

How It Works – Deep Dive

Interactive AA reading exploration

Printable worksheet · 3 parts

Name _____ Date _____

How It Works

Interactive Reading, Self-Assessment & Worksheet

"Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves... With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start... Remember that we deal with alcohol — cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us."

— Alcoholics Anonymous, Chapter 5

Topics Explored: 0 / 60% Complete

Explore by Theme

Crisis Resources

If you're struggling, reach out for help immediately:

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Call or text: 988

SAMHSA National Helpline

1-800-662-4357 (24/7)

www.TheRecoveryFiles.com

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PART 1 OF 3

Interactive Reading

Interactive Reading, Self-Assessment & Worksheet

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What "Rigorous" Really Means

The program doesn't ask for casual honesty, convenient honesty, or comfortable honesty. It demands RIGOROUS honesty — honesty that is exacting, exhaustive, and unflinching. Rigorous means strict, severe, and demanding. This isn't about simply not lying to others. It's about refusing to lie to yourself. It means looking at your motives, your fears, your resentments, and your patterns with surgical precision. Rigorous honesty is the difference between recovery and relapse.

Topics Explored: 1 / 617% Complete

The Many Faces of Dishonesty in Recovery

Dishonesty in recovery goes far beyond telling lies. It includes minimizing the severity of your addiction, comparing yourself favorably to others ("At least I never..."), telling partial truths, hiding relapse warning signs, performing recovery without doing the work, people-pleasing instead of being authentic, intellectualizing instead of feeling, and agreeing in meetings while living differently outside them. Each of these is a form of dishonesty that erodes your foundation.

Topics Explored: 2 / 633% Complete

The Meaning of "Thoroughly"

"Thoroughly" doesn't mean perfectly — it means completely and with genuine effort. It means showing up to meetings even when you don't feel like it. It means calling your sponsor when you'd rather isolate. It means working the steps even when they're uncomfortable. It means being honest when lying would be easier. Thoroughness is about consistency and commitment, not perfection. Half-hearted recovery produces half-hearted results.

Topics Explored: 3 / 650% Complete

Honesty with Self vs. Honesty with Others

Most people think honesty means telling the truth to other people. But the hardest form of honesty — and the one recovery demands — is honesty with yourself. You can stop lying to the world and still be lying to yourself every single day. Self-deception is the native language of addiction. You learned to rationalize, justify, minimize, and explain away your behavior so well that you lost the ability to see yourself clearly. Rigorous honesty starts within.

Topics Explored: 4 / 667% Complete

The DIY Recovery Trap

Many people enter recovery convinced they can figure it out on their own. "I'll take what works for me and leave the rest." While this sounds reasonable, it's often the disease talking. Addiction taught you to be self-reliant, to trust only yourself, to believe you're different. These same patterns of thinking show up in recovery when we cherry-pick the parts we're comfortable with and avoid what challenges us. The parts we want to skip are usually the parts we need most.

Topics Explored: 5 / 683% Complete

OUR Path, Not YOUR Path

"Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path." The key word here is OUR — not mine, not yours, but a path that has been walked by millions before you. Recovery isn't about inventing a new wheel. It's about having the humility to walk a path that works. When we try to do it "our way," we're essentially saying we know better than the millions who found recovery before us. The same thinking that got us into addiction cannot get us out of it.

PART 2 OF 3

Self-Assessment

— Alcoholics Anonymous, Chapter 5

Topics Explored: 0 / 60% Complete

"How It Works" Self-Assessment

Rate yourself honestly on each dimension using a 1-5 scale.

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PART 3 OF 3

Worksheet

— Alcoholics Anonymous, Chapter 5

Topics Explored: 0 / 60% Complete

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