

## THE COMPULSIVE GAMBLER SPEAKS TO HIS FAMILY

I am a Compulsive Gambler. I need your help.

**DON'T** lecture, blame or scold me. You wouldn't treat me that way for having leukemia or diabetes. Compulsive gambling is a disease, too.

**DON'T** let me provoke your anger. If you attack me verbally or physically, you will only confirm my already bad opinion of myself.

**DON'T** let your love and anxiety for me lead you into doing what I ought to do for myself. If you assume my responsibilities, you make my failure to assume them permanent. My sense of guilt will increase and you will feel resentful.

**DON'T** accept my promises. I'll promise anything to get off the hook, but the nature of my illness prevents me from keeping my promises, even though I mean them at the time.

**DON'T** make empty threats. Once you have made a decision, stick to it.

**DON'T** believe everything I tell you - it may be a lie. Denial of reality is a symptom of my illness. Moreover, I'm likely to lose respect for those I can fool too easily.

**DON'T** let me take advantage of you or exploit you in any way. Love cannot exist for long without the dimension of justice.

**DON'T** cover up for me or try in any way to spare me the consequences of my illness.

**DON'T** lie for me, pay my bills, or meet my obligations. It may avert or reduce the very crisis that would prompt me to seek help. I can continue to deny that I have a gambling problem as long as you provide an escape from the consequences of my gambling.

Above all, **DO** learn all you can about compulsive gambling and your role in relation to me. Attend Gam-Anon meetings regularly, read the literature and keep in touch with Gam-Anon members. They're the people who can help you see the whole situation clearly.

I love you -Your Compulsive Gambler