

**“Never, never, never, never, never,
never, never, never, never, never,
never give up.”**

—Adapted from a speech by Winston Churchill
(20th-century British Prime Minister)

Overcoming Emotional Blocks

★ Identify feelings that get in the way of your completing commitments:

- ___ **Overwhelmed** "I'm not capable . . . There's too much to do . . . I don't have time."
 ___ **Hopeless:** "Why bother? . . . Nothing I do ever works out . . . I might as well give up."
 ___ **Perfectionistic:** "I'm not ready to start . . . I need to prepare more . . . It won't be good enough."
 ___ **Other feelings:** _____

★ Circle any ideas below that might help you overcome your emotional blocks:

- ◆ The single most important concept: Commitment means doing what you say *no matter what you are feeling*. Think of a red traffic light: You don't decide to stop based on how you feel; you *know* you need to stop, and so you do. Commitments work the same way: If you *know* you need to do something, the idea is to do it even if you don't feel like it. You can be aware of your feelings and explore them, but you still need to do the commitment as planned.
- ◆ Commit to goals that are your own, not someone else's.
- ◆ When people say "I'll try my best" it often means "I'm not really committed to this." A small goal that's actually accomplished is worth more than a large goal that you just "try" to do.
- ◆ Forget about what you didn't do yesterday. Even if you failed 100 times, it's only right now that matters. If you wake up late, start then. If you're behind, begin anyway.
- ◆ Use *sheer persistence* to fight feelings that get in the way. If you keep moving forward, eventually these feelings will go away.
- ◆ Make your goals concrete and simple.
- ◆ Be very honest with yourself about what you can do. Sometimes people agree to do too much and then feel terrible that they cannot do it. Stay realistic.
- ◆ Pretend you are someone who gets things done.
- ◆ Everything is a *problem to be solved*. It is not your identity, your self-worth, a sign that you're not normal, or stupidity. Interpreting tasks in such big terms does not help.
- ◆ Don't "beat yourself up" if you fail at something. That makes you *less* likely to get it done next time.
- ◆ An old saying is "A good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow."
- ◆ When it gets painful, restate your commitment.
- ◆ Even if you seem to be moving three steps forward and two steps back, you're still ahead by a step.
- ◆ If you don't totally accomplish your goal, you can still feel good if you got further on it than before.
- ◆ You can also try to figure out why you're having problems—old feelings from the past? Unexpressed anger? But remember that figuring it out is not a substitute for action.
- ◆ Other strategies that work for you: _____

Action Plan

Name: _____ Date: _____

★ *An Action Plan is a way to accomplish your goal and honor your word. Fill out the "Before" section now and the "After" section later.*

B E F O R E	I promise to ...
E	By when?
F	I will use the following strategies to accomplish my commitment:
O	To overcome my emotional blocks, I will ...
R	It is important for me to complete this commitment because ...
E	If I complete it, I will reward myself with ...
R	Signed:
A	Result: Describe how it went.
F	Anything you'll do differently next time?
T	
E	
R	

If you are unable to complete your Action Plan for any reason before the next session, please leave a message with the therapist to let her or him know. This helps keep things "on track." You can leave your therapist a message at _____

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Idea for a Commitment

*Commit to one action that will move your life forward!
It can be anything you feel will help you, or you can try one of the ideas below.
Keeping your commitment is a way of respecting, honoring, and caring for yourself.*

† Option: The best commitment is to make a commitment! Fill out the Action Plan (Handout 4).

EXAMPLE OF AN ACTION PLAN

B E F O R E	I promise to ... Throw out my marijuana and rolling paper. I am promising this to myself, to my therapist, and to my sponsor.
	By when? 8:00 tonight.
	I will use the following strategies to accomplish my commitment: Call my sponsor, and write myself a "letter" about why I need to do this.
	To overcome my emotional blocks, I will ... Talk to my therapist, and focus on the good that can come of this.
	It is important for me to complete this commitment because ... My future depends on it; my health will improve; I'll honor my word.
	If I complete it, I will reward myself with ... A safe "treat" (a new video, book, CD, or go out to dinner).
	Signed:
A F T E R	Result: Describe how it went. I hated doing it, but I did it. I miss the marijuana, but I feel stronger. I bought myself a nice dinner afterwards.
	Anything you'll do differently next time? No—it went okay.

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