



An Introduction To
Starting Over

"In the battle of addiction, the first casualty is always the hope and promise of tomorrow"

Starting Over offers a different approach to recovery from addiction. If you are an addict who struggles with substance abuse, who is wanting—hoping—to become someone new, someone clean and sober, an addict who chooses not to use, this program was written for you.

The Keys of *Starting Over*: An Overview

The goal of *Starting Over* is to build a new world that includes a new you: **an addict who chooses not to use**. The goal is more than overcoming using through chemical alternatives, or boosting willpower through self control, or removing temptations (although these play a part).

The goal is more than waking up sober one day at a time in a constant, unyielding mental tug of war with addiction.

The goal is newness of life, finding a new you with new passions and purpose that do not include addiction. This new life is the recovery that is essential to overcoming the constant pressures of addiction and finding long-lasting sobriety. Not using then becomes one of the steps or tools to finding this more meaningful and fulfilling life.

When we speak of recovery, we are not “recovering from,” we are “recovering to.” We are reclaiming a new future that once was lost to us. We reclaim the future by surrendering the past and present. It is recovering that which is coming, bringing with it the hope of tomorrow, a tomorrow worth escaping addiction for, recovering into a new life.

If insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results, wouldn't it follow that sanity is found in radical change and transformation? How long will you fight your unwinnable battle? Like declaring bankruptcy in the face of unpayable debt, we surrender our addicted selves and become someone new.

The *Nine Keys of Starting Over* are broken up into four groupings.

- 1. The Reawakening Keys of Poverty and Sadness.**
- 2. The Reinvent Keys of Humility and Hunger.**
- 3. The Reinvest Keys of Kindness, Sincerity, and Goodwill.**
- 4. The Revival Keys of Disconnect and Resolve.**

The first two of the nine keys address our past addicted self. The last two keys focus on cementing our resolve and protecting our sobriety. The five remaining keys and the majority of this program, however, are dedicated to and celebrate the new person we are becoming—the addict who chooses not to use. Investing in your future and having a clear vision of who you can be are essential in overcoming any addiction.

The Reawakening Keys of Poverty and Sadness

Think about the *Starting Over* keys as building a new home. The **Reawakening Keys of Poverty and Sadness** help us address the structures of addiction within us. Poverty and Sadness represent the first steps in building a home. We begin by clearing the land, removing old structures and debris which represent our past of addiction with its denial and prideful self-empowerment, acknowledging our need and the unmanageability of addicted life.



The Reinvent Keys of Humility and Hunger

In the **Reinvent Keys of Humility and Hunger**, we dig deep, putting in a firm foundation, framing our new home with the solid materials of a willingness to change and an openness to the help of others. We begin building a clear and positive vision of our future. We divert or redirect the river of our desires toward healthier choices. We embrace time as our most precious gift and begin asking ourselves, “What do I want?”



The Reinvest Keys of Kindness, Sincerity, and Goodwill



In the **Reinvest Keys of Kindness, Sincerity, and Goodwill**, we complete our new home by adding furniture, hanging pictures on the walls, adding window treatments, purchasing appliances, and gathering all the amenities needed for our new life. We beautify our new home with acts of kindness toward ourselves and others, we learn to live in the moment, transparent about what we think and feel, we embrace a spiritual awakening by helping others in community.

The Revival Keys of Disconnect and Resolve

In the **Revival Keys of Disconnect and Resolve**, we plan the care of our new home by putting in place strategies for landscaping, cleaning, and maintenance. We protect our new home with a state-of-the-art alarm system interconnected to outside services, such as the fire and police departments. We learn to leave behind the relationships of using friends and family. We examine our triggers and invest in new people, places, and things. We embrace sobriety as a tool of self-discovery. We form a plan for the path forward including meetings, programs, and sponsorship, and begin addressing our craving thoughts.



Together, these nine keys invite you to Start Over by building a new life—a home of your own choosing—filled with hope and possibility. There are no qualifications or requirements other than wanting to become **an addict who chooses not to use**.

Responses from Student Evaluations

Please make any comments/suggestions in the spaces below. Please continue on a

separate sheet if necessary. Please explain any "1" and "10" responses.

I was not sure what to expect, but I find this class very "Real" and it makes you want to do better. Even when you're caught in the middle of addiction, it's very different from other groups and I like to say it grabs a hold of your deepest insecurities and makes you think about why you use. I thought the facilitator was great too and I really connected with him. Overall, and I've never said this before about a class, but this class seriously got me wanting to change my life, and helped me realize it's okay that I've never been able to do it. ¹⁵ Lastly I love the bible quotes, I believe the word of Jesus is powerful and should be incorporated into recovery. This class was almost all 10's because something just clicked, and

Comments on the 9 aspects or Keys of Starting Over. Feel free to use your book and material.

My favorite Key was.... Resolve

My least relevant Key was... I think they are all relevant

My easiest Key was... I can't say honestly because they all take deep work in your mind

My hardest Key was... Resolve

And I ^{to say that} ~~pose~~ 1 for difficulty because if you want to make this class work, it's easy. It's all on us though. Overall, this is a powerful class.

How was Starting Over different than other programs you have attended in the past?__

It was fundamentally me and my thoughts and I did all the work myself.

What did you most enjoy about Starting Over? the concept of the permission to start over

What, if anything did you dislike about Starting Over? honestly nothing comes to mind

Would you tell a friend or inmate about Starting Over? I already have, and I brought someone here

What did you most enjoy about Starting Over? The fact that it gets you to think about why we do what we do

What did you most enjoy about Starting Over? The fact that it gets you to think about why we do what we do

How was Starting Over different than other programs you have attended in the past? It allows you to pick and choose what works for you to stay sober

Do you feel more prepared to meet the challenges of temptation? Yes

Did Starting Over meet or exceed your expectations? very much so

Do you feel different than when you started, as if you could "Start Over"? I do feel like I have the knowledge to start over.

How was Starting Over different than other programs you have attended in the past? Because its
real, it helps you fight your fears in a different way
then anything else Ive ever done

Do you feel more prepared to meet the challenges of temptation? 100% yes

Do you feel different than when you started, as if you could "Start Over"? I do actually,
and just recently something clicked, I am starting
over.

What, if anything did you dislike about Starting Over? Coming to see how
i could of done things different

Would you tell a friend or inmate about Starting Over? yes it is a
great program

What did you most enjoy about Starting Over? meetings conversations

11- Overall, my satisfaction with the administration was...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12- Overall, my satisfaction with administering my sessions was...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

13- The amount of time during the week to do the homework was...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

14- The usefulness of Starting Over was...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

15- Compared to other programs, Starting Over was...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please make any comments/suggestions in the spaces below. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary. Please explain any "1" and "10" responses.

Each response was a 10 because the group was powerful and extremely helpful to me in my current situation.

Frequently Asked Questions:

***Starting Over's* program track record:**

Starting Over acts as one of many tools used in recovery and is meant to be used in concert with and augment other recovery programs. *Starting Over* has graduated over 50 students within the Dept of Corrections and is available outside the DOC at the Hope Recovery Center in Manchester NH.

Student class evaluations are available on request and demonstrate a high degree of satisfaction and impact in remaining addiction free.

How much homework is required?

Each chapter or “key” within the program requires questions, exercises and extensive journaling which must be completed before the next session. The homework is designed to contain elements of self-discovery and reflection as it keeps each student engaged between the sessions.

Is this a religious program?

Starting Over is a spiritual program similar to that of AA and in no way promotes any religion or group. Its goals are inclusive and speak to all spiritual persuasions.

Is *Starting Over* only for substance abuse addiction?

The term “addict” within the *Starting Over* program is used with deliberate vagueness to include not only those mind-altering substances not prescribed by a doctor but also compulsive or habitual behaviors and ways of thinking and doing that are self-destructive.

Who is the author of *Starting Over*?

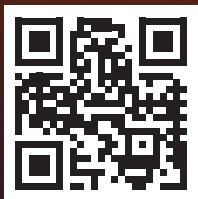
Each student becomes the author of their own recovery program within the workbook. Using the workbook as a primer, each student is encouraged to develop ownership by authoring their unique recovery program within its pages.

Where did *Starting Over* begin?

Starting Over began as a recovery meeting called “Hunger 4 Healing” a 12-step recovery meeting which ran from 1998 to 2013 in a storefront church in downtown Manchester NH called Main Street Mission.

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