





**ADDICTION
LOOKS LIKE
ISOLATION**

CHOOSING SUBSTANCES OR BEHAVIORS OVER RELATING WITH OTHER PEOPLE MEANS SPENDING TIME ALONE. TIME SPENT ALONE, OR TIME SPENT WITH OTHERS WHERE THE PRIMARY MOTIVE IS AN ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOR, LEAVES A PERSON FEELING DISCONNECTED AND EMPTY.

DO YOU (OR DOES THE ONE YOU LOVE) ISOLATE? WHY?

DO YOU FEEL DISCONNECTED OR EMPTY? SOMETHING ELSE?



ADDICTION IS ABOUT COPING NOT OVERCOMING

COPING IS THE 'MOOD ALTERING' ASPECT OF ADDICTION. WHAT COPING LOOKS LIKE IS GETTING THROUGH THE DAY, AND THE NEXT DAY, AND THE NEXT. COPING IS ABOUT GETTING THROUGH THINGS AND NEVER OVERCOMING THEM. THE MOOD MAY CHANGE BUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT PRODUCED THE MOOD HAVE NOT.

ARE THERE RELATIONSHIP-BASED SITUATIONS IN YOUR LIFE THAT REMAIN UNCHANGED AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS OR YEARS?

WHAT DO YOU DO TO COPE?



ADDICTION WARPS YOUR THINKING

LIKE THE CURVED MIRRORS AT THE CARNIVAL, WHAT ADDICTS SEE IS A WARPED DISTORTION OF REALITY. FOR EXAMPLE, ADDICTS REALLY BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE BETTER AT TAKING CARE OF THEMSELVES WITHOUT HELP FROM OTHERS. THEY OFTEN JUSTIFY MISTRUST OF OTHERS AND WILL FIGHT FOR PATTERNS OF SELF-RELIANCE.

ADDICTION IS THE ART OF SELF-DELUSION. THIS TYPE OF THINKING IS LIKE LIVING LIFE IGNORANT TO THE FACT THAT YOU ARE NAVIGATING ON A JOURNEY WITH A BROKEN COMPASS.

TRUE NORTH MIGHT BE TRUE SOUTHWEST, WITH DISASTROUS RESULTS.

DO YOU RESIST TRUSTING OTHERS?

DO OTHERS IN YOUR LIFE EVER SUGGEST YOU MAY HAVE A PROBLEM?



HOW DO YOU DISTINGUISH YOUR THINKING FROM YOUR BRAIN? WELL, THE BRAIN IS THE MUSHY PHYSICAL ORGAN BETWEEN YOUR EARS. YOUR THINKING IS WHAT HAPPENS UP THERE THAT YOU'RE ACTUALLY AWARE OF. WHEN WE USE SUBSTANCES OR BEHAVIORS TO FEEL BETTER WHAT WE ARE DOING IS FINDING WAYS TO RELEASE THE DESIRED CHEMICALS IN OUR BRAIN. CONSIDER THE PHRASE "ADRENALINE JUNKIE". AN ADRENALINE JUNKIE IS DOING SOMETHING TO FEEL THAT AMAZING HIGH WE FEEL WHEN ADRENALINE FLOODS OUR BRAIN. AND, IF TRULY A JUNKIE, THEY ARE GENERALLY DOING THIS REPEATEDLY. THE PORN USER IS USING A DIFFERENT METHOD, PORNOGRAPHY AND MASTURBATION, TO GET A LOAD OF DOPAMINE AND A HANDFUL OF OTHER NEURO CHEMICALS TO CREATE A VARIETY OF PLEASANT FEELINGS RANGING FROM EXCITEMENT TO PLEASURE

**ADDICTION
MESSES
WITH YOUR
BRAIN**

WHAT DO YOU DO MORE OF THAN YOU USED TO DO TO FIND THE SAME RELIEF OR HIGH?

WHAT DO YOU DO REPEATEDLY TO FEEL DIFFERENTLY?



THE ADDICT IS LOOKING FOR A WAY TO FEEL DIFFERENT. THEY MAY HAVE ONE OR TWO PRIMARY BEHAVIORS BUT THERE ARE OFTEN MORE. SOMETHING HELPFUL TO CONSIDER IN UNDERSTANDING THIS IS THAT THERE ARE 3 GENERAL DRUG TYPES THAT ARE ABUSED BECAUSE THEY ARE EFFECTIVE AT CHANGING HOW WE FEEL. THEY ARE: STIMULANTS, HALLUCINOGENS, AND DEPRESSANTS. STIMULANT DRUGS INCREASE FEELINGS OF EXCITEMENT AND ENERGY. HALLUCINOGENS ALTER WHAT YOUR THINK IS REAL OR REALLY HAPPENING IN A GIVEN MOMENT. DEPRESSANTS DULL PAIN OR MAKE YOU FEEL CALM

ADDICTION LOOKS LIKE USING MULTIPLE SUBSTANCES OR BEHAVIORS TO COPE

PATRICK CARNES, PHD, A THOUGHT LEADER IN THE FIELD OF ADDICTION SCIENCE, OBSERVED THAT IN ADDITION TO SPECIFIC DRUGS LIKE ALCOHOL, MARIJUANA, COCAINE, METHAMPHETAMINE, NICOTINE, HEROIN, PRESCRIPTION PAIN KILLERS, CAFFEINE, ETC., THERE ARE A NUMBER OF BEHAVIORS THAT CAN BE UTILIZED TO FEEL STIMULATED, DISCONNECTED, OR NUMBED OUT. THROUGH HIS RESEARCH HE PROPOSED THAT PROCESSES, FEELINGS, AND COMPULSIVE RELATIONSHIPS COULD BE EQUALLY ADDICTIVE.

PROCESSES HE DEFINED AS: WORKING, SEXUAL BEHAVIORS, USING PORNOGRAPHY, EXERCISING, PLAYING VIDEO GAMES, EATING, USING MONEY (SHOPPING, GAMBLING, RISKY INVESTING), AND INTERNET OR MEDIA USE. FEELINGS HE IDENTIFIED AS RAGE, FEAR, SELF-HATRED, INTENSITY, LOVE, ETC. COMPULSIVE RELATIONSHIPS, A MORE ELUSIVE CONCEPT TO GRASP, HE DESCRIBED AS CODEPENDENCY, RESCUING PEOPLE, BEING A HERO, STAYING IN UNHEALTHY OR ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS, ETC.

THIS GIVES THE ADDICT OPTIONS. AND GIVEN THESE OPTIONS, ADDICTS TYPICALLY ACCESS MULTIPLE SUBSTANCES OR BEHAVIORS TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED FEELING.

WHAT ALL ARE YOU ADDICTED TO?



ADDICTION IS ABOUT DEPENDENCE

UTILIZING MULTIPLE ADDICTIONS

ON A DAILY BASIS, OFTEN FOR MANY YEARS, RESULTS IN A BRAIN THAT HAS ADAPTED TO THE ALTERED REALITY. THIS ADAPTATION CREATES A DEPENDENCE ON THE SUBSTANCE OR BEHAVIOR. THUS, ADDICTION IS ABOUT DEPENDENCE.

SOMETIMES THIS "NEED" IS PHYSICAL AND THE BRAIN IS LITERALLY NOT FUNCTIONING WELL WITHOUT THE PROMPTED RELEASE OF THE NEURO CHEMICAL. E.G. THE COFFEE DRINKER THAT HASN'T HAD A CUP FOR 24 HOURS - HEADACHE! OTHER TIMES THE "NEED" IS MORE OF A FEELING OR THOUGHT PROCESS AND HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH A PHYSICAL PROCESS. THIS MAY BE THE CASE FOR A SMOKER WHO IS NO LONGER USING TOBACCO BUT EVERY 2 HOURS HAS AN OVERWHELMING DESIRE TO LEAVE THEIR DESK AT WORK AND NEEDS TO HAVE SOMETHING IN THEIR HANDS OR IN THEIR MOUTH (MANY SMOKERS MAY START EATING CELERY STICKS, CHEW GUM, ETC.) TO FEEL SATISFIED. AFTER APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEKS THEIR BRAIN IS NO LONGER PHYSICALLY IN NEED OF THE NICOTINE TO FEEL GOOD, BUT THE AGITATION AND FIDGETY ASPECTS OF THE ADDICTION CAN LAST FOR SEVERAL WEEKS OR MONTHS.

WHAT FORMS OF PHYSICAL DEPENDENCY DO YOU EXPERIENCE?

WHAT FORMS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DEPENDENCE DO YOU EXPERIENCE?



**ADDICTION
PRODUCES
SHAME**

BEHAVIORS THAT PRODUCE SHAME, E.G. STEALING, ARE NOT NECESSARILY ADDICTIVE. BUT ADDICTIVE BEHAVIORS ARE OFTEN SHAME PRODUCING. I HAVE RARELY MET THE MAN OR WOMAN WHO DIDN'T WISH TO HIDE THE EXTENT OF THEIR ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOR.

DO YOU HAVE BELIEFS ABOUT YOURSELF THAT YOU WISH NOBODY EVER KNEW?

WHAT IS THE MOST NEGATIVE THOUGH YOU CONSISTENTLY HAVE ABOUT YOURSELF?



ADDICTION IS A RELATIONSHIP PROBLEM

THE ABILITY TO DO RELATIONSHIP ENTAILS THE ABILITY TO KNOW YOUR EMOTIONS AND THOUGHTS, EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE THESE TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING, AND APPRECIATE A MOMENT WITH THAT PERSON AS THEY COMMUNICATE THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF YOU. SIMPLY, BEING WITH SOMEONE AND EXPERIENCING PEACE, VALIDATION, CONNECTION AND MORE. THAT IS RELATIONSHIP. THAT IS INTIMACY. ADDICTION IS A RELATIONSHIP PROBLEM BECAUSE WHAT WE HAVE DONE IS DETERMINED THAT RATHER THAN PRESSING INTO RELATIONSHIP WHEN NEEDING TO CHANGE HOW WE FEEL, WE SEEK SUBSTANCES OR BEHAVIORS. I LIKE TO JEST ABOUT INVITING "ANITA" INTO OUR LIVES. ANITA AS IN "I NEED A..." DRINK; ANITA PLAY SOME VIDEO GAMES TO UNWIND; ANITA LOOK AT PORNOGRAPHY BECAUSE IT'S TOO DIFFICULT TO JUST NOT GO THERE. ANITA THIS, ANITA THAT. INSTEAD OF WHAT WE NEED, WE OUGHT TO BE THINKING WHO-I-NITA? AS IN, WHO SHOULD I BE WITH RIGHT NOW? WHO SHOULD I BE SHARING MY GUILT AND SHAME WITH? WHO LISTENS REALLY WELL? WHO WILL HUG ME AND, THOUGH THEY CAN'T MAKE ANYTHING BETTER, MAKE EVERYTHING BETTER BY LISTENING AND VALIDATING MY EXPERIENCE?

DO YOU FIND YOURSELF SAYING "I NEED...."? WHAT DO YOU TYPICALLY NEED?

WHO WOULD BE A POSITIVE OR SAFE PERSON TO TURN TO WITH YOUR NEEDS?

