

Gamblers who fall in love with the excitement and “action” of gambling may, at first, be quite successful. They have fantasies of further success and of gambling becoming their personal path to wealth and power. Those who are headed for problems think they are smarter than the average bettor. They know that gambling is going to work for them because they, unlike less clever people, really understand how to beat the system.

As they become more involved in gambling, they derive an increasing portion of their self-esteem from seeing themselves as smart or lucky. Because of this, two things happen when they do incur the inevitable losses. First, they suffer monetary loss. Second, and often more important, they suffer a deflated ego.

To salvage their self-esteem, they rationalize losses by blaming other people, such as the jockey or the pitcher, or by blaming “bad luck” in cards, craps or lotteries. Or they reflect on their handicapping abilities and tell themselves they will not make the same “mistake” the next time.

The monetary loss is another matter, however, and this is dealt with differently. In order to recoup the loss, many gamblers “chase.” That is, they continue their betting and increase the amount of their bets in order to get even. Instead of saying, “It’s lost,” the chaser says, “I’ll get even tomorrow.” Chasing losses leads the gambler to gamble with more than he or she can afford to lose, and often to borrowing money in an effort to get even.

Many gamblers may chase for short periods, until they learn from bitter experience that this is counterproductive. The long-term preoccupation with chasing losses is the defining characteristic of the pathological gambler.

Chasing seems logical to many gamblers, as it means giving oneself a chance to get even.

If a gambler stops chasing, both money and self-esteem are lost. If the gambler continues chasing and wins, both can be regained. There is, therefore, the impetus to borrow in order to recoup losses. When continued gambling leads to still more losses, the compulsive gambler continues to borrow. The more money borrowed, the greater the commitment to more gambling as the only possible means of gaining enough money to pay off the debt.

This spiraling commitment to increased gambling often depletes family resources. Many compulsive gamblers cash in joint savings bonds, empty checking accounts, pawn joint property, and take out loans without the spouse’s knowledge. In order to preserve or regain respectability in <https://sinibet88.com> the eyes of parents, spouse and others — and because their paychecks are insufficient — desperate gamblers see more gambling as the only alternative.

Fearing loss of respectability, the gambler hides loans. When gamblers default on the loans, fear that the bank or loan company will tell their spouse may drive them to more gambling as a possible quick way out. The behavior that caused the problem is increasingly seen by the gambler as the only solution, as there is no other way to get the needed money quickly.

As loans come due and pressures to pay become more insistent, sometimes involving threats of exposure or of physical harm from loan sharks or bookies, desperate gamblers weigh the risks of “borrowing” (embezzling) money from their employer, making fraudulent loan applications or insurance claims, or stealing the money.

Once they succumb to this temptation, the threshold to an even greater commitment to gambling has been crossed. This is especially true if they obtain money by loan fraud or embezzlement. These kinds of crimes enable gamblers to rationalize that they are not really criminals. The money is only “borrowed” so no one is being hurt. But there is constant pressure to repay the money, and counting on a big gambling win is seen as the only hope for doing so. This extends the spiral of involvement from more gambling to more and more illegal activities — until the gambler is caught, seeks professional help, or really does hit the big win.

Falling in love with the “action” and then chasing losses is the starting point for most men who become

compulsive gamblers, but many women take a different route. While women also enjoy the “action” and chase losses, their initial motivation is often escape — escape from memories of unhappy childhood or parental abuse, escape from troubled husbands, and escape from loneliness. Once they became hooked on gambling, however, women follow the same spiral of increasing involvement as men, often leading to criminal activity.