

## Relapse Justification

Relapse justification is a process that happens in people's minds. If a decision has been made to stop using but the addiction still has strength, the game gets tricky. The addicted part of the brain invents excuses that move the addicted person close enough to relapse situations that accidents can and do happen. You may remember times when you were planning to stay drug and alcohol free and such a situation happened and you found yourself using again.

Use the questions below to help you identify justifications your addicted brain might use. You can then interrupt the relapse process.

### Accidentally or Other People

Does your addicted brain ever try to convince you that you have no choice or that an unexpected situation caught you off-guard? Have you ever said to yourself?

- It was offered to me. What could I do?
- An old friend called, and we decided to get together.
- I was cleaning my house and found some drugs that I had forgotten about.
- I had friends come for dinner and they brought wine.
- I was in a bar and someone offered me a beer.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_.

### Catastrophic Events

Is there one unlikely major event that is the only reason you would use? What might such an event be for you? How would using drugs or alcohol improve the situation?

- My spouse/girlfriend/boyfriend left me. There was no reason to stay clean.
- I just got injured. It ruined all my plans. I might as well use.
- I just lost my job. Why not?
- My family is falling apart. Why not?
- Other \_\_\_\_\_.

### For a Specific Purpose

Has your addicted brain ever suggested that using a certain drug or alcohol is the only way to accomplish anything?

- I'm gaining weight and need stimulants to control my weight.
- I'm out of energy. I'll function better.
- I need drugs or alcohol to meet people more easily.
- I can't enjoy \_\_\_\_\_ without using.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_.

### Depression, Anger, Loneliness, and Fear

Does feeling depressed, angry, lonely, or afraid make using seem like the answer? Is it really?

- I'm depressed. What difference does it make if I use or not?
- When I get mad enough I can't control what I do.
- I'm scared. I know how to make this feeling go away.
- If he/she thinks I've used, I might as well use.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Addiction is Cured**

Does your addicted brain ever try to convince you that you can use just once or just a little?

- I'm back in control. I'll be able to stop when I want to.
- I've learned. I'll only use small amounts and only on occasion.
- This drug (or alcohol) was not my problem – the other one was. So I can use this and not relapse.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Testing Yourself**

Would your brain like to prove you could be stronger than drugs or alcohol? It's very easy to forget that being smart, not being strong, is the key to staying sober. Have you ever thought?

- I'm strong enough to be around it now.
- I want to see if I can say "no" to drinking and using.
- I want to see if I can be around my old friends.
- I want to see how this feels not that I've stopped.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Celebrating**

Both the addicted brain and other people may encourage you to fall for the following:

- I'm feeling really good. One time won't hurt.
- I'm doing so well. Things are going great. I owe myself a reward.
- This is such a special event that I want to celebrate.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_.