



From the Heart

Introduction – Often therapy is focused on the head and reexamining thinking, which is very important in the self-improvement process. However, quite often before someone can get to work on what's in their head it can be important to work on the **heart** as well.

What is meant by “heart” in this instance? We are not talking about the physical heart which pumps blood throughout the body, (although that is extremely important to take care of too). Rather, for this exercise, we will focus on the “proverbial” heart which is an important part of all of us. This figurative “heart” is where our **values, desires, and motivations** come from within each one of us.

To break it down further consider the three aspects of the proverbial heart:

- 1 – **Our Values** – Who and what is **important and meaningful** to us personally?
- 2 – **Our Desires** – What do we want? (Not just what we say we want, **what do we really want?**)
- 3 – **Our Motivation** – What inside of us drives our behavior and guides our personal decisions?

(When you think about it, you can see that these three areas are all closely interrelated)

Group Discussion – “From the Heart”

Directions: This exercise may be more challenging for some people than others. Some individuals are more comfortable with speaking honestly “from the heart” and others may still need practice. That’s okay so whatever the situation may be, everyone should try their best to answer the following discussion points from the heart:

Breaking Down Values, Desires and Motivation as Related to Substance Use

Part 1 – Substance Use and Values

1A - As honestly and openly as you can, discuss how substance use impacted these areas listed below. (If you are not using any substances problematically now, look back to when you were using)

Values – How did substance use impact your relationship with areas of life that were important to you?

To help, here are some common values, however the group is not limited to just using this list.

- **Family, Children**
- **Relationships** (Friends and Romantic)
- **Money**
- **Education/Work/Career**
- **Interests/Hobbies**
- **Health** (Physical and Mental)



- **Beliefs and Principles** (“Rules of life that guide you as important and things you find meaningful)
Some examples in this area may be things like:
 - **Loyalty**
 - **Honesty**
 - **Trust**
 - **Integrity**
 - **Peace**
 - **Other?** – How did substance use impact other important life areas and beliefs?

1B - Turning it Around Today

Now that you are working on self-improvement and positive change today: How have your values changed? What’s better today when it comes to your substance use and your values? (Or, if you are new at this, what are you working on improving today?)

Part 2 – Substance Use and Desires

2A – Discuss the following questions about substance use and desires:

- When you were using, what were some of the “**wants**” and **desires** that guided your life?
- How did these desires impact your **behaviors and your decision making**?
- How did your desires impact your **personality** at that time?

2B – Turning it Around Today

Now that you are making positive changes today, how have your desires changed?

Change takes time, so some negative desires can linger even when we want to change. What desires from the past that you are you still working on changing?

Finally, what are some positive things you desire and want for yourself and your loved ones today?



Part 3 – Motivation: Then and Now

3A “Then” - What motivated you on a day-to-day basis before you started working on making changes related to substance use and other life areas?

3B – “Now” – Turning it Around Today

What motivates you today? (What keeps you moving forward and upward in a positive direction in life?)

Take Home Points:

What are three areas of focus that came up during this discussion that you will take with you?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

