

SUGGESTED METHODS OF OBTAINING AND MAINTAINING ABSTINENCE FROM SHOPLIFTING ADDICTION



Every Day...

- Most importantly, every day: Practice steps 1, 2 and 3: say out-loud “I admit I am powerless over shoplifting and my life has become unmanageable.” Ask your Higher Power/God for help, and make a DECISION to let God/Higher Power be in charge for today - sincerely ask for God/Higher Power’s will for you today. Say the Third Step Prayer (from the AA Big Book page 63) every morning.
- Stay focused on “JUST FOR TODAY” – stay in the moment. Continually ask your Higher Power for the willingness and strength to resist the impulse to shoplift, and pray “God/Higher Power, what is **Your** Will for me today? What is the NEXT RIGHT ACTION?” (It might be as simple as “brush your teeth” or “wash the dishes”, “leave this place”, or “make a phone call to another SA member”).
- Every day, focus on being of SERVICE to others – call other SA members to both share and listen, attend an SA meeting, do the laundry, help your community -- anything to be of service to others. Service is the 12th Step, and is a critical part of a proven SOLUTION to our disease problem.
- Focus on **gratitude** – every day! Regularly say prayers such as “God, please help me remember today that my health is worth more than anything I might get by stealing things.” Write a **GRATITUDE LIST** of at least 5 things you are truly grateful for right now (i.e., your eye sight, ability to walk, beloved pet, a family member or friend that makes a difference to you today, whatever makes you feel truly grateful right now).
- Work all TOOLS of Recovery: **Abstinence** from stealing just for today – no matter what, **Sponsorship** – find a member who has what you want and ask how it was achieved and then take their suggestions - be accountable to that person, **SA Phone Calls** in-between meetings, attend **SA Meetings** (plus other in-person 12 Step mtgs. if there are no SA mtgs. locally), **Write/Journal** about your feelings and/or situations, **Pray** and **Meditate**, practice **Anonymity** including refraining from gossip, read SA and AA **Literature**, and finally, practice being of **Service** to others – “a life of sane and happy usefulness is what we are promised from working the 12 steps – Service fulfills that promise”.

Before You Go Shopping...

- Check-in with yourself: Ask your HP for the willingness to stay abstinent. If stressed or feeling impulsive, do not go shopping; ask a friend to go with you or for you.
- Use “Book-Ending” – call a SA member right before you go shopping and immediately after leaving the store.
- Make up a shopping list and buy only the items listed.
- Shop “on-line” or through catalogs; check ads or catalogs prior to shopping to avoid impulsive buying.
- Create or recycle gifts at home for yourself or others.
- Go to yard sales or flea markets where you are less likely to steal from individuals.
- Go through your house and rediscover what you can still use and/or appreciate.
- Learn to barter with others for services.
- Only shop when you have the money to pay for what you want/need.
- Take only your wallet, credit cards, and cell phone into the store: leave purse, backpack and any other bags in the car or at home.
- Call stores and have them prepare goods for pick-up, if possible.
- Don’t wear baggy clothes or coats that make it possible for you to conceal items.
- Commit to avoid stores from which you have been told “not to return” or have been caught.

While You Are Shopping...

- Use the phone - call an SA friend for help while you shop at a store.
- Carry picture of loved one or something meaningful in your hand to remind yourself not to shoplift.
- Keep hands in your pockets to refrain from picking up extraneous items.
- Build a relationship with employees; make your presence known.
- Shop with a specific purpose and do NOT browse.
- Do NOT put any item in your pocket, purse or bag before you have paid for it.
- Do not carry bag(s) from store to store; return bag(s) to your car first.
- Video security cameras – remember they're always watching/recording - and more sophisticated than ever!
- STOP and THINK of the consequences.....before you act! PRAY for the desire to stay abstinent – ask God/Higher Power for help! Remember the “a,b,c’s” of “How It Works” (pg. 60, AA Big Book), “God **could** and **would** if He were **sought**.”
- Pause when agitated. Listen to your conscience. Many of us have felt that God speaks to us in a “still, small voice”.

As You Go Forward in Recovery...

- Learn what “triggers” you to shoplift (uncomfortable feelings, thoughts). As you discover them, write them down and make phone calls to SA members to discuss them.
- Accept responsibility for your behavior – what you do DOES have an impact on you and other people.
- Save your receipts....bring them with you to return items.
- Learn to substitute new activities for shoplifting preventing loneliness and boredom. For example: start a fun hobby, volunteer, do a neglected task, get a part-time job, start reading and/or exercising. Behaving honestly and having integrity will grow your self-esteem.
- Find an abstinent SA member and ask him/her how he/she got abstinence, ask them to be your Sponsor and let that person guide you. A sponsor helps us work the 12 steps and guides us up to the level of their own recovery. Also, find a “SA buddy” and commit daily to each other.
- Join a SA group and contribute by attending regularly and doing service (reading, sharing, leading, etc.). Also, join an in-person 12 Step meeting (DA, GA, AA, NA, FA, OA, etc.) to develop in-person support. A minimum of 3 committed meetings a week (combined) is recommended.
- Keep your day count of abstinence and share with others.
- Remember: the 12 Step PROMISES of the program occur only when we keep in FIT SPIRITUAL CONDITION (see pages 83, 84, and 85 in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous). Continue to practice prayer, meditation, gratitude and service every day.
- Here are some helpful slogans: *(for more, see handout ‘SA 12 Step Slogans’)*

♥ One Day At A Time

♥ Let Go And Let God

♥ This Too Shall Pass

♥ First Things First

♥ Keep It Simple

♥ H.O.W.: Honesty, Open-mindedness,
Willingness

♥ HALT: Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired

♥ E.G.O.: Edging God Out

♥ G.O.D.: Good Orderly Direction

♥ Keep Coming Back

♥ You are never alone again!

♥ It Works If You Work It! So Work It –
You’re Worth It!

