

Gabriela Byrne
19 Kruses Rd Warrandyte 3113
Victoria Australia
Tel: 0414 844 387



Free Yourself™ Program

Wednesday, 21 October 1998

**Productivity Commission,
Gambling Inquiry
PO Box 80
Belconnen ACT 2616**

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Gabriela Byrne and I have enclosed a few articles about my "Gambling Past for your information.

Since 1996 I have been successfully counselling people who have a gambling problem using the methods that enabled me to free myself from this addiction.

All these strategies are compiled in a program called "The Free Yourself Program" and it was officially launched by the Reverend Tim Costello in October 1997.

The Free Yourself Program book, outlining the Free Yourself Strategies, was published in November 1997. (Copy included).

I strongly believe that we should focus on "Harm Prevention" rather than "Harm Minimisation" in regards to gambling. I am in the process of producing a video "The choice is yours", outlining the traps that are deliberately set up in gaming venues for people to fall into. (I'll include a draft copy of the proposal)

I hope that this information will help your inquiry and I would be very happy to assist you in any way I can.

Kind regards

Gabriela Byrne
Director of the Free Yourself Program

I loved gambling more than my kids

Gabriela Byrne's addiction to gaming machines not only took all her money but made her steal from her family - and almost cost her life!



Gabriela Byrne knows she had a really big rock-bottom when she looked at her two children and wondered if she still loved them.

Instead of feeling madly in love, Gabriela felt they were simply a burden - drawing her away from the opium of a high-rolling career or a second, after that was Gabriela's all-consuming passion.

She was hopelessly addicted to gambling - spending all her spare time, jumping more and more money into poker machines. The point where I questioned my love for my kids was the worst," Gabriela says.

"I knew I had to stop for good. But the road to recovery was long and hard for Gabriela, whose life changed forever when she started playing the police with workmates several years ago.

Now, Gabriela has developed her own method which she calls the Free Yourself Program - and it has given her new purpose in life. It incorporates her own physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental healing techniques to help them beat the gambling demon.

This seemingly harmless pastime spiralled into a vicious addiction that ate up \$50,000 in savings and drove her to the brink of suicide.

The brave 42-year-old wants to dedicate her life to helping others with gambling addictions because she believes it is a major social problem that is destroying people's lives. The compulsion to gamble was so strong for Gabriela, she found herself

Craving to stop, Gabriela Byrne was the husband Peter and children Jennifer, 14, and Julian, 8 - to lead Gabriela from the abyss. Today, she

believes it is a major social problem that is destroying people's lives. The compulsion to gamble was so strong for Gabriela, she found herself

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The crunch came when Peter broke down

taking drastic steps to get money, even if it meant stealing.

She slipped into her company's petty cash tin but always left a note saying how much she'd taken.

Each time she managed to replace the money but had to ask her husband or friends for a loan.

"All you think about is gambling and you will do almost anything to get the money," she admits.

"I have a German butcher I have been going to for years. But instead of buying all the foods I love, I was borrowing money from him."

She admits she was even taking cash from her children's money boxes. "The children knew what was happening. My daughter, who was seven at the

time, would say: "Mummy, why can't Daddy buy you a poker machine so the money can stay in our house?"

Gabriela eventually lost her job because her gambling sessions were taking a toll on her work performance.

The reality of having no income did not weaken her addiction and Gabriela says she learned every trick in the book to get money.

To save \$20 or \$30 from the housekeeping money, that Peter gave her each week for groceries, she would drive to cheaper shops on the other side of the city from her home in Melbourne's outer-suburban suburbs.

She also neglected her appearance. "I have always taken pride in the way I look but found myself pulling things

off. Instead of getting my hair cut every six weeks, I would leave it for months," she says.

Recovery from gambling addiction is hard and Gabriela says it took her several attempts to beat it - but she is now living proof that it can be done.

"I'm not the same person I was when I was gambling and that is why it's not an issue for me any more," Gabriela says with a smile.

"I feel like this has been a journey I had to take to get to this point - and to be able to help people. It's my purpose in life."

For further information on Gabriela Byrne's Free Yourself Program, call 0644 844 387.

Emily Wood

'Your Choice?'

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A Documentary Concept
prepared by
Peter Daams

*'Your Choice?' is the working title of this production. It may be changed at any time.

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The Gambler

See the **blinking** lights
Begging you to play
Hear the winning sound
Please not today, I pray

The prayer doesn't reach the heart
Once more I hear me say
I'm sure this has to be my **lucky** day

Dark are the streets when I run to catch the train
with empty pockets, feeling nothing but pain
Why do I do this?
What makes me forget
everything
my husband, my children, my job
I'm starting to sweat
Gaining nothing but lies and loneliness
asking always for money and forgiveness

This was the last time, never again
I cry
The **devil** is smiling with a twinkle in his eye

Cause tomorrow could be different
I can hear myself say
You will win something big
Unfortunately never big enough
So **please** Lord can you help me - I pray

That one day it's all over, like a bad dream
during a **restless** night
I wake up with consistently happy feelings and laughter inside

I will get up and say -
Thank God - It is just a **dream** - It is all over - and I can stay!

Background

Over the years gambling has become an 'accepted' and highly promoted form of 'entertainment'. The gaming industry spends millions of dollars in exploring the possibilities to deliberately distract people's senses. This distraction will lessen the ability to make conscious decisions of all kind. One of the important reasons for gambling addictions is the many traps laid out by the gambling industry to lure people into casino's and poker machine venues. Churches and welfare agencies are experiencing more and more demands on their resources, an indicator of an ever increasing social problem.

<u>1. Australian Gambling Statistics (1993/1994 - 1995/1996)¹</u>				
		'93/'94	'94/'95	'95/'96
Gambling expenditure as a % of Household Disposable Income		1.51	2.25	3.18
Per capita gambling expenditure (\$)		451	628	748
Comprising:	Tattslotto (\$)	76	81	83
	EGM's (\$)*	203	270	367
	Casino (\$)	-	106	144
	Racing (\$)	122	122	126
	Other (\$)	50	49	28
*EGM's - Electronic Gaming Machines				

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¹VCGA (1997) *Definition and incidence of Problem Gambling, including the Socio-Economic distribution of gamblers*

Introduction to Free Yourself



The Free Yourself Program is a practical hands-on approach with clear instructions on how to quit a gambling addiction. It is a powerful tool which provides the key to understanding the addiction process and pro-actively fight this problem behaviour. The program was developed by Gabriela Byrne, a Certified Master Practitioner of Neuro-Linguistic Programming using NLP techniques to free herself of a long standing addiction to gambling.

Free Yourself is committed to providing people who are addicted to gambling with clear instructions and future strategies to overcome their addiction. Their aim is to assist men and women to acquire the skills to get well and stay well forever.

Aim of the video

Free Yourself considers harm-prevention an important aspect of their work, educating people so that they will be able to stay free in the future. Free Yourself will produce a high quality video to educate people of the traps laid out by the gaming industry. The power of the traps is often only recognised when it's too late. This video, currently titled "Your Choice?" will expose the traps and let everybody watching experience the 'power' of such manipulative tactics. The intent of the video is not to demand abstinence from gambling, but to encourage an educated choice.

Market

There will be two versions of "Your Choice?", enabling a broader audience. The video will possibly be advertised in newspapers.

One version will be targeted specifically at the youth. They should understand at an early stage what the traps are, so that they are well educated and have a deep understanding of the temptations the gambling venues present. This version will be shown in schools and other youth venues and will be offered to them as a educational resource.

Another version will be produced targeting a general audience. This will also include people dealing with a gambling addiction at present. This version will be shown in churches, health organisations, community clubs and other public places. It may be distributed amongst social welfare organisations and other bodies confronted with gambling associated problems. Gabi will personally take the video around to churches and will also be able to offer it as a resource to other churches nationwide. It will be produced with the possibility in mind of eventual broadcast on television.

Content

The video will firstly explain and demonstrate the importance of the 5 senses: SIGHT, HEARING, FEELING, TASTE & SMELL. A psychologist may explain their importance and their influence on our perceptions. The program will then focus on 2 or 3 people with different history, different gender, different ages, etc., who started unaware of the 'traps' laid out to get them hooked. Their stories will bring a personal note to the video.

Through the use of vision and audio the video will portray step by step the process deliberately set up to entice:

SIGHT - The lights are set up in such a way to lure and draw people towards them. There are no clocks present in a gambling venue. The flickering cycle of the gambling machines leads to the production of a slightly aroused heartbeat. The symbols, for example 'George', a friendly old man, call up certain feelings of relaxation and comfort, a feeling that is often deceptive.

HEARING - The music played in pokies venues also brings certain images to mind. For instance, the wedding march song is a part of seducing people through an image of familiarity and goodness.

SMELL - For example, the smell of alcohol and cigarettes that is present in gambling venues intoxicates and causes a feeling of pleasure and enjoyment.

TASTE - For example, the complimentary tea or coffee offered at casino's and pokies venues is a part of stimulating through an increase of arousal chemicals

FEELING - For example, the levers and buttons to push on pokies machines give the gambler a sense of control, whereas the machine would have no problem doing it all automatically.

The two versions of "Your Choice?" will generally be the same in content , however they will be produced in different styles.

Style

The main aim of "Your Choice?" is to portray how the gaming industry entices by appealing to the senses. Therefore the blend of vision and audio will at times emulate those enticements, making it easy for the viewer to understand how one could fall for them. "Your Choice?" will have to display a high standard of quality to reiterate the fact that the Free Yourself program is of a high standard.

"YOUTH VERSION"

The duration of this version will be under 10 minutes. Because the target audience is the youth, it will be edited in such a way to appeal to their tastes. This will show itself through fast paced editing with high tempo, contemporary music as the driving force of the program. There will be little space for lengthy dialogue and the camera work will be abstract at times.

"GENERAL VERSION"

This version will be from 10 - 15 minutes duration. The general target audience will need a little more time to process information and therefore the pace of this version will be decreased slightly. This will mean a slower paced editing with slower music. There will be more room for dialogue in this version.

Personnel

The personnel working on "Your Choice?" have a Christian background. Their concern that the gambling industry causes much harm to families and individuals is their motivation for working on this program. They have a deep desire to promote Christian values regarding gambling.

Gabriela Byrne will be the executive-producer of this program. Gabriela is the founder & director of the Free Yourself Program and was addicted to gambling for many years. As executive-producer Gabriela will bear responsibility for content and emphasis of the program and for the funding.

Geoff Hall will be producer of "Your Choice?". Geoff is an experienced producer in the television and film industry, where he has worked for many years. He has worked on numerous award-winning films, documentaries and television shows. Geoff will oversee the technical & creative aspects of production. He will ensure the production is completed on time, within the budget and to the required technical standard. Please find attached his resume at the end of this document.

Peter Daams will direct, shoot and edit the program. Peter is a member of Wycliffe Media Australia, where he has gained experience in the video field and has worked on a variety of productions. His previous projects include:

God Loves Albania -	A production for a Dutch mission organisation 'God Loves Albania'
Coming of the Good News -	A Wycliffe Media production

Other personnel will be defined as the project develops.

Costing

Costs involved in a professional production of this type are normally between \$2000 to \$3000 per finished minute. However, by hiring equipment from Wycliffe Media, a Christian video production unit, at a discounted rate and due to significantly discounted fees for principal crew-members, the producers are able to provide the video at a substantially reduced price. The prices listed are a guide only, final costs can only be provided when program content & shooting requirements are confirmed. The following rates are according to the Wycliffe Media deduction.

Pre-production

Script writing/ meetings/ location surveys:	at cost	\$400
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Shooting

Camera hire:	\$100 per day	\$500 (5 days)
Light hire:	\$7.50 per hour/per light	\$75 (10 hours)
Source tapes:	\$40 per tape	\$600 (15 tapes)
Travelling costs:	at cost	\$500
Producer:	\$500 per day	\$2500 (5 days)
Cameraman/ Director:	\$400 per day	\$2000 (5 days)
Assistant:	\$75 per day	\$375 (5 days)

Post-production

Editing:	\$50 per hour	\$3500 (70 hours)
Production music:	at cost	\$500
Master video tape:	\$51.10 per 32 min. tape	\$100 (2 tapes)
Preview copies:	\$10 per tape	\$30 (3 tapes)
Narrator:	at cost	\$250
Graphics:	\$10 per graphic	\$100
Producer:	\$500 per day	\$1500 (3 days)
Director/Editor:	\$400 per day	\$4000 (10 days)

SUBTOTAL:	\$16,930.00
10% contingency:	\$1700.00
TOTAL:	\$18,630.00

For crew costs Geoff Hall and Peter Daams will provide their services at a reduced rate as their contribution to the production. This discount represents a saving of \$7670.00

GRAND TOTAL:	\$10,960.00
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Endorsements

'Your Choice?' is currently endorsed by:

- Rev. Tim Costello

and the producers are seeking endorsement from:

- Em. Prof. David Hawks

Summary

The video 'Your Choice?' has the potential to be a powerful tool in gambling prevention. Through the viewing of this video people will gain an understanding of the gaming industry and will be able to stop themselves from an addiction before it's too late. This video could be the tool that saves people from a downward spiral leading to destroyed relationships, marriages and an addiction that could persist for a lifetime. The production will be funded by donations and support of interested individuals or corporations. If you would like to play a part in this invaluable production, please contact Gabriela Byrne at the address listed below. We are seeking financial involvement from sponsors in units of 1000 dollars. If required, acknowledgements will be made.

It is **YOUR** choice to have a life-changing effect on people's lives!

For further information please contact:

Gabriela Byrne
19 Kruses Road
Warrandyte, VIC 3113
Tel. (03) 9844 0652
Mob. 0414 844 387

My Relationship with George

(Wouldn't you rather be at George's with your friends)?

My name is Gabriela Byrne. I am 42 years old, happily married with two healthy children. We live in Warrandyte, one of Melbourne's beautiful outer suburbs in a lovely big house and in general have everything you could ever ask for *(in worldly terms)*.

About 6 years ago this was about to be changed because I began a "hot, passionate" love affair with "George". I became hooked on Poker Machine Gambling. I deliberately chose the analogy of a "hot, passionate love affair" because most people can comprehend an "affair" but have problems understanding how "anybody" can become addicted to something "stupid" like Poker Machines.

I will share with you my story, how it started, how far it progressed and how I eventually was able to "break free".

In the second part I will prove to you that **all of us** are affected by the Victorian "gambling - affair" and what **you** can do - to make a difference. OK, back to my story.

When I first met "George" *(when I started gambling)* my work colleagues and I went to a "Thank God it's Friday" drink, every Friday to a hotel near our office. At the time I was a Personal Assistant to a General Manager and I hated my job. I also suffered from what I called "Old Age Panic Syndrome". I discovered wrinkles and noticed that 19-year-olds could easily outrun me on the basketball court *(my husband told me that they always did that)*. The last little thing that wasn't quite right, was an unexplainable emptiness. I didn't know why I was here and even worse, I didn't know where I was going. *(At the time God wasn't around to answer this question)*. Now I know what you are thinking. We all have problems but that is no excuse to start an "affair". Well, fortunately we are all different and hopefully most of you are able to work these things out. You read books, ask other people and come up with a solution. But be honest. Isn't it sometimes easier just to "bury" your head in the sand? Just "slouch" in front of the TV - if you come home from an unsatisfactory day at work. Just blast your head with "heavy metal" music - if you are a couple of years younger and just can't grasp why you **have** to go to school. Just eat a few pieces of chocolate; drink a couple of glasses of wine - anything just to **not have to face the issue**. **George** is created for the sole reason to get people "addicted", knowing that we are manufactured in such a way that we will experience "illusions of solutions to problems" if all our senses get distracted through extreme stimuli. Here are a few examples of this **set-up**:

Sense of sight: The light level in a gaming venue is close to the light level in a hypnotherapist office or a meditation class. And there are lots of flickering lights everywhere. If you would count the "beat" of these lights you would find that they are close to the tempo of an "aroused" heart beat. Because of this your body produces certain chemicals that will in return make your heart beat faster. *(Have you ever looked in the mirror while driving your car and spotted a police car with flashing lights - what happens to your "physiology"?)*. In a gaming venue you experience an "aroused state" as "exciting, fun, challenging etc." - **and it is deliberately set up**.

Sense of hearing: There is a certain tune that most of you would have heard in Radio and TV-Advertising for Electronic Gaming Machines, called "Pokies". Unfortunately I can't sing it to you over the paper. But next time you hear it you will know what I am talking about. It is a "dah-da-dah-dah" distorted version of the "Hallelujah" from the Messiah from Haendel. Now why would they pick such a masterpiece and then distort it so we are consciously not aware where it is from. Because they talk to our subconscious. You know, where **everything** that you have ever experienced is stored, where nothing is forgotten no matter how distorted the version. So our subconscious recognises the "sacred" origin of the tune and makes you feel "secure, safe and far from all evil". Isn't that clever – **and it is deliberately set up.**

Sense of smell: If your partner, friend or relative uses a specific brand of perfume over a prolonged period of time regardless of your liking, wherever you smell this perfume it will trigger certain feelings. The feelings depend on the quality of the relationship, I guess. Another example: If your parent's house, where you grew up as a child has had a very distinct odour, just walking into the house (it could be 20 years later) would trigger emotions related to your memory of your childhood experiences.

In all gaming venues (*and believe me I've frequented a few*) the smell of spilled alcohol and hot and cold cigarette smoke is consistent. With the quality of air-conditioning in this day and age that didn't have to be. But "that is a horrible smell", you might argue. But never the less one that is very specifically linked with – **the gaming venue** – and as such becomes "familiar" (remember your parents house?) - **and it is deliberately set up.**

There is the fact that there are no clocks (*so you lose sense of time*), the deliberate make-up of the symbols (*did you notice that George looks a lot like Colonel Sanders, Kentucky Fried Chicken = successful, trustworthy, ambitious etc*), the complementary tea and coffee (*pushes up arousal chemicals in your brain*) and many, many more. **These are deliberately designed and implemented** to manipulate our subconscious mind. And by the way, Millions of Dollars are spend to employ psychologists that know what "makes us tick".

It worked brilliantly with me. Within 3-6 weeks I wanted to be "with George" every day, sometimes 3-5 times a day – as often as I could. I slowly emptied all our accounts (my husband trusted me completely) and started lying professionally. I just had to be with **George**. When I had to tell my husband after about 3 month I swore "I will never go again", just to break that promise the next day – because this time "it could be different". I would just spent \$10 and maybe win big. I was "moving in with George"; you know the next step in a relationship. From then on he "dictated" my life. I went shopping at the other side of town because I would save \$20 dollars on groceries (*which I needed to visit George*); I went to the Doctor (*I wasn't sick*), paid the account with my card (*I was allowed to use the card only in emergencies*), than took the "paid" account to Medibank to collect \$16 (*which I needed to visit George*); I constantly took money out of my children's money box, leaving a note saying that I took it and would pay it back the next day. My daughter, who knew what was going on, one night at bedtime looked at me and said: "Mummy, can't Daddy buy you a Poker Machine so that our money stays in our house". I started to neglect my appearance, there was no way I would spent \$60 on a hair-cut if could use it to see George, for 10 minutes. I wouldn't come home on time (*lots of staying back at work*), I hated week-ends (*because I couldn't see George*), I didn't want to go out with friends (*they were*

boring). I even skipped basketball most of the times (*\$6 fee bought me a few minutes and a couple of hours where nobody knew where I was*).

Talk about a "full on affair". Well things started to crumble. I lost my job (*George needed all my attention*). My family became sick of my incredible mood swings or constant absenteeism, my self-esteem suffered because I didn't want to admit that I was "not in control" and I realised I needed help. I called the Crises Line and got referred to:

Gamblers Anonymous (GA):

Don't get me wrong. I have nothing but admiration for the motives, support and the complete absence of prejudice of this fellowship. But I had two major problems. I couldn't get up and say, "I am a Compulsive Gambler". In the wording "I am" is something "unchangeable" something permanent. I am a mother, I am a woman but I was not born with a "gambling deficiency", I learnt to gamble – and I wanted to "unlearn" it. The other problem was that the 12 steps that you have to follow regardless of what your problem behavior is; were designed in 1935 by Bill Wilson, who experienced huge problems with alcohol, who had a spiritual experience which kept him sober for the rest of his life. Based on his experience he founded Alcohol Anonymous (AA). Later he transferred the 12 Steps to "Gamblers Anonymous" in 1957, which helped **him** to quit gambling but he died of emphysema in 1971 because he couldn't stop smoking. It just doesn't sound logical. People and addictions have definitely changed over the past 63 years – but nothing, absolutely nothing has been reviewed, re-worded or researched in all "Anonymous" organisations. After attending quite a few meetings I decided that GA wasn't the answer for me.

Counselling:

I went to individual counselling for 1-½ years. My counsellor was a great person and helped me a lot to understand "why" I gambled, my underlying problems and why gambling was attractive to me. But nobody gave me "clear" instructions on how to "deal with George", when I accidentally ran into him on the street. By that stage "George" was accessible on almost every corner in Melbourne. I became more and more desperate. I needed to stop. I had a new job, as an administrator for a big company, very conveniently in the City. Very close to the "old" casino. My family believed my early start was for work but that enabled me, because of the 24-hour access at the Casino to spend time with George before work at around 7am in the morning. I started to borrow money off friends and sometimes out of Petty Cash, always promising to pay it back. More than once I had to ask my husband to pay it just before I was about to be found out.

I started to believe that there was –No Way Out!

I guess God works in mysterious ways. One Saturday I picked up the paper (*at that stage of my affair a very unusual thing for me to do*) and almost immediately came across a small advertisement "would you like to teach yourself and others to change unwanted behaviors". I called and was told that it was actually a "practitioner course" in Neuro Linguistic Programming, a form of applied psychology. The cost of the course was \$2,000. I knew that we didn't have the money but after I explained my dilemma to the facilitator they agreed to part payment, whenever I had some money left over (*very trustworthy considering they knew what my problem was*). It might be

worth mentioning that they are devoted Christians, something that didn't mean much to me at the time.

During this course I learnt a lot of things but the most important strategy that I did use in my fight with the "Gambling Part" of me, was to look at myself as a "split personality". That I still was a loving, caring person, wife, mother and friend but that I had developed a part inside of me that was ruthless, dishonest, basically had no values at all beside the instinct of being fed (*in my case with gambling*). I learnt that every behavior serves a positive intent. So the initial intent was to offer me enjoyment, relaxation, whatever it was. But now it had taken over my whole other part and determined how I was living my life. So in my internal dialogue with my "Gambling Part" I was able to tell it to "Get lost". That I wanted to spend time with my children while the "Gambling Part" wanted to spend time with George. So I talked to "IT" like I would to my worst enemy. And it worked. More and more decisions were made in favor of ME and less and less in favour of the "Gambling Part".

On one occasion I went back to George, so I studied my journals for clues, all of a sudden another "magical" insight got given to me. Every time I wasn't able to communicate to George properly (*so he got the message and left me alone*) I was run down, tired and stressed and hadn't been looking after myself. So I studied the impact of food and drink on the way you feel. And I experimented with various food groups always documenting how I felt. Slowly I discovered that I had to cut back immensely on caffeine, stay away from red meat and increase complex carbohydrates e.g. rice. (*For months I had plain rice cakes in my car and was eating between 1 and 2 packets a day*). Rice stimulates the production of Serotonin, a well-being chemical, which helps you to feel more balanced. I started to walk every morning for the same reason and even today I still go for a walk on an average 4 out of 5 working days. So I had two major breakthroughs and thought that I had beaten this "Monster".

Until: one afternoon. I was in good shape, nothing wrong with me. I went to Shoppingtown in Doncaster to buy a present for my mother in law. My children were with my sister in law and I expected to spend about 2 hours trying to find the appropriate present. As it turned out I found it in 10 minutes. So I am walking through the Centre and hearing this voice constantly nagging at me: "Come on, you know all the strategies. One day you have to face it. Why not now. Let's just walk in the Gaming Room, stand there look around, maybe has a cup of coffee. You can do it. You need to do it. How can you tell that you are free from it?" etc. I didn't want to analyse this as the "Gambling Parts" trick to get me back to George, I felt like I was slowly taken over by this "evil force" that I thought I had kicked out a long time ago.

Well, I went in, changed money and the day that followed will stay with me for the rest of my life. I believe I came face to face with Satan. Working through me with a force that I had never experienced before. I took all the money we owned (*See, my husband trusted me already, I had all my credit cards, everything*), I remember standing there outside my body watching me throwing all that money into the machine, thinking this is not me, what is happening to me?

When I couldn't get any more money out, I drove to Warrandyte. They remembered me from my earlier Gambling times and were happy to give me some extra cash on the credit card. I lost all that and even when I was winning at times I couldn't get rid of it fast enough. By the end of the day, there was no "Jackpot" big enough to cover

what I had lost and I went home by myself. I called my sister in law and asked her to keep the children. I called my husband, who was in Sydney at the time, and just explained to him what had happened and then hung up. And I remember standing in our kitchen thinking "How am I going to end it". I thought about tablets, bath with hair-dryer etc. I knew this was it. I had tried everything and it wasn't good enough.

Eventually I fell onto my knees and I screamed and cried and I offered my soul. I said: "God, if you are there then from now on you have to take over. There is nothing that I can do now that will get me out of this. I know my sins are incredible but if Jesus died for me too than please forgive me and help me to become a better person. All along feeling the war battling inside of me "just to get up and end it all". I don't know what exactly happened, but it was about 4 hours later that I got up from my knees and I felt "new". I felt that a burden that I didn't even realised I had carried, had just fallen off. I was free. When my husband came home that night I witnessed another miracle of God's work. He took one look at me, took me into his arms and said: "I think we made it this time". After all that I had done that day, he saw a change in me and didn't spend one minute judging, or worse, condemning me for what I had done. I saw God's unconditional love demonstrated in my husband's expression of faith, trust and love towards me.

This happened almost 3 years ago. I have never gambled since and I **have not missed** it. If I can finish this part of the story like I started it. My feelings towards the Poker Machines today are *(and yes I have been into Venues as I display my business cards there)*: Remember George – well we had a "very passionate, almost life destroying" affair – but things didn't work out. Through God's love and grace I was able to kick him out. I tell him what I think of him when I run into him occasionally *(with ca 27,000 George's around, it's hard not to do)*, and I look at him today and honestly think, "**What on earth did I ever find in him**"! God has changed my identity; I am a **Child of God** and as such don't find anything attractive in this harmful, life destroying activity.

Shortly after I stopped gambling I documented all the steps that enabled me to "free myself" from the "Gambling Beast". I called it the **Free Yourself Program** and it was officially launched by the Reverend Tim Costello in October 1997. Since then I have been successfully counselling a lot of people that suffer, like I did, from this **destructive relationship with George and his friends**. Very few people are Christian. I feel so incredibly blessed that the "other" strategies e.g. diet, exercise, quiet time, "visualising and talking to the beast" helps support them to stop gambling almost immediately. The "outer layer" starts to change. After being without **George** for a few weeks the "void" that they used to fill with **George** emerges again. At that time a lot of my clients are looking for solutions to fill this void on a deeper, spiritual level of their being. I always share my story honestly. I always point out that my long-lasting change is guaranteed because I try on a daily basis to put all **my faith** on God.

And that my purpose in life is to convince more people into changing **their bet** so they too will win the **Jackpot of eternal life**.

Pretty good odds, don't YOU think?

If you know of anybody who could benefit from the Free Yourself Program please ask them to call **Gabriela Byrne** on (03) 9844 0692 or 0414 844 387.

I am happy to share my story in person at you Church or other Community Clubs or Groups.

The Editing Hall

Telephone 03 97120139 Mob.015 300116
Fax 0397120139

25 DAWSON ROAD
KANGAROO GROUND VICTORIA 3097

Resume of Geoff Hall. FILM & Video Editor.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

SEPT. '69	STW CHANNEL 9 PERTH Photographic Assistant.
FEB. '71	GROUP COLOR Photographic Processor
JUNE. '71	STW CHANNEL 9 PERTH Photographer
FEB '72	BRIAN WILLIAMS PRODUCTIONS. Initially employed as Production Assistant. Over a 6 year period fulfilled roles as sound recordist, film editor and production manager. Appointed as a director of the company in 1977.
FEB. '78	TVW CHANNEL 7 PERTH. Assistant Director/ Editor of Documentary Unit. News and Current Affairs editor.
JUNE. '80	Freelance Editor and Sound Recordist.
FEB '85	THE EDITING HALL. Owner/Manager of a production and post- production company providing specialised editing services and coordinating productions for clients including; Shell, WAPET, Woodside, Argyle Diamonds, CRA and Barron Films.
MAR. '96.	Currently operating as a consultant and free-lance Director/Editor.

MAJOR CREDITS AND ACHIEVEMENTS.

TELEVISION DRAMA CREDITS.

ANGELINA	T.V.PILOT.	EDITOR.
FALCON ISLAND	10 Part Series	EDITOR.
HELEN	30 Min. TV Drama	EDITOR.
KICKING AROUND	10 Part Series	EDITOR.
RIVER OF GIANTS	30 Min. Drama/Doco.	EDITOR.
WALTZ THRU THE HILLS	Telemovie	EDITOR.
HAYDAYS	10 Part Series.	EDITOR.
CLOWNING AROUND	Mini Series	SUPERVISING EDITOR.
CLOWNING AROUND 2	Mini Series.	SUPERVISING EDITOR.
SHIP TO SHORE	26 Part Series	SUPERVISING EDITOR
SHIP TO SHORE 2	26 Part Series	SUPERVISING EDITOR
SWEAT	4 Episodes.	EDITOR.

TELEVISION DOCUMENTARY CREDITS.

LOST ANGELS.	Storyteller Prods.	EDITOR
SKELETON COAST	TVW 7 Perth	ASST. DIRECTOR
THREE WOMEN	TVW 7 Perth	EDITOR
THE EMDEN	Brian Williams Prods.	EDITOR
A RACE APART	Channel Nine.	EDITOR
100 GUINEA CUP	I.M.G.	EDITOR
SAME SEASONS	R.O.P.	EDITOR
APPETITE FOR ASIA	CVA	EDITOR
WHALESONG	Storyteller Prods.	EDITOR

AWARDS.

A.C.S. Best Editing 1982. Golden Key 1984, 1986, 1987.

FILM AWARDS. (Following are some of the awards for productions Geoff has worked on, not individual craft awards.)

CHICAGO FILM FESTIVAL - SILVER SCREEN 1985. BEST SERIES 1988.
PENGUIN AWARD. 1979, 1982, 1989, 1990.
NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL 1990.
A.F.I. NOMINATION. 1993.

World Sun, Friday, April 3, 1998

Helping herself: Gabriela Byrne knows what it's like to be a gambling addict. Picture: DAVID BAIRD

Coming out of the shadows

By GREG THOM

GABRIELA Byrne knew her gambling was out of control the first time she stole money from her company's petty cash tin to play the pokies.

That knowledge still wasn't enough to stop her.

"I consider myself as a person with quite high values. Honesty is one, for example, that I value very much," she said.

"(But) I felt like I had a split personality."

"Gabi" justified her actions to herself by leaving notes in the cash tin of how much she had taken and by always managing to replace the money, often with the help of her husband and friends.

"I never actually committed the crime of taking it and not putting it

“All you want is money to gamble. You need to feed the beast”

back," she said. "But it's a fine line, because if I had no other option, I probably would have done it anyway, because you live in the moment and at that moment, all you want is money to gamble."

"You need to feed the beast."

Eventually, though, three sessions a day at the casino took their toll on her work and she was sacked.

"Once you are in there, you run an auto-pilot, so nothing is important any more but the fact that

you're there," she said. For Gabi, the introduction of pokies to Victoria six years ago came close to ruining her life.

Working as a personal assistant in a large company, the non-gambler's world was completely changed the moment she first set foot in a pokies venue.

What started out as a social activity after work ballooned into an addiction that cost her her job and \$40,000 in savings.

"While I was who I am now, the real me, I had no inclination of harming

anybody, taking any money, lying to my kids," said Gabi.

"But when the urge hit me, I switched over and the gambling part of me took over."

"I took money out of my kids' moneyboxes. I think that's a criminal act too." Finally, Gabi decided enough was enough.

After trying all the conventional counselling methods, she developed her own solution to her gambling addiction, the Free Yourself Program.

Based on improving a person's physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing to allow them to step out of gambling's shadow, she now helps others suffering what she went through.

The program was developed by Gabriela Byrne,
a Certified Master Practitioner
of Neuro-linguistic Programming,
using these strategies to free
herself from a long-standing
gambling addiction.

"A fresh, positive approach in
dealing with gambling addiction."

Rev. Tim Costello
Spokesperson of Interchurch
Anti Gambling Taskforce



Free Yourself™ program



A way out of
the gambling trap

Gabriela Byrne

Free Yourself

a program for people with
addictive gambling behaviours

Gabriela Byrne



Freeyourself™

Published by Gabriela Byrne 1997

For Peter,
Jennifer & Julian.
Without their continuous love
and support my story wouldn't
have had a happy ending!

When I was addicted to Poker Machine gambling I felt nothing but guilt, pain, frustration and anger. There wasn't a day when I didn't wish that I could; again experience laughter, fun, happiness and love coming from inside. With the unselfish love of certain people I overcame my addiction. Without their help this book would not have been written.

My warmest thanks go to:
my family in Germany, especially my parents Ruth & Will Mies who prayed for me constantly; my family here in Australia; Joy, Beat & Pat, the Clingen Family for their friendship and lots of free meals and use of their computer equipment; Bronwyn who is a true friend; the Warrandyte community church, especially Peter & Anthea Keep, who live the 'word of God' by teaching it to people—like myself; Alan Carr who made me believe in an 'easy' way to stop an addiction; Integrated Learning, Peter, Robyn & Tony (who taught me so much more than NLP); Laraine Rasmussen, for being a successful client, friend and now business partner; Melanie, who proof-read this manual in every stage of its development and has also successfully used it; all my clients who proved that this program works; Mike Slusher and Sheena Geysen who provided me with the opportunity to desktop publish this book with students from Holmesglen Institute of TAFE; Pablo Gastar for the cover illustration and logo design.

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F.Y.TM is the trademark of Gabriela Byrne

Gabriela Byrne asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this booklet and the designer of the Free Yourself Program

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Free Yourself Program

"While I was addicted to gambling and smoking I was desperate to hear about somebody whose life, like mine, was a mess, but who had experienced recovery.

Nobody told me the story so I had to write it myself! I didn't make it up. Now, I live it every day and so do many others who are committed to implementing some simple but far-reaching changes in their lives.

Today I don't gamble and, more importantly,
I don't miss it at all!"

Gabriela Byrne, Director of Free Yourself Program (F.Y.P.)

About F.Y.P.

Being addicted to something like gambling, drinking, over-eating, drugs etc. affects the whole person. If someone is addicted for a lengthy period of time, noticeable physical, psychological and spiritual changes occur. Life deteriorates at every level.

Just telling people to cease their negative behaviours rarely encourages change. Most people know they need to stop long before they may seek help. They are just unable to stop on their own.

It is not that those experiencing problems with compulsive behaviours are unwilling, weak, stubborn, unmotivated, or undisciplined. They are using the wrong vehicle trying to reach a certain destination.


In my own case, I was desperate to change, to stop my gambling addiction. Eventually I found the solution. I took steps to improve my physical well-being by diet and exercise. I implemented some drastic re-thinking strategies, and I took time to work on my spiritual growth through prayer and meditation. This last point is a very personal one. I don't claim to have the 'one solution fits all' answer. However, I am convinced that 'quiet' time, meditation and/or prayer are very important tools which support the changes to get on top of the addiction.

I developed the Free Yourself Program based on my own experiences which enabled me to free myself from my own gambling addiction. I have taught the program to many other gamblers who found that it worked for them as well. This book is a summary of all the necessary instructions to help you to do the same. Even though I believe that F.Y.P. could be transferred and used on other addictions as well, I have restricted this guide to gambling addictions.


I am living proof that F.Y.P. works. I can give you F.Y.P.,
but **YOU** have to use it!

What is Addiction?

Addiction is a process whereby a behaviour seemingly takes control of our lives. It causes us to do things that are inconsistent with our values, beliefs and goals. If not overcome, addiction can lead to health problems, stress, despair and low self-esteem. This problem behaviour can affect our relationships at home and at work and can lead even in some cases, to death.



Can you explain addiction to me please?



What types of addictions are there?

There are two types of addictions:

1. Process addiction

Almost any process, if practiced often enough, can lead to addiction.

Some of the most common ones are:

- Gambling, work, shopping.

2. Substance addiction

Mood-altering substances deliberately and consistently taken over a period of time can lead to addiction.

The most common ones are:


- Alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, drugs, food.

Understanding the Process

There are many convenient and powerful 'whys' that people use to justify their gambling addiction. Ranging from simple boredom, personal problems, childhood traumas to the loss of a loved one, they all serve as an excuse when we think about WHY.

F.Y.P. will not help you to work through these problems. F.Y.P. will help you to stop gambling.

Once you have jumped off the gambling addiction Merry-Go-Round, you will be able to focus on these issues with a clear mind.



Why do I have to do it?
Why me?
Others seem to have so much more control.

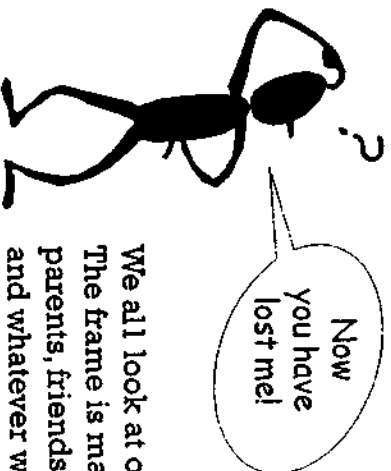
Let me tell you the story of Procrustes.

I believe Procrustes' story represents in a nutshell why we try to influence our state/feelings with the help of things external to us.

Understanding the Process

The Story of Procrustes

A long, long time ago Procrustes invited people to his house to stay overnight. He showed them the beds that they had to sleep in, but (now listen to this) they were only allowed to sleep in it if they fitted the beds perfectly. So, if they were too short - they were stretched. If they were too long - their limbs were cut off!



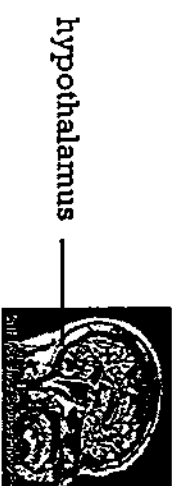
The Moral:

We all look at our 'Life-Bed' and try to fit. The frame is manufactured by our parents, friends, the media, role-models and whatever we believe is important. We have to fit! For some of us that means *Stretching*, and for others it means that they have to *Cut Off Extras* - anything just to fit!

Addictions are one way of dealing with this process but they only pretend to disguise our pain in the 'fitting process' and attempt to change *how we feel about it*!

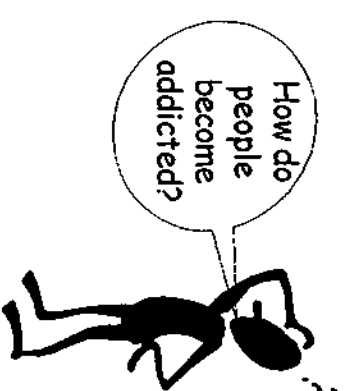
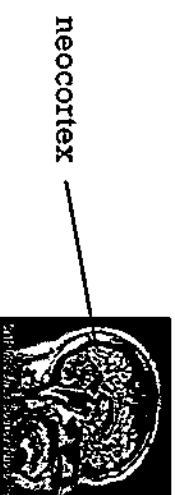
Understanding the Process

Everybody depends on certain things to survive, e.g. food, oxygen, water, warmth, etc. These survival instincts are located in the **hypothalamus** or animal brain.



When the animal brain registers a deficiency and/or a need for any of these survival needs, it sends signals up to the 'main brain' or **neocortex**.

This is the part of the brain that sends instructions to our hands and feet so we can get the necessary supply of whatever it is we want.



Understanding The Process

The addiction process can happen very easily as a result of the workings of the brain. Let's take food as an example. Today we eat for survival and we also eat because we are bored, lonely, it is lunchtime, it's somebody's birthday, the food looks good, etc. So the signal to eat gets released because we just FEEL like it. There is no deficiency. We are linking an outside event or an inside emotion (feeling) with a behaviour such as eating. Continuous repetition of this behaviour ensures installation of a 'problem behaviour'. In the case of my own addiction, I started gambling one Friday after work. I'd had a bad week and was glad to unwind with a few drinks and colleagues at the pub. Although I wasn't particularly interested in gambling, playing the pokies changed the way I felt. I won, which made it even better. So the next week, one lunchtime after a bad morning at work, I decided to go gambling again, just to change the way I felt.

But did gambling change the fact that I was unhappy at work? It definitely did not.

Does eating get rid of marital problems?

Does alcohol make this world a better place to live in?

Do cigarettes relax, help concentration or taste really good?

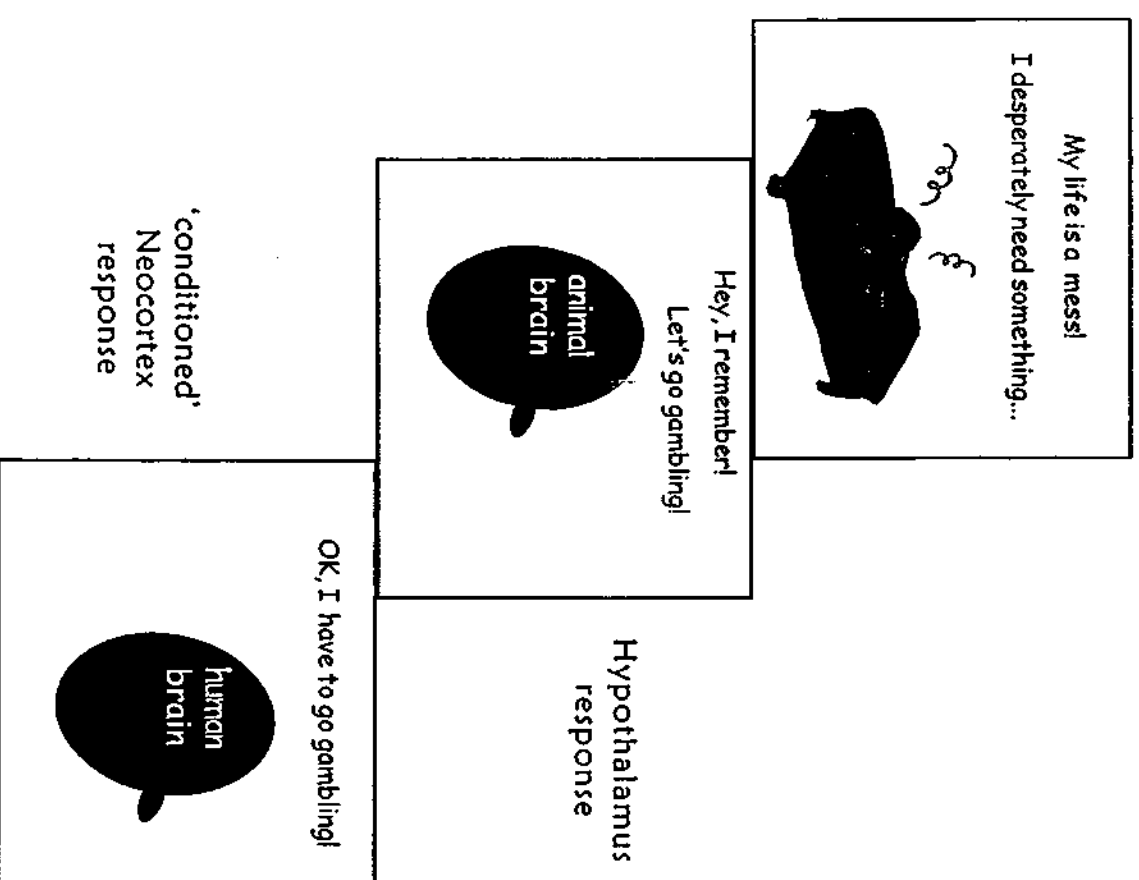
Addicts are really addicted to illusions.

These illusions are created by ourselves and the people who make money out of our bad habits.

Please look at the picture on the next page:

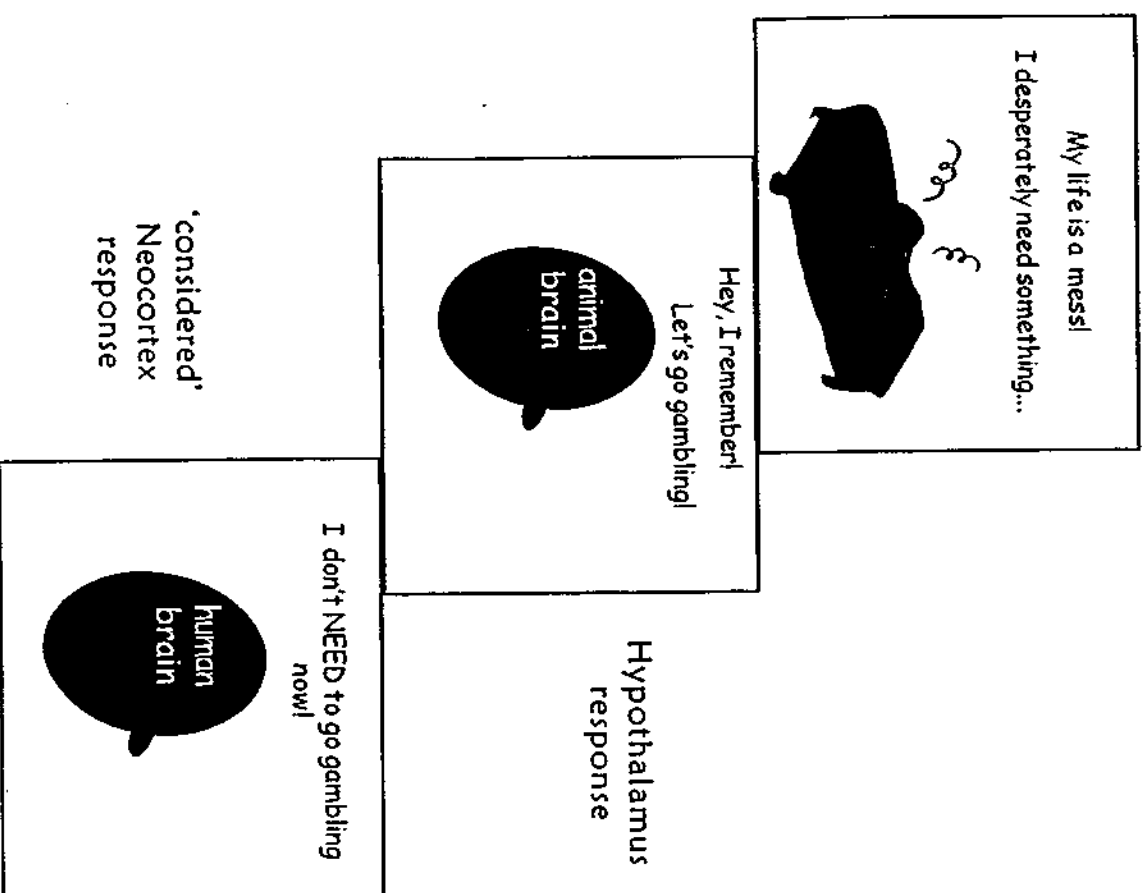
Understanding The Process

Let's have a look inside your head



Understanding The Process

Can you see the difference?



Understanding The Process

Did you recognise the different responses?

I am sure you have heard about people who go on hunger strikes. I am certain that their 'main brain' registers a lot of signals of hunger but they choose not to act on that message. This indicates that we, the 'main brain, are really in control of even our survival instincts. Consider that if everybody who saw an attractive person of the opposite sex followed their instincts right there and then, what would happen! This control shows that at every point, we can overcome every signal that comes from the 'survival centre'.

Once I understood that I was only tricked into believing that I had to gamble because I stored it with my survival instincts, it all made sense. I had genuinely wanted to quit, but eventually the urge had become so overpowering that I thought I had to do it, or I would die!

The part of our brain (the human brain) that sends out instructions to move our hands and feet to get whatever it is that the survival brain wants is actually on top and always has been completely under our control!

Isn't that incredible?

Do you understand what that means?

Can you see how easy it is to stop?

Understanding The Process

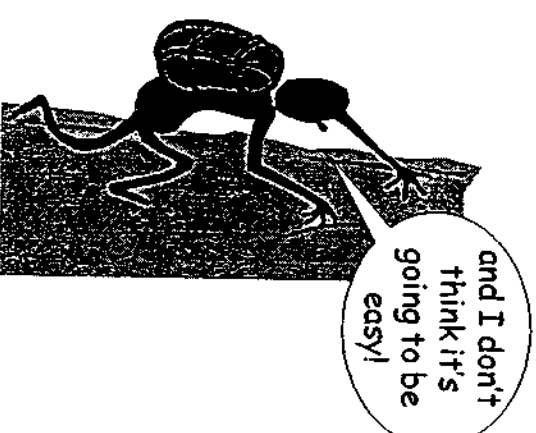


That is exactly what I am saying !

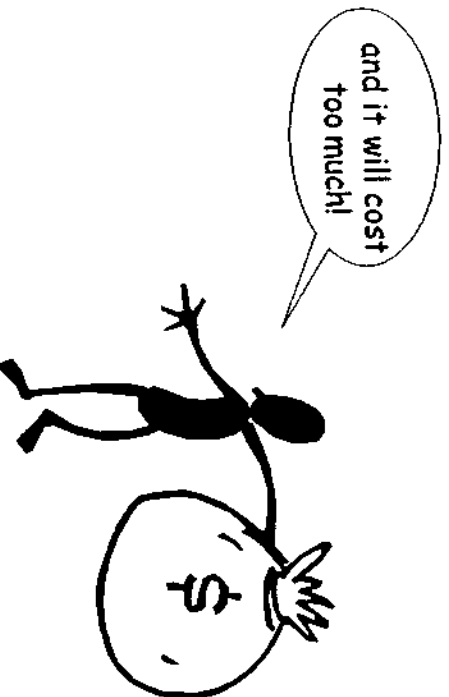
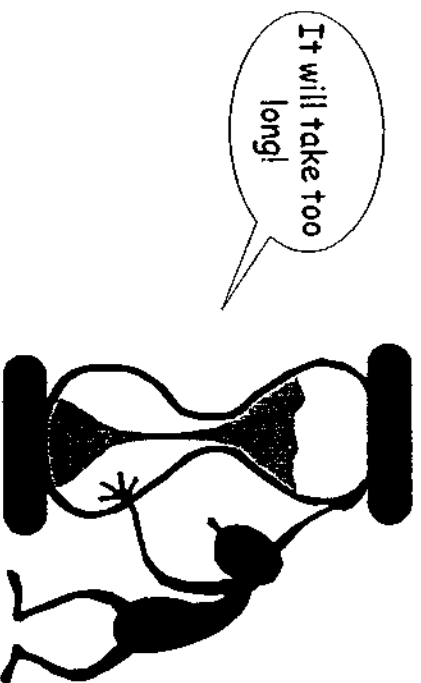
However, you have practised the addictive behaviour for a long time and it is linked with a strong need or emotion. To re-program the brain you need to implement changes that will assist you in learning new and better behaviours.

But, YOU need to commit yourself to the change process !

Understanding The Process

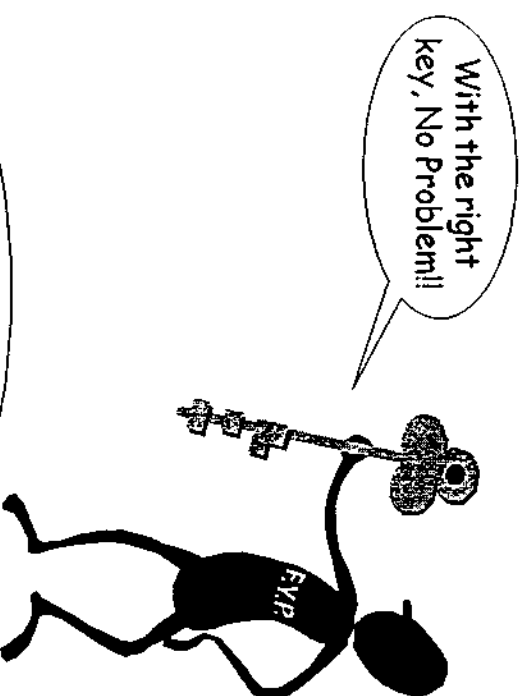


Understanding The Process



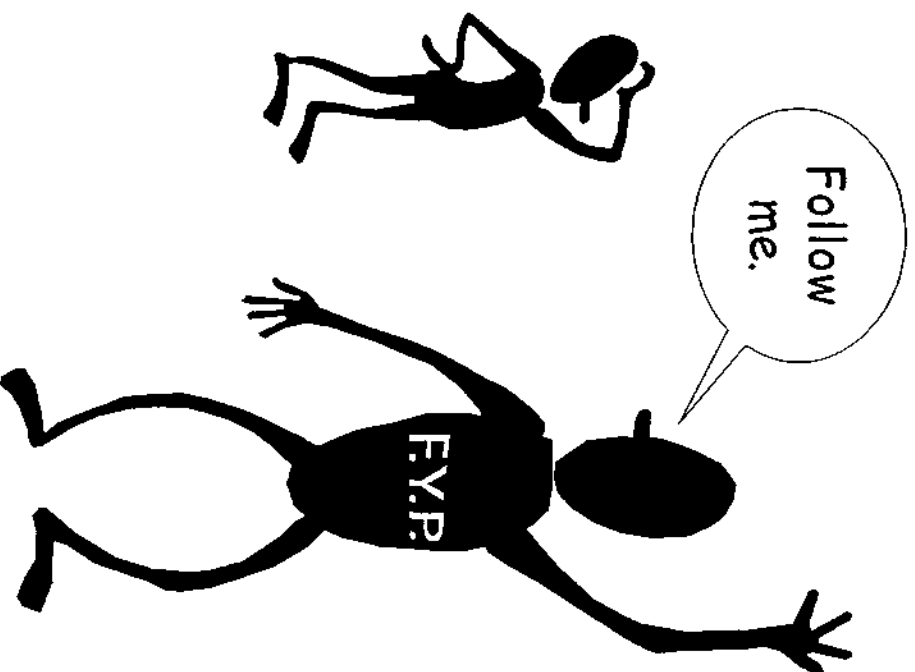
Understanding The Process

Come On...



Getting to Know Your O.P.

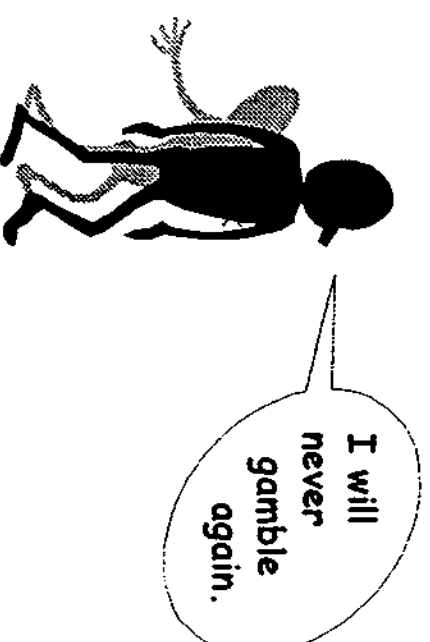
Follow me! You have nothing to lose!



Getting to Know Your O.P.

Let's do a little test to start with. This is not serious.
Just a test.

Say to yourself loud and clear:



Now be quiet and LISTEN!!!

What is going on inside your head?

Can you hear some arguing going on?

What can you hear?

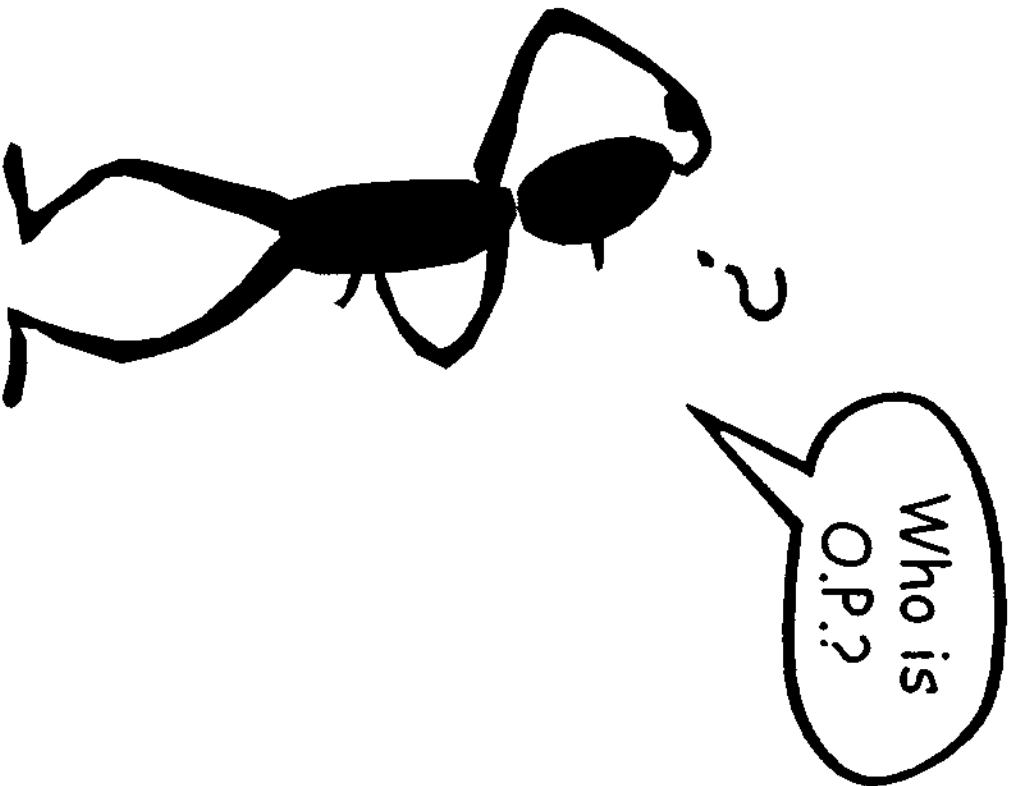
Talking back to you is your Other Part (O.P.)!

Whose is this VOICE I can hear loud and clear?

This can't be me - I really do want to STOP!

WHO IS THIS?

Getting to Know Your O.P.



Getting to Know Your O.P.

Introducing the Other Part

Have a good look.

This is what my O.P. looks like. Very ugly, don't you agree?



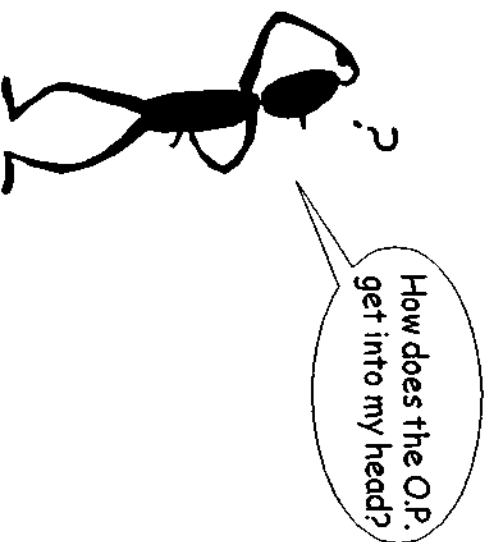
Getting to Know Your O.P.

More about the O.P.

O.P. is the one that you are arguing with when you decide to stop.

The O.P. is the one that always finds a reason why you should continue to gamble. "One more time."

The O.P. is the one that tells you 'You are too weak, you will never make it, you are sick, there is no way that you want to give up. Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah...'



Getting to Know Your O.P.

More About the O.P.

The truth is that you have created the O.P. yourself.

Remember the 'survival centre'. You placed a "monster" in this part of *your* brain. So your O.P. (the monster) gives signals from a part of your brain that under normal circumstances will not get ignored.

Pretty clever, isn't it?!

You have a choice now.

Willpower will ignore the O.P. Pretend you don't have a Gambling Part.

Willpower will deny the O.P. is there.

Willpower enables people to stop gambling for a while, sometimes a life-time, but they suffer for it, because the O.P. is there. The O.P. gets angry. The O.P. will talk constantly. It will strike when least expected. You have to be on guard non-stop.

I believe it is better to **accept** the existence of the O.P. and to learn some strategies about **how to control the O.P.**



Getting to Know Your O.P.

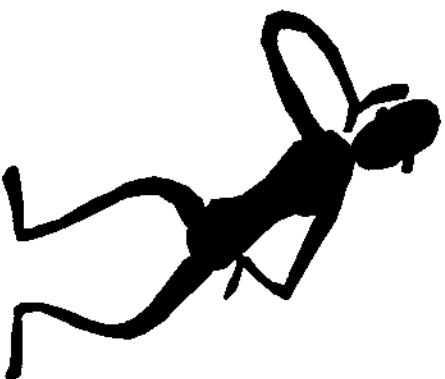
A. Imagine the O.P.



B. Listen to the O.P.

C. Pay attention to your feelings about the O.P.

D. Talk to the O.P.



Imagining the O.P.

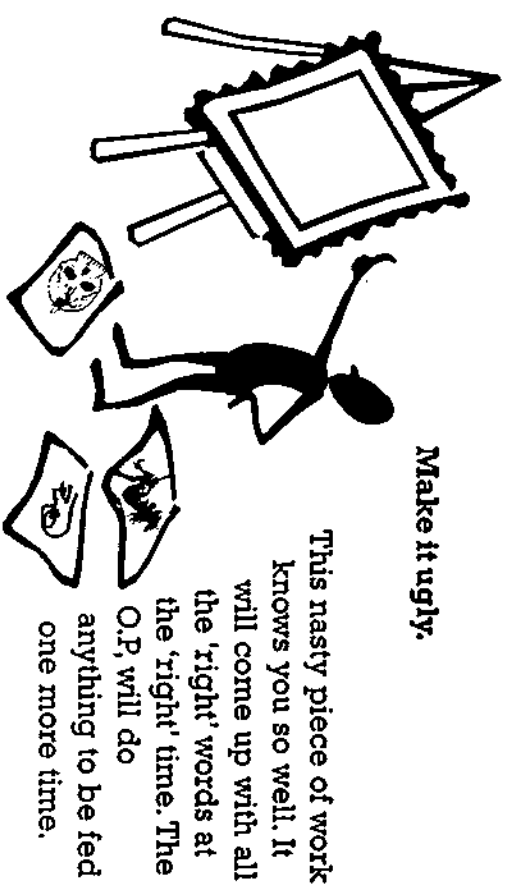
It is really important that the IMAGE of the creature that you create is something that you don't like. You can't stand the look of it at all. Just the thought of it makes you shiver. Imagine that this ugly and cruel creature is nesting inside your brain, just looking after itself. This O.P. (beast, devil, monster, etc.) doesn't care the least bit about you. It doesn't care that your family is suffering, that you are unhappy, or that you are neglecting other important areas in your life.

Important: Make your own picture of your O.P.

Picture the O.P. as a monster, devil or beast.

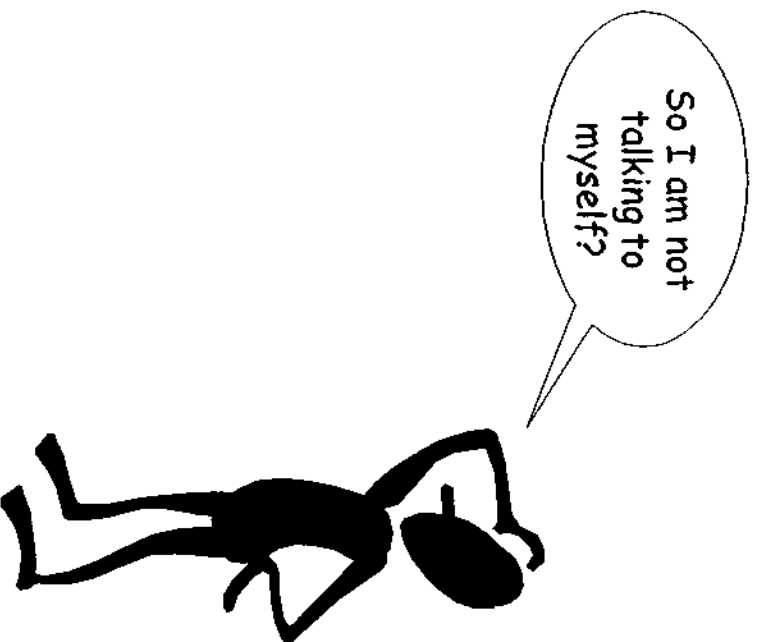
Make it real.

Make it ugly.



Listening to the O.P.

The O.P. can talk!



Listening to the O.P.

You think you are talking to yourself because most times the O.P. sounds exactly like YOU.

- ♦ It uses your language.
- ♦ The O.P. knows exactly what your needs are.
- ♦ Every time the O.P. gets a chance it will demand to be fed.
- ♦ Because the O.P. knows you so well it will come up with the right words at the right time.
- ♦ Sometimes the O.P. will demand.
- ♦ Sometimes the O.P. will beg.
- ♦ Sometimes The O.P. will plead.
- ♦ Sometimes the O.P. will scream.
- ♦ Sometimes it will rationalise.

Paying Attention to Your Feelings About the O.P.

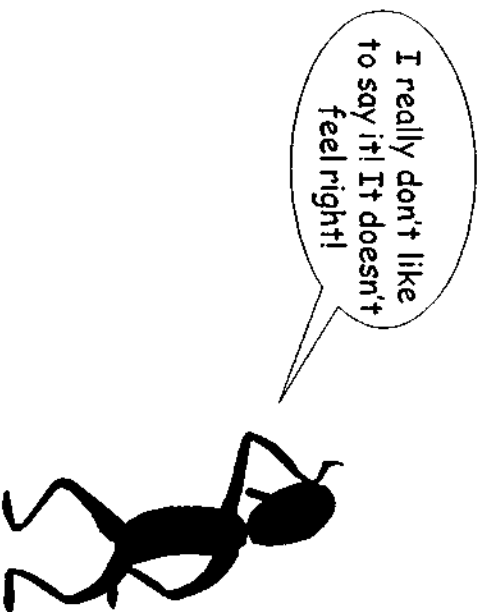
Now for the second time, still just for fun say again loud and clear:

I will never gamble again.

Say it like you mean it!

Come on. Just to scare the O.P.:

I will never gamble again!



Paying Attention to Your Feelings About the O.P.

Remember?

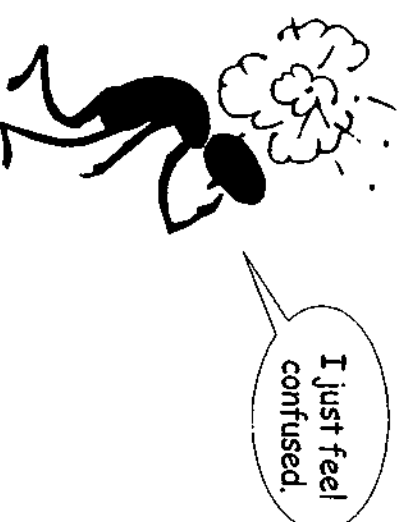
The O.P. will continue to work on your feelings.

- ♦ The O.P. knows you are serious - the O.P. creates tension.
- ♦ The O.P. doesn't want to give up - the O.P. fights, so you feel aggressive.
- ♦ All the feelings that you have - the O.P. will use them to get fed.

Now, say it again loud and clear:

"I WILL NEVER GAMBLE AGAIN."

...and concentrate on **how you feel!**



Paying Attention to Your Feelings About the O.P.

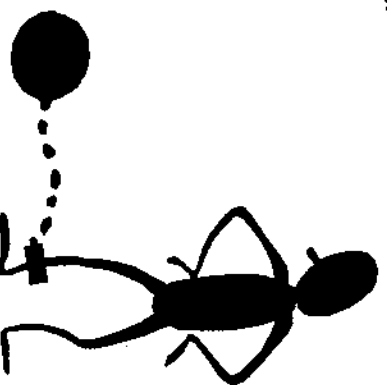
I am sure that you have experienced a whole range of feelings whilst you feed your relationship with the O.P.

The relationship initially developed because you thought it would fulfil a need: you were lonely, bored, shy, upset, unhappy, stressed, etc. (just to name a few possibilities).

After a while though, you become aware of how much of YOU the O.P. takes and how little you gain in return.

But you believe that:

- Only gambling is exciting.
- Nobody cares anyway.
- I could win big!
- Gambling helps me forget.
- I can beat the system.
- What else is there to do?



Paying Attention to Your Feelings About the O.P.

These quotes represent only a few of the illusions that you bought when you started to gamble. They are expressing your need but by now you know that you are on the wrong train.

Your belief is/was: "If I ride it long enough, maybe, eventually, it will get me there." By now the feelings have changed.

You feel:

ANGRY

FRUSTRATED

ISOLATED

SICK

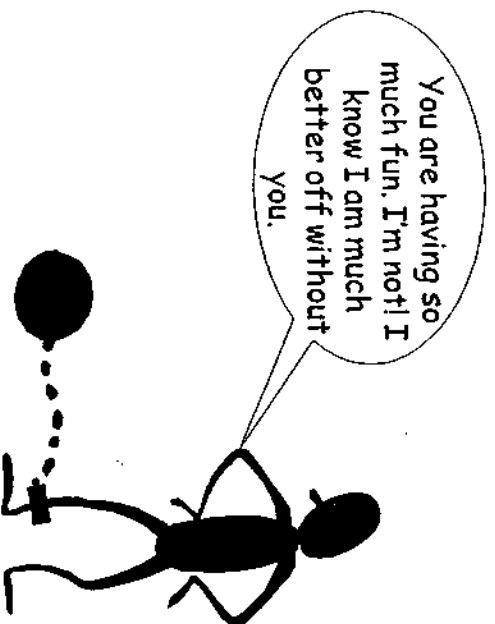
That's good!

Now you are able to change.

Talking to the O.P.



Why do you
want to quit?
We are having so
much fun!



You are having so
much fun. I'm not! I
know I am much
better off without
you.

Talking to the O.P.

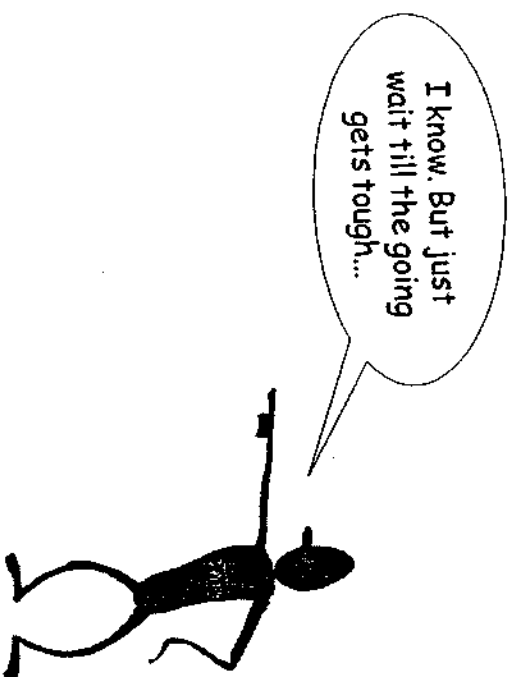
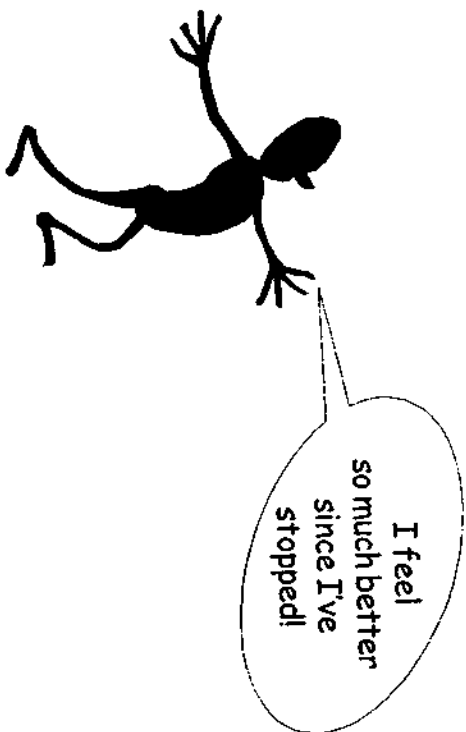


F.Y.P.I What a lot
of rubbish!

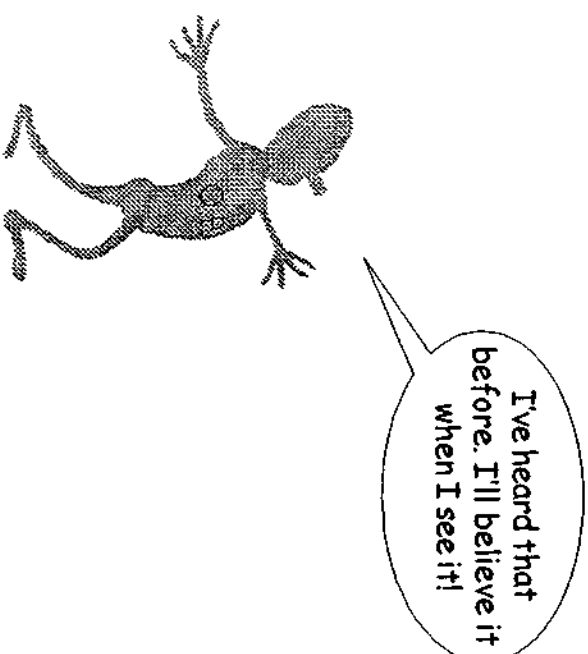
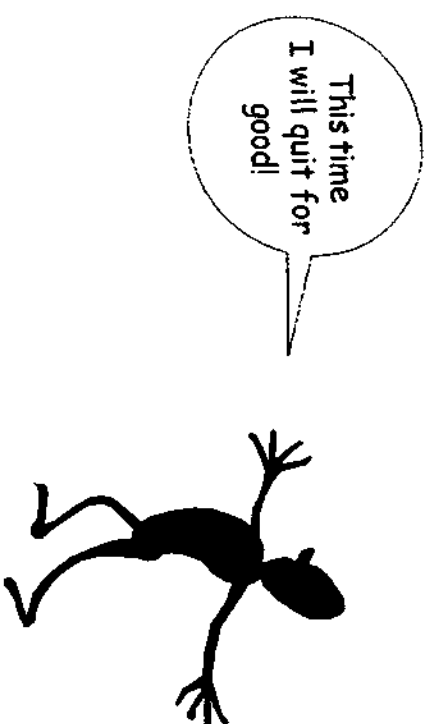


It sounds very
logical to me!

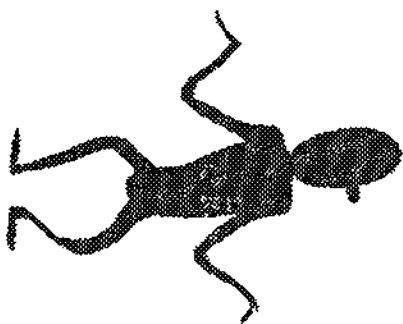
Talking to the O.P.



Talking to the O.P.

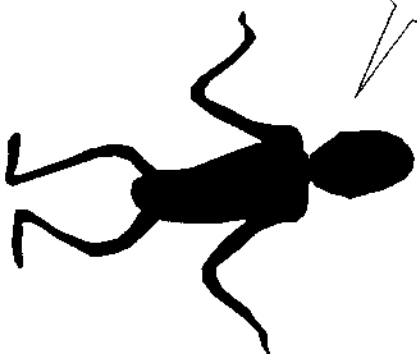


Talking to the O.P.



This plan is far too abrupt! Nobody can quit just like that!

Watch me! I can do it easily!



Talking to the O.P.

For the first time I actually had fun! I laughed!



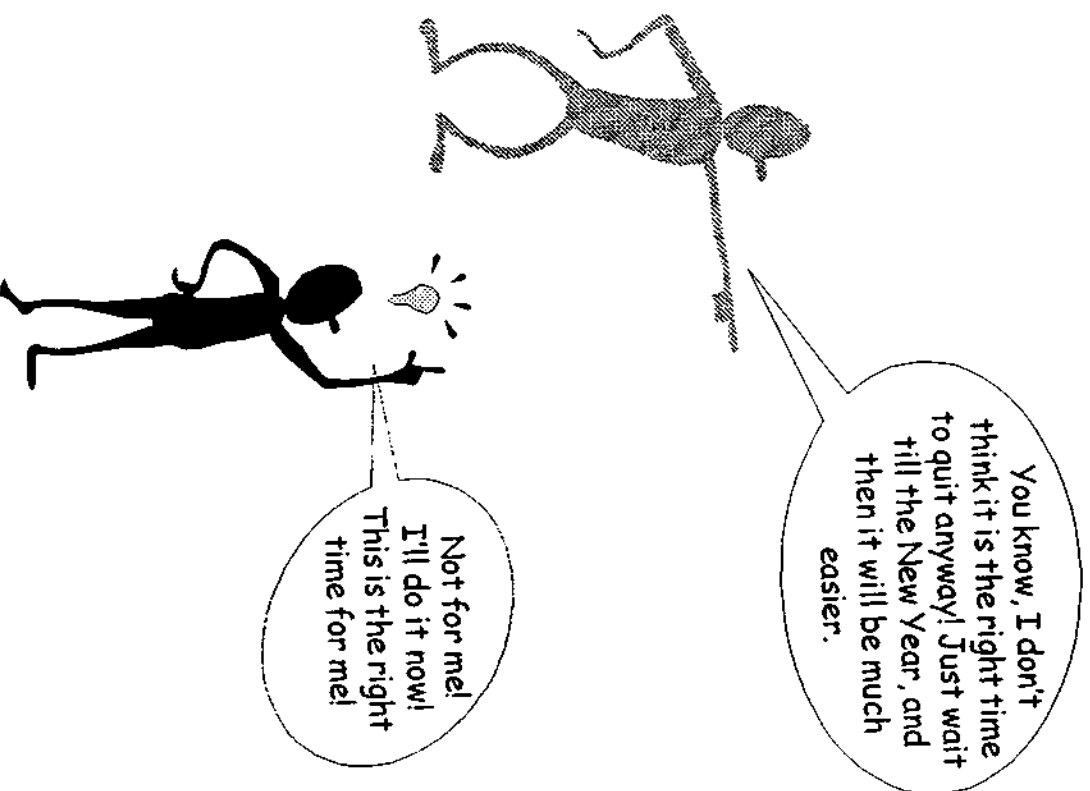
Great! I am so happy for you! Let's go celebrate with...



Oh, no! I'm having fun because I don't need gambling anymore!



Talking to the O.P.



Talking to the O.P.

Now, listen to the next couple of examples.

This time the O.P. uses "I" instead of "YOU". This makes it harder to recognise the O.P.

Remember, whatever argument comes up for you to continue the behaviour you want to stop, it is not you arguing, it is the O.P.

Take a step back and:

A. Imagine the O.P. as ugly, horrible, etc.

B. Listen to the O.P. and answer quickly.

Now you have to say it one more time.

THIS TIME YOU REALLY MEAN IT.

YOU KNOW IT IS OVER.

YOU WILL STOP NOW!

SAY IT LOUD AND CLEAR!

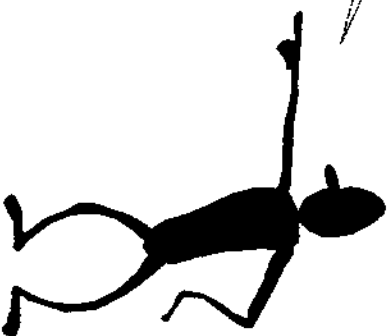
"I'LL NEVER GAMBLE AGAIN."

Talking to the O.P.

This is the only thing I do for myself! Why should I give this up?

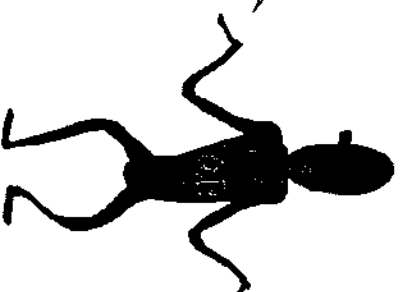


I only hurt myself if I continue! You, O.P.! Just back off!

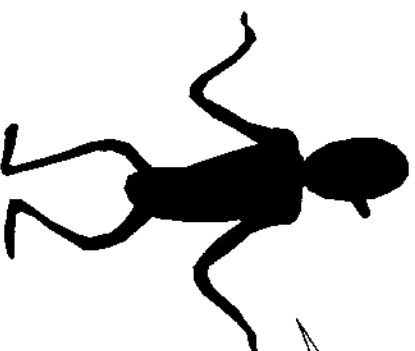


Talking to the O.P.

It wasn't all bad. I remember how good it felt when I started. I just want to be normal!



Listen, O.P., I was not born with a gambling deficiency! I am normal if I don't do it!



Talking to the O.P.



I only do this because it makes me forget! I don't feel anything when I gamble. I need that.

Life will always have ups and downs. I don't need you O.P., to make it worse.



Talking to the O.P.

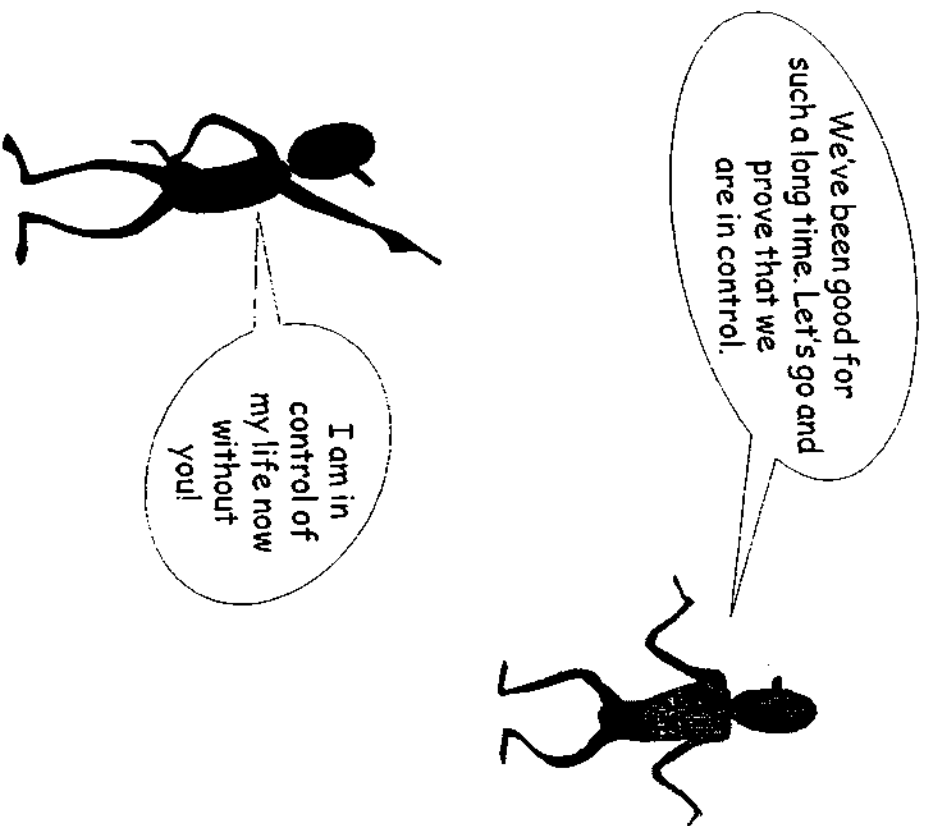


Can't I just do it a little bit?

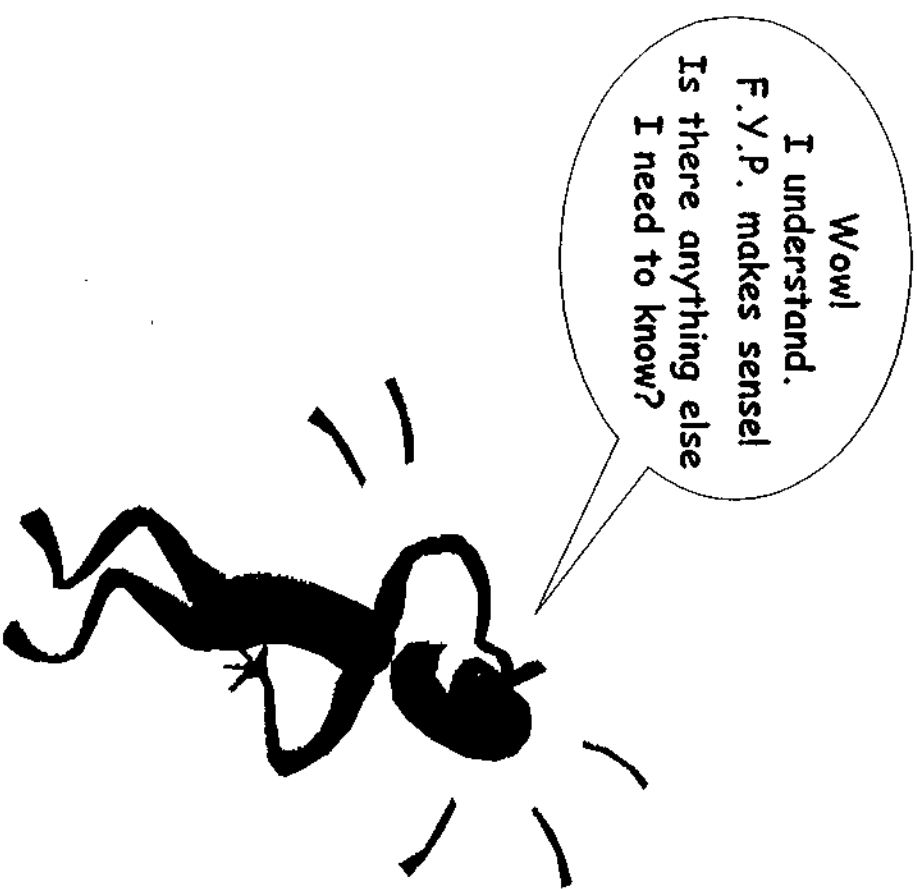
No! It doesn't give me what I'm after anyway. I'll look at alternatives!



Talking to the O.P.



Support Tools to Change



Support Tools to Change

Exercise, Diet, Meditation/Prayer

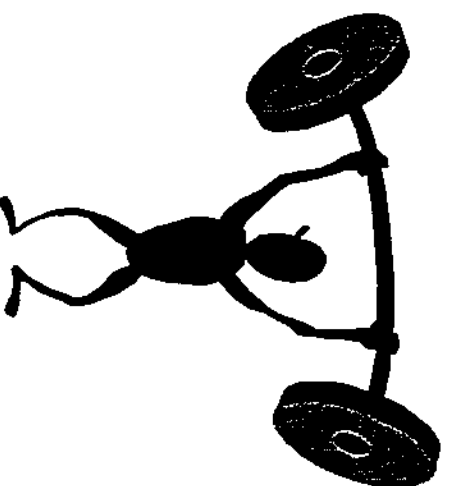
I am not a dietician but I discovered that what I ate influenced how I felt. I have a degree in Physical Education, so I know a little bit about exercise. I am a Christian but I know that a lot of people don't share my faith.

These next few pages contain suggestions based on my own experience and books that I've read which supported my 'freeing process'.

With what you know now, you already have everything you need to **stop for good**.

By applying these ideas you will find that they encourage the change in an incredible way.

OK, let's start with exercise.



Support Tools to Change

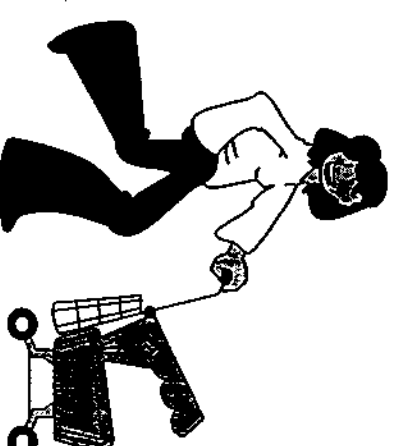
Effects of Exercise

"I don't exercise. I don't like it. I am not sporty."

You don't have to lift weights, run for miles or play competitive sport. All I did, on a regular basis was a 15 minute walk in the morning. Every morning. And before I did anything else.

What does this do? It increases the 'well-being' chemicals in your brain, which will help you to focus on your new life-style.

By putting exercise first in your day, it will remind you that this new way of life is a priority to you. During the day too many things can come up. Too many possible excuses. If you are serious, about changing your life...



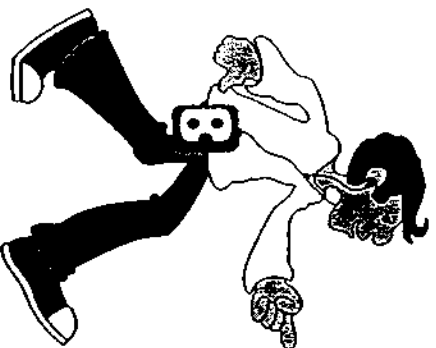
Support Tools to Change

Effects of Exercise

Especially for the first two weeks:

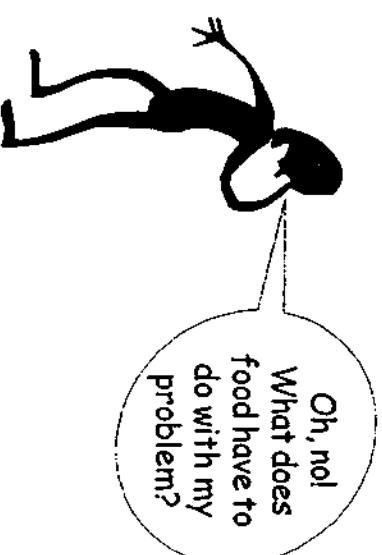
**Walk
every
morning.**

Don't worry about pace or time. Just enjoy the fresh air. Take in deep breaths and look at the pleasant things around you. The exercise will stimulate your senses to take in different information and when you get back home, you are ready to start the day **differently**.



Support Tools to Change

Effects of Dietary Changes



At the start of my own process of change, for several weeks I stopped drinking coffee, tea; everything that contained caffeine. My gambling addiction caused the accumulation of too many 'arousal chemicals' in my brain. By eliminating the 'extras' in my food, I felt better. I didn't eat red meat and I cut back on refined sugars; I increased my intake of complex carbohydrates (rice, pasta, etc.) dramatically. I always had a packet of plain rice-crackers on hand. I drank a lot of water and herbal teas.

After a couple of weeks I began to notice the effects these foods were having on my brain. I calmed down and lost a lot of my restlessness that I had treated with gambling before. This worked for me and my addiction. For other addictions it could be different. So please seek expert advice on this one.

Support Tools to Change

Meditation/Prayer

Learning and then changing a behaviour can take place on different levels within ourselves. They are all inter-connected and influence each other.

Meditation/prayer will support the production of 'well-being chemicals' in your brain. These in turn will support the focus on changes in your daily routine and the re-thinking strategies.

After your commitment to stop gambling you could still have problems. This is because you are human. Some of the excuses you used to justify gambling will emerge again. They need to be worked through. Being a Christian, I work very hard to seek solutions in prayer. Other people find it in other forms of 'quiet' activities like **yoga, meditation, listening to music**, etc. I would recommend making such activity a regular daily feature. Before you start, state clearly where you are struggling and would like to be helped. For a while I wrote all of my prayers down, and when I knew that I wouldn't be disturbed, I read them out loud. This worked for me, but for you it might be different.

You may even find that issues that you have long forgotten about will emerged after you have stopped gambling. Be happy that you now have the chance to work through these issues and don't hesitate to seek professional help if required. It will be a lot easier when you're free of the addiction because your brain will be able to focus clearly on the issues without thinking about how to 'feed the O.P.'.

The Final Commitment

After reading this manual (as often as you can) there is only one thing left to do. This is your decision. It is your final commitment to stop gambling.

Now, I don't know when you will decide to do so, but I would recommend that you do it publicly. (Listen to the beast talking right now). Write it down and send it off to family and friends or invite them over and announce it loud.

When you are committed, take control and kick your O.P. out!

Just imagine the following scenario:

A friend visits you for a day, then stays overnight and then a week, and it turns into a month.

Your friend spreads out his belongings, determines what to watch on TV, makes decisions about dinner and just takes over your life! You become less and less in control in your own home!

You try to convince him to go and find somewhere else to live, but he always comes up with an argument that makes you agree that he can stay- just one more night. You become aggressive, your family and friends blame you for being weak, but now you find it hard to imagine your home without him. There is nothing that you can do. Every day you make the decision, "today I am going to tell him to go", but when you see him it seems impossible. You feel so torn/between what you should do and what you are actually allowing to happen. You feel like a total stranger in your own home. There is only one possible solution.

Eventually you pack his belongings and **throw him out**.

The Final Commitment

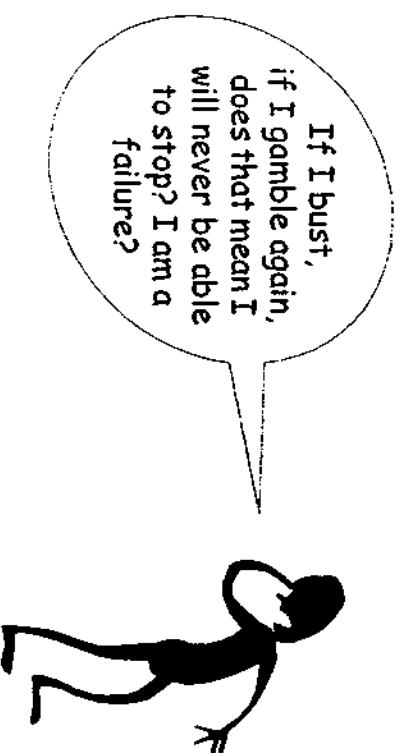


Yes, your friend will not give up without a fight. He was too comfortable in your house. Your friend will try to convince you that you were better off while he was living with you. He will tell you that you shouldn't listen to anybody but him. He will write letters, call you day and night and sometimes turn up at places you didn't expect him to be. Would that change your mind? Would that make you let him back into your house, into your life?

I don't think so.

You would probably get the key locks changed and even consider getting a silent number. You would not get into long discussions, if you happen to see him. You will repossess your house, your family and ultimately yourself again.

The Final Commitment



If you have made a commitment but you go gambling again then YOU have decided to do so.

You are now aware of the O.P. but you still decide to go gambling.

You are not a victim of anything.

Maybe you will go through a phase of uncertainty and conflict but you will experience a great deal of self-consciousness.

This phase usually results in definite progress towards complete abstinence.

The Final Commitment

This is my last question:

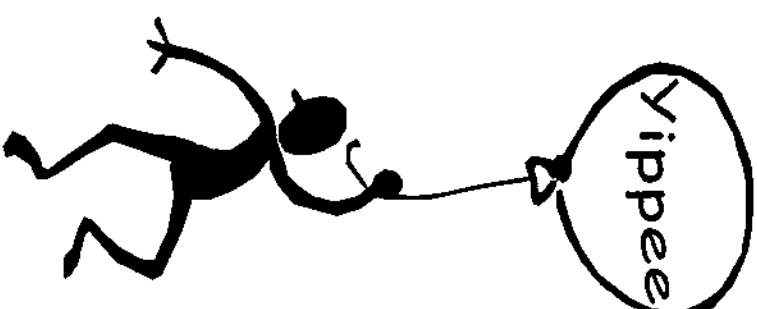
When will I know that I have made it? When will I be sure that I control the O.P.?

I believe at the moment you are sitting on a see-saw. The O.P. sits on one side and you on the other. Say, at the moment you are determined to quit. All the weight is on your side, Now you are constantly looking up to the O.P. You are constantly listening to its voice. You feel how the O.P. is getting heavier and heavier and... all of a sudden the O.P.'s side weighs more and BANG, the O.P. is in control. The game continues, over and over again. With willpower you might last a little bit longer, sometimes a day or even a week. I have heard of people that kept the O.P. up in the air for years. The true change and the definite and complete recovery can only happen when you **JUMP OFF!** You don't play the see-saw game any more. You stand next to the see-saw looking down on the O.P. on the ground trying to get you back on. With everyday you will walk one step further away from the see-saw, knowing that eventually you will be so far away from the O.P. that its voice is hardly reaching your consciousness.

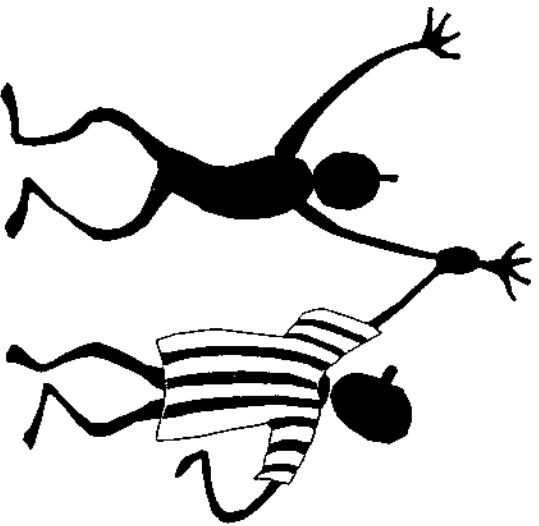
Its begging becomes weaker and weaker and you are able to laugh about the O.P.'s desperate attempts.

You are one hundred percent certain that, whatever happens to you, **Gambling is not an issue any more!**

Don't forget to celebrate!



That's when and how you know that you killed the O.P.



For more information and comments about this booklet,
please write to:

Rebound Consulting Pty. Ltd.
19 Kruses Rd
Warrandyte Victoria 3113 Australia

Tel: (03) 9844 0652; Mobile 0414 844 387

e-mail: pbyrne@compuserve.com