

25 Signs of REAL Recovery

1. Respects other's boundaries even if they don't agree with them.
2. Accepts responsibility for actions by doing what they say they are going to do and making it right if actions don't match up with their words. The goal is to have their words and actions match.
3. Apologizes when making a mistake or offending someone.
4. Doesn't blame anyone else or become defensive; the addict has learned to accept responsibility and refrain from attacking others when feeling vulnerable and weak.
5. Is able to identify and share feelings (beyond just feeling mad, sad, or glad) by digging deeper into themselves to find out what is really inside and what makes them tick. He or she can then share what is inside themselves with others.
6. Is open and doesn't try to hide anything. All phone, social media, bank accounts, etc. are available for loved ones to see. There should be no secret accounts of any kind.
7. Can negotiate difficult situations and not take things personally. He or she has learned how to handle difficult situations in a healthy way and to listen to others point of view and understand them before solving the problem.
8. Is open to learning non-sexual intimacy and has learned how to connect with other people in an emotional way that is non-sexual.
9. Doesn't get angry when his partner are not in the mood for sexual intimacy.
10. Has a community of support
11. Helps with household needs.
12. For addiction to change, one can't simply go from "addiction" to "non-addiction" overnight. He must atone to truly change. This means that his life must be fully dedicated to repairing the grievous damage that he has caused to others, but especially his partner and children.
13. Admit fully his behavior. Denial and minimizing need to stop, including discrediting the partner's memory of what happened. He can't change if he is continuing to cover up, to others or himself, important parts of what he has done.
14. Acknowledge the wrong, unconditionally. He needs to identify the justifications he has tended to use, including the various ways that he may have blamed his partner, and to talk in detail about why his behaviors were unacceptable without slipping back into defending them.

15. Acknowledge that his behavior was a choice, not a loss of control. For example, he needs to recognize that there is a moment during each incident at which he gives himself permission to act out and that he chooses how far to let himself go.
16. Recognize the effect his actions had had on his partner and children, and show empathy for those. He needs to talk in detail about the short - and long-term impact his behaviors had had, including fear, loss of trust, anger . . . And he needs to do this without reverting to feeling sorry for himself or talking about how hard the experience has been for him.
17. Identify in detail his patterns of behaviors and entitled attitudes. He needs to speak in detail about the day-to-day tactics he has used. Equally important, he must be able to identify his underlying beliefs and values that have driven those behaviors, such as considering himself entitled to sexual behaviors, looking down on his partner as inferior, or believing that men aren't responsible for their actions.
18. Develop healthy behaviors and attitudes to replace the sexual behavior he's stopping. Examples will look like, improving how well he listens to his partner during conflicts and at other times. He has to demonstrate that he has come to accept that the partner has rights and needs that are equal to his.
19. Make amends for the damage he has done. He has to develop a sense that he has a debt to his partner and to children as a result of his behaviors. He can start to make up somewhat for his actions by being consistently kind and supportive, putting his own needs on the back burner for a couple of years, talking with people who he has misled in regard to the behaviors, and other steps related to cleaning up the emotional messes that his behaviors have caused.
20. Humility may be a sign of real recovery. A willingness to humble themselves and submit to the process (of living amends), and willing to acknowledge the trauma they have caused and get out of the victim mentality where they act like they can't do anything right. Finding gratitude for the opportunity to atone and begin attempting to repair the damage they have created. Humility can be very easy to fake. Do your words and actions align. Ask your partner.
21. Respect for all women is a promising sign of true recovery. Pornography exploits women. When men completely stop using pornography for a substantial period of time, without any slips, out of true respect for women, it's a sign that attitudes and behaviors are becoming healthy.
22. Commit to not repeating his behaviors and honor that commitment. He should not place any conditions on his improvement. If he does backslide, he cannot justify his behaviors as if a good period earned him chips to spend on occasional slips.
23. Accept that there are no double standards in the relationship.

24. Accept that overcoming addiction is likely to be a life-long process. He at no time can claim that his work is done or complain that he is sick of hearing about his behavior and that "it's time to get past all that." He needs to come to terms with the fact that he will probably need to be working on his issues for good and that his partner may feel the effects of what he has done for many years.
25. Be willing to be accountable for his actions, both past, and future. His attitude that he is above reproach has to be replaced with a willingness to accept feedback and criticism, to be honest about any backsliding, and to be answerable for what he does and how it affects his partner and children.

A man in real recovery believes this: My wife is a woman of infinite worth. Because of this, she deserves my best efforts. She deserves a husband who only has eyes for her. She deserves a husband who respects her and all women. He takes active steps to protect her and their family, not just passively going with the flow. She deserves a husband who reminds her that she is not to blame for his past or present choices. She deserves a husband who actively opposes visual and mental abuse in all forms, viewing it as the enemy of true intimacy.

A stylized signature in light gray. The first part is a large, fluid cursive 'K' that extends downwards and to the left. The second part is the name 'KRIS CRISTIANO' in a clean, uppercase, sans-serif font, positioned horizontally across the middle of the signature's stroke.