

## BACKWARD STEPS TO ADDICTIVE BEHAVIORS

**TRIGGERS** – External, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Which areas are the riskiest for you? Which do you have the most difficulty combating? Rate each category from 0-10 (where 10 is the riskiest or most difficult).

- a. \_\_\_ Conditioned responses in certain settings
- b. \_\_\_ Unpleasant emotions
- c. \_\_\_ Unpleasant physical sensations
- d. \_\_\_ Pleasant emotions
- e. \_\_\_ Pressure from others
- f. \_\_\_ Conflict with others
- g. \_\_\_ Socializing
- h. \_\_\_ Testing personal control

**IMAGINING/FANTASIZING** – Start to imagine what it would be like to... how you would feel, how you would think and act ... then...

**“STINKING THINKING”** – Irrational beliefs, cognitive distortions, and rationalizations that you used to convince yourself to take the backward step.

- a. \_\_\_ Negative exaggeration; awfulizing; catastrophizing.
- b. \_\_\_ Self-downing / self denigration.
- c. \_\_\_ Rationalizations:
  - “It won’t really matter.”*
  - “I deserve it.”*
  - “I will only have one.”*
  - “It’s been a long time.”*
- d. \_\_\_ Low frustration tolerance:
  - “I can’t stand it.”*
  - “It’s awful.”*
- e. \_\_\_ The tyranny of the should:
  - “It shouldn’t be so hard.”*
  - “I shouldn’t have this problem.”*
  - “S/he shouldn’t speak to me that way.”*
  - “The world stinks, and it shouldn’t!”*

**PLANNING**

– “I’ll just go down to the store and buy a bottle.”

– “I’ll finish this project and then go to the bar.”

– “I’ll take some money out of my other account.”

– Others: \_\_\_\_\_

**ACTING** – Behaviors that led to UNDESIRABLE OUTCOMES (list them)

Teach yourself how to respond at *each step*. Even though it gets *harder* to intervene at each step along the way, it *can* be done. Practice rehearsing relapse preventive self-talk in SMART Recovery group meetings (role-playing is an excellent exercise), out loud at home, into a tape recorder, or in writing.