft. I found new ways to fund my interest (addiction) which then led onto credit cards. It was now the eighties and money from the banks was been thrown at people it appeared. Live for today pay back whenever. I kind of based myself on a cross between a Del boy and Harry Enfield character “Loadsamoney”

I was strutting around in my leather jacket and going to the races and hiring a jaguar with my mate to get there and back. This was the life for me! After a big win I used to shout out after ordering a bottle of champagne “I wonder what the poor people are doing now! “

I didn't want to settle down and become semi suburban Mr Jones like my 3 brothers. That was boring. I wanted to be on a race track or a dog track and that's how I lived until my late twenties, until my money options ran out, and I went back home to my parents with my tail between my legs. I paid minimal board and they helped me with my debts and I started all over again.

13 years at work and nothing to show for it. I threw my energies into work and got promoted and my wages increased. Deep down though, I felt and knew I was missing something, and was only biding my time to start again.

Anyway, by 1991 I was told by my parents that they were moving and I had to find a place for myself. In their eyes I was now being responsible for the first time in my life at 31 years young. I put a deposit down and bought a small house for myself with a drive for my company car. I became a 'normal' person. However cutting the grass and washing the car on a Sunday did not float my boat. I hated it.

Within a year of moving in, I slowly fell back into the previous lifestyle which I so missed. I was going to races and dogs again and found a few other gambling buddies. I was putting bets on at the tracks where bookies were not giving me a ticket and it felt great. In truth, I was living a lie. It was all borrowed money from work and the banks. My house hold bills were not getting paid and my credit cards limits were increasing.

I started drinking heavily and it was spiralling out of control. I was regularly at a race track / dog track, but I had also found the casino, football pools, entering spot the ball competitions etc. It was wall to wall gambling. Many a time, I would be coming out of the casino at 4 in the morning, sometimes walking home with hundreds of pounds in my pocket because I was unwilling to part with a 5 pound note to get a taxi home. It was a 3 mile walk. You see that money was my gambling money and not to be spent on things like that. Madness.

The house was getting neglected and my father was doing all the work on my house and the garden. I was broken into twice because I was never at home. Always out either gambling or at work doing extra overtime to get money to fund my 'hobby'. I was drink driving as well. Not clever.

During this period I recall I went to the races at Folkestone one day in the company car with a couple of gambling mates. On the way back after winning, we decided to stop off at Wembley dog track, just to round the day off. After racing had finished we went back to the car park but the car was not where I had left it. It had been stolen! Luckily my mate had a friend in London, and we crashed on the floor before I had to make the dreaded call to the boss. Of course I lied by saying it was left in a pub car park and not at the dog track. Somehow I was holding down a good job and living this other life.

I also bought a share in a greyhound and got to know the trainer who used to 'stuff it' when not required and then get it ready for a punting job.

On one occasion, I went to Leicester dogs, a 200 mile round journey on FA cup final day. The dog had been readied according to the trainer and dropped in grade. All systems go. It was entered in the first race. I emptied my pockets with the local bookmakers and waited to collect. It never happened. The dog stumbled at the first bend when clipped from behind and it traipsed in last. I was angry and skint and only had a fiver left for a drink before I set off

home. The trainer was very apologetic and I said that's it, I don't want this dog anymore its cost me a small fortune tonight. The trainer then said it doesn't matter, I'll sort it. He came back half an hour later and said he'd put it down (shot it). There was nothing wrong with the poor dog. I was talking through my pocket! That scenario still haunts me to this day as I work on my recovery.

At 35 I was made director at the firm I had been since leaving school and was invited round to the boss's house. I felt overwhelmed. If only he knew what a mess my life outside of work was.

I went home and thought long and hard. I couldn't take in extra responsibilities with all this other stuff going on in the background. I was beginning to crack up because I kept everything to myself and didn't know how to handle it or who to talk to. My parents weren't the answer I told myself and I couldn't tell my boss who was about to place his faith in me. One week later, and to his surprise, I handed my notice in without explanation.

I quickly, somehow, got into another job within the shipping community and thought, right fresh start. I went to Citizens Advice Bureau and cried like a baby and told them of my financial mess. They were very good and wrote to everybody and I bought some time. They froze the interest and only paid off minimal amounts to my creditors. The stress just seemed to leave my body and I felt so relieved.

However, in a short period of time the gambling bug came a calling again, tapping me on my shoulder. I was borrowing money from a long-time friend who I went racing with. I owed him a lot of money at the time.

Then one morning at work I took a call from his Mrs that he had passed away overnight. I was devastated for her, and expressed that to her in a sorrowful phone conversation. Within minutes my immediate thought was thank God, I don't have to pay that back. How sick was I? I have never told her to this date about the money and don't know whether to after 20 years or so?

A few weeks after the funeral, I began borrowing money again from the firm to continue my gambling addiction. I helped myself to the cash box which I had access to. I got found out and was unable to explain the shortfall to the accountant. I was sacked by my employer. I was grassed up by a colleague who I subsequently never spoke to and bad mouthed at every opportunity behind his back. Looking back, and after attending GA these last 2 years or so and in the clear light of day he was not the problem. It was me! I stole the money. For the record, I have recently made amends with this person man to man, and we get on quite well nowadays.

Anyway, I was back on my haunches out of work. I found 2 other jobs and dusted myself down whilst my debts were sorted out by citizens advice. I was now pushing 40 and while lots of my friends were settled down with family etc., I was alone.

Then one day I got the crazy notion that I could put my house on the market to raise some capital to start again. This time it would be different. I would be more disciplined and patient and would not make the same mistakes as in the past. So, I set the ball rolling. This was quickly done and I took the first offer that came along.

Within a month or so, I had a big fat cheque from the sale of the house. I found some accommodation from a manager at work who charged me a peppercorn rent and it felt great. I

had a company car, a small rented flat out in the country and money in the bank. The country air was just what I needed, I told myself. This time it was going to be different.

I had a master plan. I was going to put the maximum holding in premium bonds and wait for the big one to land, thinking the gambling gods were going to shine on me after all these years. I would claw everything back in one hit!

I also found a racing tipster who I paid and this would be another source of income for me. After researching his results it appeared this guy never lost. If I followed him blindly and was disciplined it was win-win. With the rest of the money I could pop now and again to a local racetrack. Job sorted! Life Balance! No worries! All I had to do was be patient and disciplined and everything would be just fine.

Sure you won't be shocked to know that within a year it had nearly all gone. I had found internet betting and could bet nearly 24 hours a day. The downward spiral had begun again. I opened up accounts left, right and centre and was losing money hand over fist without leaving my flat. So much for the country air!

I was even doing it on the firm's computer at the weekend when I was on duty. The figures on the screen didn't seem like real money. It was just a number, but the cold truth was I was in self-destruct mode and told myself I would not be happy until it was all gone. I used to sit there drinking just to numb the pain and would bet on sports and events I knew little about.

I was more interested in gambling than my work and it was only a matter of time before the IT cottoned on to me. Eventually, after I had got rid of nearly all the money from my house, 6 credit cards and 2 further bank loans, I went to the doctor and told him I had a problem. He examined me and put me on a course of medication for what turned out to be the next 7 years. I was prescribed strong anti-depressants and booked on a course of counselling. I took 3 months off work, the first 2 of which I just sat indoors, afraid to go out as the stark realization hit home. I had a complete nervous breakdown.

Eventually I plucked up the courage to go to the bank to see if they could help me. My salary was not even covering the minimum payments on my cards and bank loan repayments. They just turned round and said sorry no can do. They strongly advised me to file for bankruptcy. I declined. I decided rightly or wrongly that I was going to pay this money back. I was not a bad person. I was a good person who had done wrong and I wanted to make amends. I even got myself a part time job doing voluntary work to make myself feel better.

I eventually contacted a debt management company and paid the majority of it back over the next 5 years. I also changed jobs again to a less pressurised one where I had no company car and no access to the firm's

money. All my money was more or less spoken for except for a secret stash that I kept in my bottom draw. This I was going to use for a few small bets just to keep my eye in so to speak over the repayment period. You see I couldn't let go and be 100 percent truthful to the Debt management company.

It was shortly after this time that I heard a group of guys at work were forming a racing syndicate for a season or two. My ears pricked up. I asked if I could join and before you could say 'hey presto', I owned an 1/8th of a racehorse.

It felt great or so I told myself and I was living the dream – or was I? I had sold my house with nothing now to show for it. After 30 years at work and earning good money all I owned was a bike worth 100 quid and I was in debt up to my eyeballs. All the furniture in my rented flat above a launderette had been given to me by family. That was the reality. My clothes were bought from a catalogue run by my mum. I attended my sister's wedding in a borrowed suit from my grandad and a pair of brogue safety shoes from work – not exactly Saville Row!

I was visiting my parents for my one decent meal a week and the rest of the week it was mainly beans on toast or something with a yellow sticker on it, bought last minute from the local supermarket. That was to be my staple diet for the majority of the 60 months of my debt repayments.

Eventually I completed my IVA in August 2012 and the racehorse syndicate had disbanded quite quickly in the interim. I was still on medication, but on reduced intake. Surprisingly I never missed a payment and all my debts were paid off. I was 54 and was thought this is it now, no more gambling or horse racing for me. Time to move on.

I've definitely had enough I told myself for the umpteenth time. 40 years living in cloud cuckoo land, running away from normal life and existing with this addiction. Life had somehow passed me by. It was time to grow up and move on.

Within the next 6 months of completing my IVA I was gambling again. Just small stakes on football bets I said to myself. I could control this. I'll just be a recreational gambler. It's funny how quickly you forget the past, and before long I was back betting in larger stakes.

I even started running a lottery syndicate at work convincing myself that I was going to win big. The same deluded thoughts were re-appearing again.

In April 2013 I met a friend, Dave, who I had borrowed money off in the past. We went for a coffee and were chatting about life and my renewed interest in gambling. He knew a little bit about my history and he said why don't you come to GA with me? He told me it was an illness. I thought why not? I needed help. I was going back to my old ways. This addiction has got me licked. I had had enough. So why not give it a try. I had never been able to stop by myself.

That day was 23rd April 2013. I have been going quite regularly now over 2 and a half years and in that time I have broken my date 3 times. From time to time I feel as though I am walking on a tightrope. Nevertheless, I am determined to keep the addiction at bay, otherwise experience tells me I will revert to my old ways and delusional thinking.

My finances have improved and I have just paid a deposit for a small house. I became addicted to not spending and filling the void with work. I will be working until I am 70 and my mortgage is paid off, but hey that's the way it is. It could be worse; I am now acting for the first time in my life in a responsible way and dealing with normal life/problems. Its official, I am now a suburban Mr Jones, but it's not too bad.

My parents, who are both nearly 80, told me not so long ago that they were both happy now. "We've got you back" they told me. I thought well, I've never really been away, but they meant I was back in the real, and not the gambling one. I must have been a massive worry to them over the years and I am truly sorry. They have worked so hard together. My dad running 3

jobs at times to put food on the table for the family of 5, my mum ensuring that we were turned out well. So many sacrifices made over the years, like most parents I guess.

Anyway, this is not only the hardest thing I have done in my life, but the best.

I quite often rue the fact I did not face up to my problems until the age of 54. There were dozens of times when I said I am finished with gambling, but I always found a way back and left a window open. I am guilty of looking back and seeing how the addiction has controlled / influenced my lifestyle / existence and feeling sorry for myself. I am also racked with guilt for what I have done for my parents, family and that poor dog!

But I am working on the above through the GA recovery program. I gave gambling everything and kidded myself I loved it. It gave me nothing! I have an illness and I want to get better and this is the only way forward for me.

I now believe I have a future if I keep attending GA, whilst listening to and helping the good people within. It's a two way street.

Finally, a big thank you to Dave for pointing me in the right direction to the doors of GA and for that, I am forever indebted my friend. I have not had a bet today and that's a positive.

My name is Tony (Hull) and my last bet was 05.04.14. - Thank you New Life.

Jay's Therapy

My name is Jay and I'm a compulsive gambler. Gambling took me places I could never have imagined and caused havoc for many years. I'm now using what I have been through to help others and show awareness to other people.

My gambling started when I was a teenager buying scratch cards, getting that buzz off winning and hoping that I could land the jackpot. It slowly progressed into going in the bookies and playing on the FOBTS, a spin of a wheel way an even bigger rush, and most weeks. I may have just gave my employer the bookies bank details and had my wages paid directly to them. I never thought it was a problem and then I started to go into casinos.

My gambling got more erratic, I lost all my savings, many relationships, possessions and even a business that I had established. Everything was gone but I was addicted and knew that big win that would solve all my problems would come soon. My gambling led me to commit fraud and inevitably ended in me being given a prison sentence.

Whilst in prison I thought I could self-medicate and overcome my addiction, and came out thinking I had beaten it and would never gamble again, I was ready to start my new gamble free life.

After a few months I had some bad news and my mind was all over the place, I had no support and no one to turn too. I ran to the thing I had vowed never to do again. I remember thinking I can control this, it's just small bets after all. I was and am a compulsive gambler and again I found myself chasing losses and trying to meet the bills and life expenses. The only difference this time was that I had a partner who was pregnant with my son! I couldn't let them know I had come back to this life and I will win soon to solve all my new problems and give them the comfortable life they deserve.

One problem was I was running out of money. I started to borrow, to pawn not only my possessions but my partners, and when all those avenues were exhausted I again turned to fraud to fund this horrible addiction. I again got sent to prison 3 weeks before my son was born and was devastated. I was at the lowest point ever in my life. I sat there in my cell and thought I need to overcome this. I needed to get help, I can't do this alone, something I had never admitted before in my life.

I asked the officers what help I could get and they told me there was nothing for gambling addicts available. I was disheartened and thought to myself if I go through this sentence without help I will come out and more than likely end up back in the grasp of the addiction.

I requested to the prison to ask GA to come in and give meetings within the wall and this was arranged by myself and I met a lovely man from Wolverhampton who agreed to come in.

I was amazed to find out I was not alone in being in prison due to gambling and the meetings were a success. I also set up a gambling support network for other prisoners to get them the support and help when they are released so they have every chance possible to overcome their addictions. This helped many people during my 13 months in prison and led me to receive an Accolade from the prison itself for all the work I had done and the help I had given.

I have now been released for almost two months and have carried on with my GA meetings in my local area. I have also set up an organization that helps give awareness of the devastating effects gambling can cause and to help and support fellow addicts and addicts within prisons.

For me I owe my life to GA and the members that give up their own time to do things beyond their means to help fellow gamblers. With my determination and the weekly GA meetings my life is now clear and almost stress free. I have a beautiful 14-month-old boy and partner that stuck by me through all I had put her through and I am now able to use my story to help and give awareness. If the awareness helps just one person not go down the path I did then it has all been worth it.

Just remember there is always hope, however bad things get and where your addiction takes you, reach your hand out and get the support. There is always someone there that will help.

There is always hope...Jay, Kings Heath

Recovery by numbers

- (1) After 17 years of gambling, I finally accepted I had a problem
- (2) After calling the Samaritans about my suicidal thoughts, I called the GA helpline
- (3) Went to my first meeting, 02/07/87, and lied
- (4) Continued going to meetings for 6 weeks and continued to lie
- (5) Things getting better so began to think no need to hang around in GA for much longer
- (6) Arrested by the police and realised that I need GA a bit longer
- (7) Struggling to accept that gambling is no longer the solution to my problems because my problems are still there
- (8) Went to my 10th meeting and told the truth for the first time
- (9) Continued wanting to do things my way and still not always being truthful
- (10) Heard lots of therapies but didn't listen to that many
- (11) Tried being honest at a meeting about feeling complacent, felt criticized by the next 7 speakers
- (12) Stopped being open and honest about my feelings
- (13) After 6 months removed my head from my backside
- (14) Stuck head back to where it came from
- (15) Became group secretary
- (16) Received my first year pin and failed to acknowledge my wife's contribution or anyone else's to my success
- (17) Only married 9 months but wife wants a divorce
- (18) Still doing things my way
- (19) Went to Relate counselling with wife
- (20) Went to my first steps meeting and it opened my eyes however my ears were still shut
- (21) Still feeling suicidal
- (22) Believed I should feel like rubbish as that's my penalty for doing what I did in the past
- (23) Started to really listen
- (24) Increased my meetings to 5 a week
- (25) Became group treasurer
- (26) Opened ears to hear about a member's recovery instead of just the usual gambling therapies
- (27) Gained confidences to speak about my inner feelings
- (28) Took honest look at myself and didn't like what I saw
- (29) Decided I needed to change
- (30) Received my second year recognition and acknowledge other members help but not my wife
- (31) Still all about me
- (32) Went to my first convention and whilst there came to believe in God
- (33) Kept going to meetings including my steps one
- (34) Knew every word of the recovery program perfectly
- (35) Life no better because although I knew the words I failed to apply the steps to my life
- (36) Began to apply the principles in all my affairs
- (37) Let go of anger
- (38) Let go of guilt
- (39) Let go of fear
- (40) Became honest about myself to myself but not always to others.
- (41) Began to like me better
- (42) Received my third year pin but still failed to mention my wife
- (43) Started doing things the GA way
- (44) Stopped feeling suicidal
- (45) Things going well but unable to enjoy my recovery as I was worrying about it all ending
- (46) Learned how to live life one day at a time
- (47) Began to enjoy my recovery
- (48) Received my fourth year pin, had good intentions of mentioning my wife but failed again

- (49) Got involved in service at regional, national levels and in helping to arrange the Luton convention
- (50) Ego going wild at this point as I now know everything
- (51) Received my 5-year pin and recognised my Wife's contribution in my recovery, she said it's too late she's no longer bothered about that now
- (52) Still doing plenty of meetings and becoming more comfortable with myself
- (53) Couple of years on lose my job as firm goes into administration and I struggle with self-pity
- (54) Get another job but too pressurised and longer hours mean my GA attendance suffers as only able to do part meetings
- (55) My serenity suffers due to lack of meeting time and I feel less comfortable
- (56) Wife has affair with a GA member but I do not blame GA in fact I don't blame anyone but me
- (57) Change jobs and meetings become more regular, serenity returns and I feel more comfortable again
- (58) Went to Relate counselling again
- (59) 1996: my Father dies, big shock but I manage to cope with the responsibility of all the arrangements thanks to GA
- (60) Three months later wife asks for a divorce and this time cannot change her mind
- (61) Did not cope with the separation very well but kept up my GA meetings and that helped me through it
- (62) Did my first step 4, ten years after my first meeting, and it was an eye opener
- (63) Finally able to forgive myself for what happened in the past. I also forgave my wife for the affair and made the divorce process as easy as possible
- (64) Attend another fellowship to help me deal with my co-dependency issues
- (65) Met new partner
- (66) Continue regular GA meetings and happy in the relationship
- (67) 2000: my Mother dies and again my GA meetings help me to cope with it all
- (68) Move in with my new partner
- (69) Employers sell business to competitors as they are heading into trouble and I move to the new firm
- (70) New company seems to offer me more security so I am happy with the move
- (71) Relationship falls apart over the next few years as I finally accept the truth that she is an alcoholic but she remains in denial
- (72) Although I took step 4 in 1997 I only began to deal with the moral inventory wrongly choosing to believe that the financial part did not apply to me
- (73) Finances in a mess and getting worse each month. I'm in more debt than I was when I arrived at GA yet not gambled for 16 years
- (74) Did not share these problems at my meetings
- (75) My drinking got worse as if it was a case of can't beat them join them
- (76) I do not blame her for my bad decisions
- (77) Things got worse until 2004 when following the Convention I found the will and strength to want to change
- (78) Following a drunk fuelled fight at home police attended and suggested I should leave
- (79) Left the following day and thus ended another relationship
- (80) Realised that total honesty required with everyone for me to recover from this latest issue
- (81) Became more open at meetings and outside meetings too
- (82) Accepted I was using alcohol to blot out my issues and to make me feel better about myself
- (80) Reduced my drinking to a normal level and felt better about myself
- (81) Made redundant and unemployed for 2 months then got new job
- (82) Looked at my finances and began a plan how to reduce my debts
- (83) With the help of meetings my head cleared and so did my finances
- (84) Felt even better about myself
- (85) Move in with new partner 2005
- (86) Only drink now on holidays or special occasions
- (87) Head's a lot clearer and I am a lot happier
- (88) 2007: my only Sister died after a short illness and I am devastated

- (89) 3 months later collected my 20-year recognition but very sad she's not there to share it because she did more for me than anyone else outside of GA
- (90) Once again GA helps me deal with my loss, partner is also a great help and I tell her so
- (91) Now working my program on a daily basis not just when I feel like it
- (92) Also work on my relationship with my partner on a daily basis
- (93) Still attending GA on a regular basis and still learning about myself
- (94) Company I work for is not very empathic, no consideration for their employees and this showed up loud and clear when my sister was ill.
- (95) I leave without another job to go to in order to save my serenity and sanity
- (96) I get an interim job to tie me over, stacking shelves in a retail shop, and my mind clears
- (97) Get my current job
- (98) At last I find gratitude and how to express it
- (99) Financially doing OK as each month there's a little bit over, not fortunes but enough to be grateful for
- (100) Life will never be perfect but that's OK if I keep progressing with GA

BRYAN - WATFORD

Roger's Therapy

Good evening. I am Roger, a compulsive gambler who does not gamble.

My therapy is for those of you who have joined the fellowship recently and have not heard my story before and may be trying to understand why this old man still attends GA meetings regularly.

My story began 33 years ago when a disgraced, frightened and broken man first walked through the GA doors at Birmingham. The previous day I had been found guilty by a jury of my peers of false accountancy and given a 3-month suspended sentence.

Although I felt this was a lenient and sympathetic judgement, I was still required to give up my employment but I could keep my pension.

A friend of mine who had been in the same gambling compulsion suggested that GA was helping him with his addiction. He and his wife took Jane and I to our first meeting. Jane attended Gam-anon and hated it! I can barely remember the first meeting except I seemed to spend most of it sobbing my heart out and feeling very sorry for myself.

At this point I may add that Birmingham GA meetings were different in the day. It was the case of senior members (a clique of at least 6) sitting on a roster and dispensing wisdom to us plebs. It is not surprising that all but one of them went back to gambling. However, I read the small amount of literature and made my choice that GA was the way and that it could work.

I took several hard menial jobs to keep us afloat one of which was a 12-hour night shift, 6 days a week. The shift started at 8pm so there was no way I could make the GA meeting in Birmingham and work at 8pm. I solved the problem by leaving home at 7pm, opened the GA room, leaving my donation and racing back to clock in for 8pm! I kept this up for 10 months until I got a better job. During the time however I never heard a word from the group. Not a phone call, text or personal visit. The discipline I imposed on myself was the beginning of my recovery program – given that I did not understand the GA recovery program then. Those solitary journeys to and from my “meeting” were my quiet times of contemplation.

Once I was settled into my new job and reasonable hours, I began to think what I could do in my small way for GA. I chose to do prison visits in Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton and a few others. Then someone suggested I take over as group secretary. I did the post for 4 years.

Problem was I was beginning to find the Birmingham meetings as they were then to be a bit negative. No book work to speak of and a cliquey atmosphere where many of the members felt undervalued. As a result of this many members decided to set up a new GA group in Kings Heath.

I could see that GA had no meetings to the north of Birmingham so I applied to the region and national for permission to start a group in Sutton Coldfield.

Sutton Coldfield meetings started about 28 years ago with about 5 members. I was determined that the meetings would be run with ‘no senior members’ holding court. That every GA member, new or old would be treated equally and that our meeting would always be warm, welcoming and friendly to all in desperate need. I think it is so.

During the past years, I have been regional secretary, treasurer. I am a strong advocate in the fact that the more you give to GA, the more GA gives back to you and the better all our recoveries are.

I am now old and not too strong any more. I can no longer do the things I used to do for GA so now I rely on old and new members alike to put their all into our wonderful fellowship. It is up to you to keep up the good work.

Finally, to all you wives, families, friends of the compulsive gambler, please do not give up on us. With patience, hard work and infinite good will, for the first times in our lives, we will win. All those years ago, Jane could only see a pin point of hope / light at the end of a very long tunnel. Now we are a lot closer to the end with the light brighter than ever. At last we have peace.

God grant me the serenity to accept he things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.

I am Roger, a compulsive gambler who does not gamble.

Question: How can the New Life magazine be published without new material?

Answer: With more contributions from you - the GA fellowship - it's your magazine - please fill it with your new material - **Thank You**

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God

*Grant me
the **Serenity** to
accept the things
I cannot change,
Courage to change
the things I can
and **Wisdom** to
know the difference.*

