

Barriers to Belief Journal

Sometimes [recovery] comes harder to those who have lost or rejected faith than to those who never had any faith at all, for they think they have tried faith and found it wanting. They have tried the way of faith and the way of no faith. Since both ways have proved bitterly disappointing, they have concluded there is no place whatever for them to go. The roadblocks of indifference, fancied self-prejudice, and defiance often prove more solid and formidable for these people than any erected by the unconvinced agnostic or even the militant atheist.

—*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 28

Consider the five reasons for weakened faith (indifference, self-sufficiency, prejudice against religion, defiance, and scrupulosity) and describe how you relate to each. What patterns and actions in your life help overcome each obstacle?

Indifference

Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God's voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades.

—St. Maximilian Kolbe

How I relate:

Patterns and actions that help overcome:

Self-Sufficiency

If you are discouraged it is a sign of pride because it shows you trust in your own power. Your self-sufficiency, your selfishness, and your intellectual pride will inhibit his coming to live in your heart because God cannot fill what is already full.

—St. Teresa of Calcutta

How I relate:

Patterns and actions that help overcome:

Prejudice against Religion

We used to amuse ourselves by cynically dissecting spiritual beliefs and practices when we might have observed that many spiritually-minded persons of all races, colors, and creeds were demonstrating a degree of stability, happiness and usefulness which we should have sought ourselves.

—*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 49

How I relate:

Patterns and actions that help overcome:

Defiance

At no time had we asked what God's will was for us; instead, we had been telling him what it ought to be. No man, we saw, could believe in God and defy him, too. Belief meant reliance, not defiance.

—*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 31

How I relate:

Patterns and actions that help overcome:

Scrupulosity

He believes he is devout. His religious observance is scrupulous. He's sure he still believes in God, but suspects that God doesn't believe in him. He takes pledges and more pledges. Following each, he not only drinks again, but acts worse than the last time. Valiantly he tries to fight alcohol, imploring God's help, but the help doesn't come.

—*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 32

How I relate:

Patterns and actions that help overcome:
