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# Denial Checklist

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### Brief Denial Questionnaire:

What denial patterns do you use? (check as many as needed)

1. Avoidance: "I'll talk about anything but my real problems!"
2. Absolute Denial: "No Not Me, I Don't Have Problems!"
3. Minimizing: "My Problems Aren't That Bad!"
4. Rationalizing: "If I Can Find Good Enough Reasons For My Problems, I Won't Have To Deal With Them!"
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12. **Democratic Disease State:** "I Have The Right To Destroy Myself & No One Has The Right To Stop Me!"  
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## Denial Pattern Checklist

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Read the list of common denial pattern below and check any that apply to you.

**Denial Pattern #1. Avoidance:** *I Say To Myself: "I'll talk about anything but my real problems!"* Somewhere deep inside of me I am afraid that I might have a problem with alcohol or drugs that is hurting me and those that I care about. But when I don't think or talk about it I feel OK. So I think about other things and try to keep people from prying into my life where they don't belong. My drinking and drugging is private and no one has a right to know anything about it. If someone asks about it, I change the subject and start talking about other things that have nothing to do with my drinking and drugging. If nothing else works, I'll start an uproar by creating a bad crisis and making sure that they get sucked into it. If all else fails I'll play dumb and pretend that I don't know what they're talking about.  
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**Denial Pattern #2. Absolute Denial:** *I Say To Myself: "No, not me! I don't have a problem!"* When others try to corner me, I tell "the big lie." I say that I don't have a problem with alcohol or drugs. No! Not me! Absolutely not! I don't drink too much! I don't use drugs!; I'm not addicted! I never get sick or have problems because of drinking or drugging. I am so good at convincing other people that there is nothing wrong that sometimes I actually start believing it myself. When they believe my story a part of me feels really good because I beat them. Another small part of me feels disappointed. There is a small part that wants others to know what is really happening. There is small scared part inside of me that wants help.  
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**Denial Pattern #3: Minimizing:** *I Say To Myself: "My problems aren't that bad!"* Sometimes my alcohol and drug problems get so bad that I can't convince myself or others that I don't have a problem. When this happens I minimize. I make the problems seem smaller than they really are. Yes, I had a small problem with my drinking and drugging. But it only happened that once. It will never happen again. Besides, the problem just wasn't as bad as people think it is.  
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**Denial Pattern #4. Rationalizing:** I Say To Myself: "If I can find good enough reasons for my problems, I won't have to deal with them!" I try to explain away my alcohol and drug problems by making up good explanations for why I drink and what's "really" causing my problems. Sometimes I'll pretend to know a lot about alcoholism and addiction so other people will think that I know too much have a problem. The truth is that I rarely if ever apply what I know to myself or to my own problems.

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**Denial Pattern #5. Blaming:** I Say To Myself: "If I can prove that my problems are not my fault, I won't have to deal with them!" When the problems gets so bad that I can't deny it, I find a scapegoat. I tell everyone that its not my fault that I have these problems with alcohol and drugs. It's somebody else's fault. I only abuse alcohol and drugs because of my partner. If you were with a person like this, you'd abuse alcohol and drug too! If you had a job or a boss like mine, you'd drink and drug as much as I do. It seems that as long as I can blame someone else, I can keep drinking and drugging until that person changes. I don't have to be responsible for stopping.

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**Denial Pattern #6. Comparing:** I Say To Myself: "Showing that others are worse than me, proves that I don't have serious problems!" I start to focus on other people instead of myself. I find others who have more serious alcohol and drug problems than I do and compare myself to them. I tell myself that I can't be addicted because I'm not as bad as they are. I know what an addict is! An addict is someone who drinks and drugs a lot more than I do! An addict is someone who has a lot more alcohol and drug-related problems than I do. An addict is someone who is not like me! I tell myself that I can't be addicted because there are other people who have worse problems with alcohol and drugs than I do.

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**Denial Pattern #7: Compliance:** I Say To Myself: "I'll pretend to do what you want, if you'll leave me alone!" I start going through the motions of getting help. I do what I'm told, no more and no less. I become compliant and promise to do things just to get people off of my back. I find excuses for not following through. When I get caught, I tell people that I did the best that I could. I blame them for not giving me enough help. I tell people how sorry I am. I ask for another chance, make another half hearted commitment, and the cycle of compliance tarts all over again.

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**Denial Pattern #8: Manipulating:** I Say To Myself: "I'll only admit that I have problems, if you agree to solve them for me!" When I my alcohol and drug problems box me into a corner, I start to manipulate. I try to use the people who want to help me. I try to get them to handle all of my problems and then get them to leave me alone so I can keep drinking and drugging. I'll let them help me, but only if they do it for me. I want a quick effortless fix. If I they can't fix me, I blame them for my failure and use them as an excuse to keep drinking and drugging. I won't let anyone make me do anything that I don't want to do. If they try, I'll get drunk at them, blame them, and make them feel guilty.

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**Denial Pattern #9. Flight into Health:** I Say To Myself: "Feeling better means that I'm cured!" I manage to stay clean and sober for a while, and things start to get a little bit better. Instead of getting motivated to do more, I convince myself that I'm cured and don't need to do anything. I tell myself that I may have had a drinking and drug problem, but I got into

recovery and put it behind me.

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**Denial Pattern #10: Recovery By Fear:** I Say To Myself: "Being scared of my problems will make them go away!" I began to realize that alcohol and other drugs can destroy my life, hurt those that I love, and eventually kill me. The threat is so real that I convince myself that I can't ever use alcohol or drugs again. I start to believe that this fear of destroying my life and killing myself will scare me into permanent sobriety. Since I now know how awful my life will be if I continue to drink and drug, I just won't drink or drug anymore. If I just stop everything will be fine. Since everything will be fine, I won't need treatment or a recovery program. I'll just quite.

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**Denial Pattern #11: Strategic Hopelessness:** I Say To Myself: "Since nothing works, I don't have to try" I start to feel that I'm hopeless. It seems like I've done it all and nothing works. I don't believe that I can change and big part of me just doesn't want to try anymore. It seems easier just to give up. When people try to help me, I brush them off by telling them that I'm hopeless and will never recover. When people do try to help me, I give them a hard time and make it impossible for them to help me. I don't understand why people want to help me. It would be easier if they just let me keep drinking and drugging. [<Return To TOC>](#)

**Denial Pattern #12. The Democratic Disease State:** I Say To Myself: "I have the right to destroy myself and no one has the right to stop me!" I convince myself that I have a right to continue to use alcohol and drugs even if it kills me. Yes, I'm addicted. Yes I'm destroying my life. Yes, I'm hurting those that I love. Yes I'm a burden to society. But so what? I have the right to drink and drug myself to death. No one has the right to make me stop. Since my addiction is killing me anyway, I might as well convince myself that I'm dying because I want to.

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## Personalizing The Denial Patterns

We can become better at recognizing and managing our own denial if we personalize the denial patterns we selected. This is done by writing a new title and description for each denial pattern we selected in our own words.

Here are some examples of personalized denial patterns.

1. (Avoidance) **Skating Off The Walls:** I know I'm using denial when I refuse to directly answer a question and keep trying to change the subject.
2. (Absolute Denial) **Saying It Isn't So:** I know I'm using denial when I tell people that I don't have a problem even though I know deep inside that I do.
3. (Minimizing) **Saying It Isn't That Bad:** I know I'm using denial when I admit that I have a problem, but try to tell people that it isn't as bad as they think it is.
4. (Rationalizing) **Giving Good Reasons:** I know I'm using denial when I try to convince people that there are good reasons for me to have the problem and that because there are good reasons I shouldn't be responsible for having to deal with it.