

What is the point of doing more units?

Dear Member,

I have been thinking long and hard on when it was the right time to move on to Stage 2 - Our Temple.

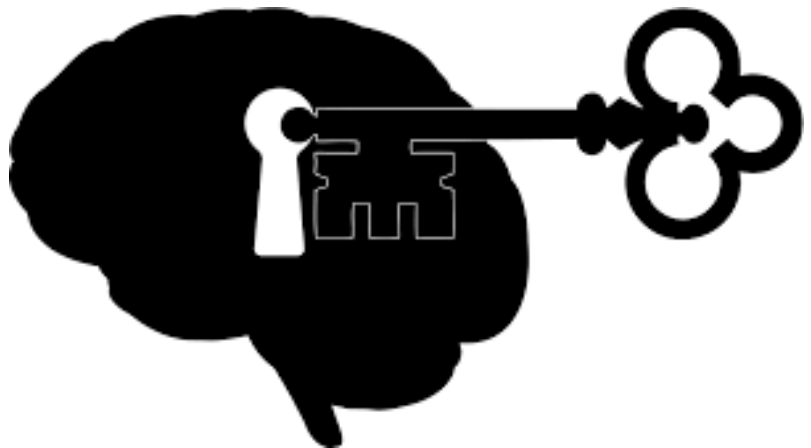
In truth, there is no correct answer but I feel it is important that some of you start to understand you have a great deal more work to do. This is a '*self-help*' unit and by its nature relies on personal integrity and determination. You must *want* to succeed or all that will happen is you will get to the end of the units - fall into sin - then declare it doesn't work for you! I know, because I have made that statement many times in the past.

If by working through Stage 1 you have found that your sinning through impurity has dramatically reduced or stopped, then well done. This does not mean you are cured but it does show you have the power to control these sinful urges. It shows that you have a choice - use it well. That does not mean you should stop with the fellowship and get on with your life. Now you can use your new found strength of will to help others by providing support and advice. More of that in Stage 3...

The majority of us, however, will probably be close to giving up. We will have decided that this approach is not working or not suited to our circumstances / situation. Although we have enjoyed the chats online, the supportive texts and the *sometimes* amusing articles we will have already decided to give in. And perhaps, for some, this is the correct decision - this fellowship will not be the answer to everyone. If this is where you are sitting right now then I urge you to reconsider - help us to know why it is not working for you and help make it an effective course for everyone.

If you have decided to stick with the program and the Fellowship then I would hope you are looking forward to the next stage of your defence against sexual addiction. This stage is 'inward looking' and concentrates on your personal traits, characteristics and history.

This is when you will definitely require the support of a spiritual director, a mentor, peer support AND be ready to recognise you may need a trained councillor.



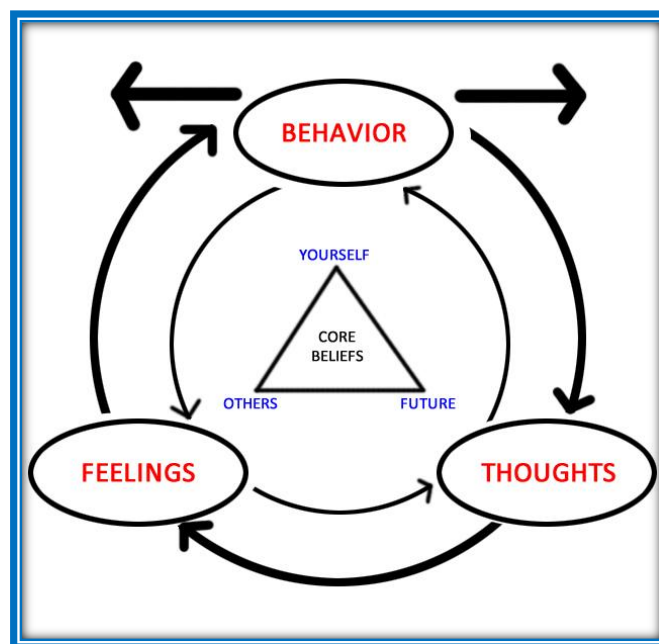
I will freely admit that my addiction resulted from a very difficult childhood and required the help of a qualified analyst working alongside my priest and peer support group. Without that qualified support I would have struggled to recognise the level of my self-deceptions and the depth of my selfishness to others. It wasn't until I had received that help that I could make progress in the other areas of my recovery. You must be willing to accept this could be the case for you. It is not a sign of weakness.

Men of Hope cannot provide this level of trained support and will signpost you to seek medical help if necessary. Some of the exercises we use however, have originated from established Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (C.B.T.) courses. Father Nicholas can provide specific details upon request.

To move on you must have completed stage 1 properly and demonstrate:

- You have engaged in a daily scheduled *prayer routine*
- You have identified and managed your *vulnerable* times with meticulous daily reviews
- You have regularly *engaged* in online chats / email / text communication
- You are contributing to the health of the Fellowship through *spiritual donations*
- You are *helping others* by supporting the Forum articles with 'comments / replies'
- You recognise that the *cross you bear is ongoing* and must always be fought
- You acknowledge that sin is not the real failure - *despair is*
- You *trust others* in the Fellowship with your 'secrets' and have found humility
- You understand that *isolation and boredom* is your enemy
- You realise that your addiction *affects* your family too - it is destructive

If you have not yet achieved all of the above then I would recommend you wait until you have. There is no hurry to complete any of the units - you are not being compared to anyone else. Moving onto the next unit, if you are not ready, may present a risk to recovery. It requires a high degree of honesty and soul searching and will necessitate you revisiting , in detail, all aspects of your youth, teen and adult years. To do this effectively you must already be fully engaged with the fellowship and its principles.



Your spiritual director must be supportive about you taking this next step...

To complete this unit:

1. Have discussed it with the Fellowship and had a mentor assigned
2. Be ready to make a fearless inventory of your personal life