We react to the word "powerless" in a variety of ways. For some of us admitting powerlessness brings a sense of relief, allowing us to become receptive to spiritual guidance. Some of us recoil connecting the idea of powerlessness with weakness. Still others see themselves as both powerful and powerless depending on circumstances they are experiencing. Perhaps the most helpful litmus test is to honestly ask ourselves: “can I control this?” whatever THIS is.

If the answer is “no”, then surrendering our efforts to control clearly makes the most sense. If we’re unwilling to surrender, we are choosing an experience of unmanageability.

We are powerless when the driving force in our life is beyond our control. Our addic- tion certainly qualifies as such an uncontrollable, driving force. We cannot moderate or control our drug use or other compulsive behaviors, even when they are causing us to lose the things that matter most to us. We cannot stop, even when to continue will surely result in irreparable physical damage. We find ourselves doing things that we would never do if it weren't for our addiction, things that make us shudder with shame when we think of them. We may even decide that we don't want to use, that we aren't going to use, and realize we are simply unable to stop when the opportunity presents itself.

We may have tried to abstain from drug use or other compulsive behaviors-perhaps with some success for a period of time without a program, only to find that our un- treated addiction eventually takes us right back to where we were before. In order to

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