

FAMILIES

OF

WHAT THEY GET WRONG
& HOW TO GET IT RIGHT

ADDICTION

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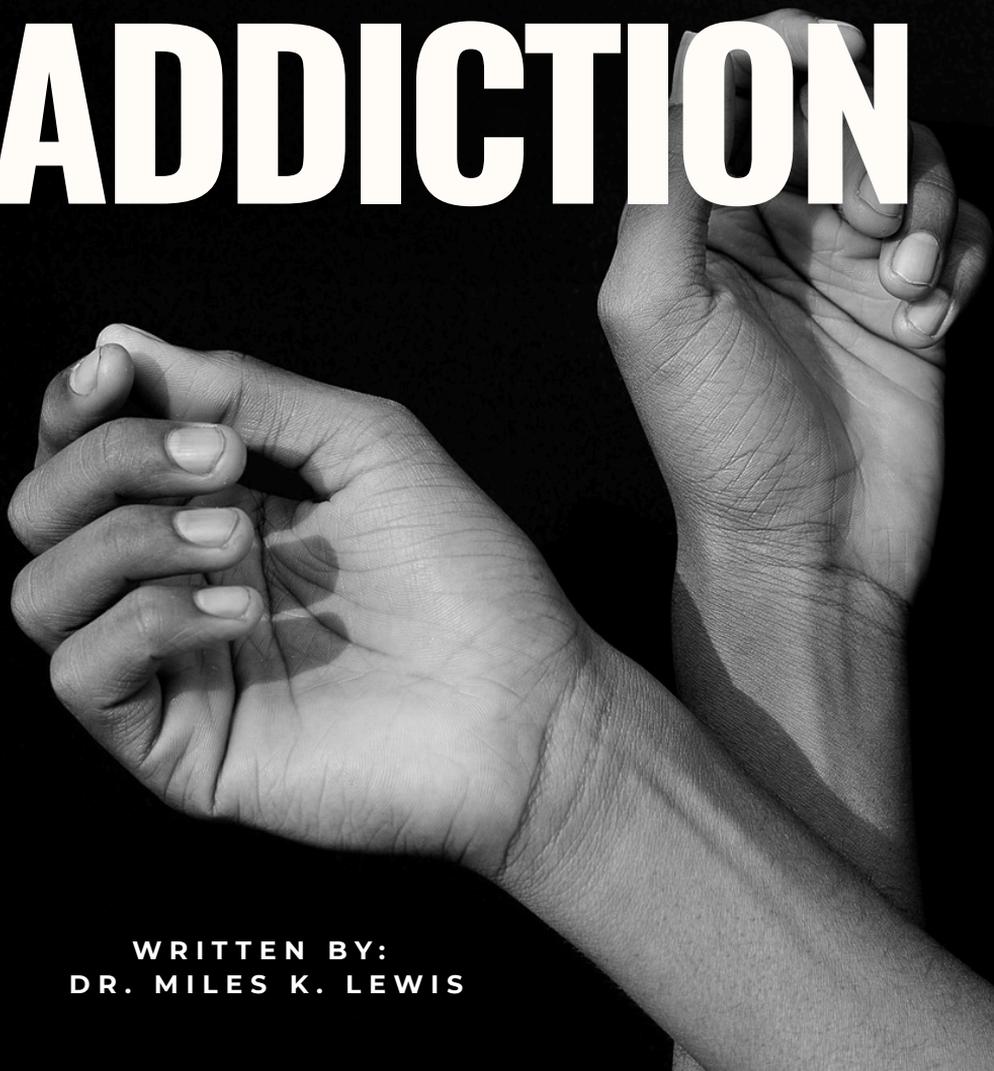




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INTRODUCTION

Hello Everyone

I'm very excited to share my decades of addiction-recovery expertise with you. You are getting real Solutions that will help you move your family towards healing and lasting recovery, even if your Addict is resistant.

My name is Miles K Lewis. 20 years ago, my wife and I founded an addiction program named Justin's Lighthouse Recovery focused on helping the whole family, not just the Addict.

FOR THE FIRST TIME we are making our wealth of knowledge and resources available through on-line education.

We have helped thousands of families-of-addiction, just like yours, to achieve lasting recovery (*even if the addict has been to multiple treatment programs*).

We understand the fear, chaos, and dysfunction that families experience when trying to save their addict/loved-one. The constant rescuing, the disappointment, believing the promises to change, only to be disappointed again.

This Guidebook will give you a deeper understanding of what is actually happening in Addiction and how to overcome it. It's easy for families to think "if the addict would just stop using, then we'll all be okay"... BUT, that's not how it works!

Families have a role to play, and today you will know what to do!

Warmly,

Miles K. Lewis, PhD

P.S. I've done away with the warm & fuzzy pictures you'll find in most E-books in order to give you as much information as possible. I want you to have life-changing knowledge you can use right now, instead of marketing photos.

There's so much information in this book, you may feel overwhelmed, at times, but that means I've done my job and I pray your family begins new strategies, today!

****You can always Google some pics of families in distress or images of hope, if it's important to you, but I'm guessing it's not!***

01

**HOW ADDICTION
TAKES THE WHOLE
FAMILY HOSTAGE**

01

Solving the Family Addiction Problem

It's not easy being a Family member of someone who struggles with drugs, alcohol, or any other serious compulsive behaviors.

I know the disease of Addiction, first-hand, because I've been a son to an Alcoholic-father and step-father, plus, a brother of an Addict. All 3 are dead because of this family-destroying disease. I have spent 50 years of my life in and around Addiction and have experienced it from every angle. Including the recovery side.

My journey also includes my own personal Addiction to pain pills many years ago. Since my own recovery, I have taken my professional training and personal addiction experiences on a mission to help other families overcome this painful process through Justin's Lighthouse Recovery program.

You will learn what drives the development of Addiction. How it begins long before the family member starts using or drinking, and how Trauma sets the wheels in motion which manifests into full blown Addiction, and even other compulsions.

This E-book contains a very condensed version of actual group materials I use every day in our intensive recovery program .

I don't speak to you from a position of theory. I describe real problems and offer real solutions. The same solutions that put our recovery program in the 90% success range for the past 20 years! (The nat'l avg is 12%).

Did you know that only 7% of medical schools teach anything about addiction? Might explain why clinical programs have such a low success rate. REAL solutions come from programs run by recovering addicts with behavioral expertise. people who've 'been there' and overcome this nasty thing we call Addiction.

WELCOME to the beginning of your healing journey!

1. Families Adapt to Survive

When addiction enters a household, the family instinctively shifts into survival mode. Families stop asking, “What do we need to be healthy?” and begin asking, “What do we need to get through today without a crisis?”

SURVIVAL MENTALITY RESHAPES

- **Communication:** Families avoid hard truths to prevent explosions.
- **Emotional expression:** Anger, fear, or sadness become dangerous or “too much.”
- **Daily structure:** Schedules revolve around the unpredictable behavior of the addicted person.
- **Energy and attention:** Most bandwidth goes toward preventing or responding to chaos.

These adaptations may reduce conflict in the short term, but they also train the family to tolerate dysfunction, silence their own needs, and disconnect from themselves.

2. Stress Becomes the Family’s Baseline

Addiction brings chronic uncertainty—Is today a good day or a disaster? Will we have a fire to put out? Will they be lying? Withdrawal? Rage? Tears? Relapse?

FAMILY MEMBERS MAY DEVELOP

- Hyper-vigilance
- Anxiety or depressive symptoms
- Difficulty relaxing
- Over-responsibility or people-pleasing
- A sense of walking on eggshells

***These reactions are normal
responses to abnormal behaviors***

FAMILY MEMBERS SURVIVING THE CHAOS

3. Roles Shift—Often Without Anyone Realizing

To stabilize the home, family members unconsciously take on predictable roles. These roles aren't chosen—they emerge from necessity.

COMMON PATTERNS INCLUDE

- **The Hero** – the overachiever unwittingly compensates for chaos
- **The Scapegoat** – Family member who absorbs blame and attention
- **The Lost Child** – quiet, invisible, self-contained
- **The Mascot** – using humor to relieve tension
- **The Caretaker/Enabler** – keeping the addicted person functional
- **The Addicted Person** – the identified patient

These roles are coping mechanisms, not flaws.

Eventually these traits outlive their usefulness. But, they follow every member of the family into adulthood, shaping relationships long after addiction or dysfunction is removed from the environment.

Siblings often feel overshadowed—either by the chaos of the addicted person or by parent's fear and hyper-focus on them. Resentment and guilt for feeling resentful are common among siblings.

**“ONCE OUR ADDICT GETS BETTER,
THEN, WE’LL ALL BE OKAY”...**

WRONG!! Addiction is a Family-wide disease

The Disease Thrives in Silence, Shame, and Secrecy

Addiction and secrecy are deeply intertwined. Families often keep the problem hidden because they fear judgment, misunderstanding, or, social consequences.

Making excuses for the Addicted person can become common place;

“John’ has been really busy, lately”

when family knows he’s disappeared again

Control and Enabling: Two Sides of the Same Coin

Family members typically respond to addiction in predictable ways:

- Trying to control the addicted person’s behavior (“If only”)
- *Fixing consequences*
- Over controlling
- *Minimizing problems*
- Financially or emotionally rescuing
- *Avoiding conflict*
- Doing things for the person they should be doing themselves
- *Anticipating the next crisis*

**“FAMILIES ADAPT OVER TIME-
RESCUING BECOMES THE NEW NORMAL”**

Understanding the underlying causes that leads to the chaos of Addiction is vital to solving these problems. Yes, addiction and alcoholism are genetic and hereditary. However, compulsive behaviors can be applied in many different ways, not only drugs and alcohol.

Any behaviors that become self-destructive have the potential to impact the whole family!

Even if you aren't dealing with a full blown addiction but your family member lives in cycles of self- destruction, which the family feels responsible to “fix”, or cleanup,

I have good news...

The underlying problems are exactly the same, which means the solutions are too!

PLEASE SPEND TIME IN HONEST SELF-REFLECTION

Before you can change anything, you must admit the dysfunction in order to implement new strategies.

**FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE A RIGHT
TO HEAL, ALSO.**

02

**MISTAKES
FAMILIES MAKE**

02

“CAN’T THEY SEE HOW THEY’RE DESTROYING THEIR LIFE?”

Recovery doesn’t happen the way most Families think it will

Distortions in the brain are severe. Whatever strategies that might help in a rational person simply don’t work in Addiction.

The Addict-Brain progressively adapts to a lower standard of living- It’s about survival for the Addict!

As long as they have a cell phone, car, rent, spending money, and the occasional rescuing by the family, they become comfortable on the bottom rung. It feels safe... Sounds very sick & it is!

THE ADDICT BRAIN IS NOT A NORMAL BRAIN

I know these standards seem far below the level in which you raised your addict but keep in mind, *we’re not dealing with a rational brain.* **WE ARE** dealing with a very sick and distorted brain. The usual strategies won’t work and they haven’t worked.

You must stop being afraid of their next outburst, or, threats of suicide if they don’t get what they want (rescued).

Time to turn the tables, which begins and ends with a deeper understanding of the “Addict Brain”

TIME FOR A NEW APPROACH

After years of Family's...

Rescuing	Pleading	Crying
Wanting to give up	Begging	Spending more money
Fixing	Cleaning up messes	Short periods of success
Helping	More periods of failure	Blaming

Be willing to learn what to identify isn't working and what to do differently

**NOTHING CHANGES IF
NOTHING CHANGES...**

7 MISTAKES FAMILIES MAKE

1. **Say** 'Yes' when they mean 'No'
2. **Say** *"This is the last time", then, rescue again*
3. **Believe** *the lies*
4. **Think** *"If only we can change their situation, then, they will be great"*
5. **Believe** *when the addict says "I really mean it this time, never again"*
6. **Believe** *"If we can catch up their bills then the addict won't have so much stress (and will succeed)*
7. **Absorb** *most of the consequences from the Addict's behavior (life, legal, financial, etc..)*

03

**THE REAL REASONS
BEHIND ADDICTION**

03

TRAUMA

The driving force behind Addiction

First, let me say that TRAUMA is not anyone's fault and thinking along those lines, - trying to figure out who's to blame, is not helpful, nor, is it accurate.

Trauma-Impacts are about interpretations, not reality!

A Bad Situation doesn't have to happen. The person only has to think a bad thing has happened. it's all about how we interpret our experience (*this goes for everybody*).

For example:

A sibling gets a cool birthday present and another sibling perceives this experience as "my parents love them more". Of course, this isn't what's happening but this begins to shape the child's perspective (I'm not enough). The child may display pouting or withdrawn behaviors but isn't able to respond to the intervention of the parents; "Honey, is everything okay"? the child replies; "Uh huh", and that ends it

However, it doesn't really end anything, it's the beginning of the development of 'survival-mode'. A life-long process of the individual believing they must prove their worth to the world, feeling shameful and angry when they don't get something they want. This dynamic is about control, or a perceived loss of control..

Trauma shapes Identity & Behavior

Trauma is rarely handled effectively in clinical treatment.

There's simply not enough time. Often times, an Addict will attend multiple treatments (*the avg. is 5 per Addict*), with no lasting change.

Unresolved trauma is the primary reason why Addicts go to treatment; Look better, sound better, have high hopes for the future, but then, seemingly out-of-nowhere, **RELAPSE!**

“I’m not good enough” Syndrome

Trauma, and responses to it, are stored in the memory. Decision making and behaviors become automatic. Stuck in default-mode. (*see Chapter 5 for “Shameful/Shameless”*)

- Nobody Understands me
- All or nothing thinking/
- Pouting
- Anger
- Impulsivity
- Compulsivity (*not just drugs*)

*It's not about what
actually happened...*
It's about what you *think* happened

The Addict Brain perceives experiences through the lens of Basic Emotional Needs. "The world is meeting my needs or it's not"

3 Basic Fears drive all Trauma-Impacts

These fears govern the Addict's perception of their experience. They may display Anger but they are merely covering up their fears. *Understanding how this works is a key to recovery.*

Fear of:

1. Not getting something they want / need
2. Losing something they thought you had
3. Getting caught for something they did / Being found-out

When the Addict perceives that their Basic Needs (*below*) are not met, or they are losing one, the experience is personalized and internalized (*see chapter 5*)

EXAMPLES OF BASIC NEEDS



Love	Belonging	Approval
Safety	Security	Compassion
Affection	Empathy	Identity

Trauma perceptions have a serious impact on

- Memory development
- Reasoning
- Stress responses
- Decision making
- Emotional Regulation

TRAUMA CAUSES IDENTITY CONFUSION

Addict's don't know who they are apart from their experience

1. Sense-of-self:

Seek validation through externals / need people & situations to be a certain way

- a. Avoid conflict
- b. Catering to others (*to avoid conflict*)
- c. People pleasing

2. Understanding of self

Based on experiences/ situations

- a. If Good experience = Feel good about self
- b. If Bad experience = Feel bad about self
- c. Constantly seeking a different experience (*impulsivity*)

3. Survival-Mode:

Getting through the next 15 seconds

- a. Minimal connection
- b. Hyper-aware & critical of others and situations/ Avoid self
- c. Lack understanding of personal responsibilities/
Follow-through
- d. History of self-sabotage
- e. Disrupt own routine over feelings
- d. Constantly seeking "just the right situation" (*or mood*)
- e. Chronic need for instant gratification
- f. Isolation

IT'S NOT NORMAL TO WANT
TO BE DRUNK OR HIGH...

One of the most common responses that Addicts give when addressing “trauma” is: ***“Oh no, Trauma doesn’t apply to me, I just can’t figure out why I keep drinking” (using).***

Getting honest about emotional pain is the key to real change and healing.

Often times, people are hesitant to consider Trauma in their own life for fear they will have to blame somebody else for it. This is why I’ve given you the true origins of trauma. If you will treat it as a perspective issue instead of a “*somebody else did me wrong*” issue, the entire family can begin to heal!

COMMON STRATEGIES FOR COVERING UP TRAUMA:

1. **Denial:** Pretend it doesn’t exist. “I’m fine”, “Nothing to see here”, “I don’t even think about that old stuff anymore”
2. **Lie/Minimize:** Pretend some behaviors weren’t really a big deal. “It’s not like I meant o hurt anyone”, or, “*other’s have done way worse than me*”.
3. **Resentments / Fears:** Hold in the pain, never talk about it / Angry at the world!

GETTING SOBER ISN'T ENOUGH...

Life-long problems don't go away just because you stop drinking or using DRUGS -

*Every Addict goes through periods of sobriety.
It doesn't mean that 'change' has occurred!*

Remove alcohol & drugs but still left with these Underlying symptoms:

- Extreme emotions
- Feel that other people's pain is your fault
- Replay pain over & over in your mind
- Stop enjoying life
- Think you are going crazy at times
- May see images of a painful event. long afterwards
- Feel you've done something wrong
- Feel you are defective
- believe you aren't good enough unless you are being perfect
- Feel un-safe, even though you are safe
- Trouble sleeping or concentrating
- Shut down emotionally
- Easily irritated
- Want to escape (drugs, phone scrolling, isolation, alcohol, etc...
- High Anxiety / Moody
- Feel disconnected
- Pretend everything is okay (*angry or sad inside*)
- Defiance- Act out (*aggressively or passively*)

COMMON TRAUMA THOUGHTS:

It's can be hard to get an Addict to accept help. Often times, Families hear...

- "I'll go to treatment as long as I can keep my phone"
- "I only want to do 2 weeks of treatment"
- "I just need to get a job"

This is about a *fear of losing control*. Anyone with unresolved emotional pain (*trauma*) feels safest when they feel in control... Of everything!

A high need for control keeps a person in a state of anxiety while constantly thinking about things they wish they could control; including, people, places, and, situations

Common statements of an Addict desperately hanging onto control

1. I don't need help, I just need to get back to work
2. I'm not even an Addict /Alcoholic
3. I can do it on my own... Just need my family to pay off my bills, get me an apartment, etc...
4. I wish everyone would get off my back
5. If only everybody else would just...
6. Nobody understands me
7. Everyone is against me

TRAUMA

The driving force behind addiction

Summary

Children view the world from the perspective of their basic needs. It doesn't matter what is actually happening, only what the child *feels* is happening.

Something as simple as falling short in a sport. Struggling to play an instrument or feeling like an outcast in school all play a role in the child's deep rooted sense of 'not being enough'. No amount of encouragement from the parents will change this.

This shameful perspective is engrained in some kids. The child believes the only way to "prove their worth" is to become perfect, thus, the beginning of the Shameful/Shameless dynamic. (*chapter 5*). This dynamic turns a child into an adult who lives in extremes, never truly feeling worthy which is countered with unrealistic expectations.

The child can even be an overachiever but still feel they aren't *enough*. This way of thinking becomes solidified by age 14.

REAL CAUSES that lead to the development of Addiction and all other compulsive behaviors

- Unresolved trauma (*emotional pain*)
- *Genetics*
- *Distorted interpretations of life's experiences*

(see final chapter for Solutions)

04

**WHY THE
ADDICT FAILS**

04

Automatic thinking dictates Automatic behavior

Bad behavior and distorted decision making are literally programmed in to the brain

Here's what I mean; Every Addict/Alcoholic follows a predictable pattern Their decision-making will always default into what feels safest, easiest, rewarding. This is why they do well with things they *want* to do, but not with things they *don't want* to do. or *need* to do.

Although the Addict's world seems chaotic and unpredictable, it's actually following a pre-programmed pattern (*since childhood*). **Families always recognize this pattern once they learn about it.**

What looks like bad behavior is really "default-mode" in the brain. It's so engrained in the thought-processes that the self-defeating behaviors are automatic.

Until new thinking is developed in Addict and the Family, the chaos-cycle will continue.

To affect real change we have to first understand what is actually happening. **The problem is in the brain.**

As the Addict & the Family learns and practices new behaviors, *regardless of how they feel*, new thinking slowly follows. This must become solidified over a period of time, NOT 30 days, or less!

Stop changing the situation- Start demanding change in the Addict

A more comfortable situation has never affected long-term change

After periods of relapse or chaotic behaviors, well-meaning families tend to focus on 'making everything better'. I get this, it's natural to want to take away their pain. However, it won't affect long-term change. It's only another rescue.

EXAMPLES OF SITUATION-CHANGES (*feels better for a while but won't work*):

- Take the Addict back to church
- Buy a new car (or fix the old one)
- Pay-off their debts - give them a clean start
- Set 'em up in new apartment
- Enroll them back into school (*and pay for it*)
- Buy new clothes
- Encourage them to change friends
- Send them to a short-term rehab for a "quick-fix"
- Immediately post bail / LEGAL FEES

By doing so, the family unwittingly takes away all responsibility from the Addict to have to change anything about themselves.

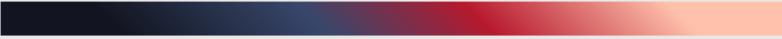
Remember, The Addict operates in default-mode and has adapted to the lower rungs. **This is the disease of addiction!**

The Addict never changes by being made more comfortable. They just get better at manipulating the heartstrings of mama bear with "Victim-of-Injustice angle, *"always somebody else's fault"*.

(see final chapter for solutions)

When Families change, the Addict has no choice but to change

...but, they won't change until they have to



When Families are willing to learn these predictable patterns and make changes in the way they respond to the Addict, real & lasting change can occur!

STOP changing the Addict's feelings and situation.

START requiring the Addict make changes within themselves.

KEYS TO CHANGE:

1. Learn what those behavioral patterns look like
2. Disrupt the process at critical points (*Different responses to familiar situations*)
3. Add new information (*this comes from professionals*)

Keep in mind

Understand and apply these definitions to every decision when dealing with the Addict

- **CHANGE:** "To make or become different"
(so do something different)
- **RESCUING;** "Robbing another person of the opportunity to learn how to do it for themselves"
(let them learn, even when it's uncomfortable)
- **PROCESS:** "A series of actions"
(keep practicing these over & over)

PHASES OF RECOVERY

OVERVIEW:

All 4 Phases are necessary for the Addict to make a complete transformation.

Addicts fail in this process by quitting in Phase 2, to start over (*see details on next page*).

The Addict lives on feelings. Once their feelings have run their course, their brain craves to **BEGIN-AGAIN** (*this is where the impulsivity comes from*). Desperate to start over, back to phase 1, where everything is fresh, fun, and, they can convince others how smart, funny, and charming they are.

Phase 1 is where the Addict feels safest (*remember the identity confusion from Trauma*)

Phase 2 is the overlapping of phase 1, lasting beyond what the addict can handle (*we're dealing with an emotional child*). Eventually, the '*pretending-identity*' runs it's course and life becomes very uncomfortable trying to hold up that persona.

Towards the end of **Phase 2** the Addict is craving to BEGIN-AGAIN, and has become very good at manipulating their way back into **phase 1** to start over.

Phase 3 & 4 are achieved by those who come to realize the jig is up, time to grow up, and, "I'm my own worst enemy". With new information & opportunity for change throughout Phase 1& 2, the Addict always becomes willing to finally seek & solidify lasting change... *Unless they get rescued!*

PHASES OF RECOVERY

PHASE ONE

Begins at the point where the Addict has come to end of their latest relapse. May even ask Family for help.

Addict feels safest, comfortable, and in control (*remember the identity confusion from Trauma*).

- Detoxing
- Brain pathways very distorted
- Go along to get along to avoid conflict
- Sizing up the environment & people
- Compare self to people who are failing, not succeeding
- Do minimal amount necessary
- Rely on others for the heavy lifting
- Start to urgently request things that didn't matter 3 months ago
- Show how charming, funny, smart they can be
- Begin to feel better - start thinking "*I'm not really an addict*"
- Desire to be liked
- Apply new information to other's they know
- Manipulate behavior to make it look like they're serious
- Overanalyze everything
- Reject idea of slowing down
- Constantly thinking of ways to short-cut solutions
- All questions are based on getting something or doing something (as real growth occurs, questions based on improving & contributing something)
- Delusions & Denial
- Stuck in "uniqueness" (*I'm not like these people*)
- Lack self-direction
- in a hurry to get back to old life

PHASES OF RECOVERY

PHASE TWO

Overlapping of phase 1. Lasting beyond what the addict can handle (*we're dealing with an emotional child*). Eventually, the 'pretending-identity' runs it's course and life becomes very uncomfortable, Trying to hold up that persona and sense of control becomes too much. Move to critiquing the world.

The Addict has never grown beyond this Phase. Has ALWAYS been able to 'begin-again' at Phase 1, through family-rescue, a romantic partner, anyone who believes their cries of injustice and comes running. (*life-long dynamic, Addiction recovery is no different*)

- Feeling better physically
- Still operating on feelings
- Learning some new things but still think it doesn't apply
- See people as vehicles to get or do something
- Has genuine compassion & empathy but uses it to manipulate
- Show more negative aspects of personality
- Complaining increases
- Keep score of everyone else around
- Subconsciously set up their rescue
- Think they are smarter than everyone (*know more than the experts in any field*)
- Tension builds as they perceive greater loss of control
- Complain to families of some injustice at work, rehab, the world...
- Complain at work, rehab, the world, about their families



Internal stress builds - self-sabotage is near

PHASES OF RECOVERY

PHASE THREE

If the Addict didn't get rescued and was forced to face themselves, an awaking begins. A true surrender and acceptance that their problems lie within themselves.

- Feeling much better physically
- beginning to apply new information to themselves
- Become more open and humble
- Think something in their environment has changed- Don't realize that it's them!
- Questions are now centered on improving something and contributing to something
- Beginning to understand the concept of Higher Power and relying upon it
- Much more teachable
- Looking for ways to be of help to others
- No longer need to be the smartest person in the room
- Learning to family as Mom, Dad, Siblings, instead of Maid, Banker, Problem fixers, taxi drivers
- Developing a Deeper Self-awareness
- Brain is still healing
- Experience peace
- Managing emotions well
- Much healing has taken place in the process to this point



PHASES OF RECOVERY

PHASE FOUR

Phase four is the result of the successfully moving through the previous phases. It's organic and real.

- Maintaining daily structure
- Keeping life simple
- Following new principles and direction- *Not feelings*
- Become willing to do whatever is necessary to stay healthy
- Mind continues to open more & more
- Deeper understanding of their own defects and assets

05

**WHAT THE ADDICT
IS THINKING**

05

A LIFE OF EXTREMES

*driven by a deep sense of shame countered
by a high need to over-achieve... just to be 'enough'*

I know it may sound crazy that I can tell you what the Addict is thinking. I'm not only going to tell you what your Addict loved-one is thinking, I'm going to tell you what they're feeling, and how those two things dictate their behaviors.

How do I know this? Because it's all predictable. The Science of Addiction is well known, not broadly taught. Achieving lasting recovery is not good for business for the mega corporations that run 85% of the treatment centers in the US.

These are the same treatment centers that have a 12% success rate. The same programs that tell us that "*relapse is part of recovery*". They literally rationalize their own lack of solutions.

Failing treatment programs will give the Addict just enough information to feel better with a sprinkle of superficial hope, then it's time for discharge. **Back to the wolves without any real change.**

The Good News Is: Achieving Recovery is not only possible, it's probable. When Addicts and their Families follow a course of action, based on years of neurological studies, human behavior, and the nuances of Addiction, there can be only one outcome... Transformation!

(more on solutions in last chapter)

SHAMEFUL & SHAMELESS IS A LOSS OF IDENTITY

The Shameful / Shameless dynamic represents a deep rooted sense of 'not being enough' while striving to perform 'better-than', in order to feel good enough.

Shame tells the Addict that something is wrong with them. They are a mistake. (internal).

Guilt is intended to alert us that we've made a mistake, which we can correct. (external)

Here's how the Shameful / Shameless dynamic works:

Since childhood, the perception of 'not being good enough' takes shape. As a way to compensate, the child develops a manner of thinking:

- *"In order for me to be good enough, I must perform more than human"*

Many Addicts become high achievers in sports, arts, academics, and pretty much everything else they pursue. Sounds good, right? No, because the Addict is motivated by the satisfactions of high achievement. The Addict is actually motivated by an overwhelming fear of not being enough, so, the achievement isn't about the achievement. It's about their very identity. Who they believe they are as a human is tied to their success or failure of an external activity!

Success means they *are* good enough. Fall short by even an inch and they are a *loser* in the game of life.

Constant struggle to be ‘Enough’

The Addict shifts back & forth from **shameful to shameless, skipping past “HUMAN”**

Shameful

What the Addict **feels**

- Less-Than Human
- Loser
- Unacceptable
- Deficient
- Disappointed
- Disappointment
- Inadequate
- Helpless
- Family Rebel
- 2nd Class Citizen

NO EXPECTATIONS

Shameless

What the Addict **thinks**

- Must perform more than Human
- Accepting help is sign of weakness
- Must have it all together
- Can’t make mistakes
- Invincible
- Go-it-alone
- Self-Contained
- Demanding of self
- Blaming-Critical-
- Judgmental

UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

One extreme to the other

HUMAN

The ultimate goal of recovery

- IT'S OKAY TO ASK FOR HELP
- I'M ACCEPTABLE
- FORGIVABLE
- FORGIVING
- VULNERABLE
- RECOVERING
- OPEN
- NO PRETENSES
- REALISTIC
- PEACEFUL

06



REAL SOLUTIONS

06

Recovery is not a 'Maybe' thing

My primary reason for writing this book is to offer hope to every Family and Addict who wants to achieve a true and lasting recovery - **It is absolutely possible.**

.....

I'm very familiar with the resignation of Families of Addiction who have been in this struggle for years, sometimes decades.

I don't want to slam my own profession but I'm going to for just a bit.

Addiction-treatment is not handled properly in the mainstream. Well-meaning professionals are tied-up by bureaucracy and insurance company dictates. The average addiction-professional is only allowed enough time to teach triggers and cheer-on the Addict, and hope for the best. Say all you want about "evidence based -practices", but when the average treatment center discharges their patient at exactly the same time the brain is making a major shift downward (*30 days of sobriety*), that is not the best practice!

This is exactly why so many relapses occur after treatment!

Plus, very few professionals have actual lived-experience with Addiction. In other words, their knowledge is all theory. They only know what they have vaguely been taught. They've never seen Addiction, up close. Most professionals don't know what it's like to spend years in the suffering of Addiction, or the struggles of Families trying to save their Addict.

Every Family's Nightmare

Only people who have experienced Addiction can relate to these;

- Finding your adult child unconscious on the floor
- The 'never before seen' rage
- Finding plastic baggies, needles, or pills
- The long periods of time with zero contact.
- Not knowing if they're alive or dead
- Watching them throw away all of their dreams; one class, one job, at a time.
- The broken promises and missing money
- The wrecked cars
- Stepping into an alcoholic home with odors so gross you have to step back outside.
- Scenes that require a hazmat crew
- Liquor bottles strewn about
- Blood trails you follow through the house certain to find your loved one dead
- The phone ringing late at night, convinced "this is the one"
- Watching the slow deterioration of the child you raised to be a superstar
- The pain from seeing your loved-one seemingly not care about their family or themselves.
- The multiple attempts at Treatment, the high hopes that "This time will be different", only to watch them fail, again.
- Hearing professionals say for the 10th time "well, your addict just doesn't want sobriety, enough"
- The heartbreak of having to kick your adult child out of your home to protect the rest of the family & property
- Losing the family business because the Addict embezzled your life's work
- The dark moments when you pray for them die in their sleep or be arrested. Anything to stop their madness
- The constant state of needing to "fix" them

Nobody wants to be an Addict

The Addict resists change out of fear & comfort,
not because they love destroying their life

As long as the Addict is comfortable, they won't change. Remember what we talked about in previous chapters. Your idea of comfort is much different than the Addict's ideas.

Perhaps you already have a willing Addict, but after so many failed treatment attempts, they've given up all hope.

As the Family makes changes, the Addict will follow

Focus on these areas, now!

FAMILY

1. Let God Drive
2. Understand Codependency
3. Boundaries

ADDICT

1. Identify Basic Fears (*see page 17*)
2. Practice being Human (*see page 35*)

Instructions begin on next page



Nobody wants to be an Addict cont...

The Addict thought-process

The Addict perceives every experience from the perspective of 'being-enough' - feelings are hurt easily.

Basic needs, such as:
Love-Belonging-Safety-Security-Validation-Approval-etc...

Addict Thought-Process:

Experience	Thought	Feeling	Reaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any Experience or event 	<p><u>Perceived as:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threat to basic Needs <p>(see needs above)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shameful/ I'm not good enough Hurt Angry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I must feel better" "I must get what I want to feel better" Follows feelings

The Addict goes backwards to change their feelings. Compromising every value, goal, and responsibility

Healthy Thought-process:

Experience	Thought	Feeling	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any Experience or event 	<p><u>Perceived as:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threat to basic Needs <p>(see needs above)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shameful/ I'm not good enough Hurt Angry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I must do better" Responds to responsibilities, Values, Goals, regardless of feelings

Responsibilities take precedent over feelings, which builds self-esteem.

1. Let God Drive

The Importance of Believing in God in Recovery

For families, belief in a Higher Power can bring peace in the midst of chaos. Loving an Addict often creates fear, anxiety, and a sense of helplessness. **Faith helps families** release control over what they cannot fix and place trust where it belongs. Surrender does not mean giving up—it means letting go of constant worry and choosing peace over panic.

God is a better higher power than the Addict

Many individuals and families affected by addiction find faith in a Higher Power becomes a source of strength, hope, and guidance when everything else feels uncertain. Addiction leaves people feeling powerless, exhausted, and defeated. Faith restores what addiction takes away: *trust, purpose, and the belief that change is possible.*

“God can do for us what we can’t do for ourselves”

Faith provides hope during moments when progress feels slow or setbacks occur. Recovery is rarely a straight line. There are moments of doubt, fear, and exhaustion. In those moments, belief in a Higher Power reminds us that setbacks do not equal failure. It reassures us that growth is happening even when we cannot see it. Faith shifts focus from immediate outcomes to long-term healing.

1. Let God Drive cont...

A Higher Power can mean different things to different people. For some, it is God as they understand Him. For others, it may be a spiritual force, divine presence, or even the collective strength found in recovery communities. What matters is not perfection or rigid belief, but openness. Recovery asks individuals and families to believe in something greater than addiction—something stronger than despair.

Surrendering requires Faith

Believing in a Higher Power also encourages accountability and moral grounding. Many people in recovery find that faith helps them realign with values they lost during addiction. It fosters honesty, humility, forgiveness, and responsibility. These spiritual principles support emotional growth and healthier relationships, both essential for lasting recovery.

Perhaps most importantly, faith reminds people that they are not broken beyond repair. Addiction often fills individuals with shame and self-blame. Belief in a Higher Power offers unconditional love and grace.

2. Codependency

developed out of love, *keeps the chaos spinning*

One of the most common and misunderstood responses that families develop is **Codependency**. While rooted in love and concern, Codependency can unintentionally keep both the family and the person struggling with addiction & stuck in painful cycles.

What Is Codependency?

Codependency occurs when a family member becomes overly focused on another person's needs, behaviors, or recovery, often at the expense of their own well-being. In families affected by addiction, Codependency can feel like a responsibility, loyalty, or survival. Over time, however, it leads to exhaustion, resentment, and loss of self.

Common signs of codependency include

- Constantly monitoring or trying to control the Addict's behavior
- Making excuses, covering up, or rescuing them from consequences
- Neglecting personal needs, health, or emotions
- Feeling responsible for the Addict's happiness or sobriety
- Experiencing guilt when setting boundaries
- moods dictated by the Addict's well-being
- Saying Yes when you mean No

Many families don't realize they are codependent because these behaviors are often thought-of as "being supportive" or "holding the family together."

2. Codependency cont...

Finding a new way to Love

How Codependency Develops

Codependency is not a flaw—it's a learned response to chronic stress, fear, and trauma. Addiction creates unpredictability. Families adapt by becoming hyper-vigilant, overly responsible, and emotionally reactive. Over time, roles may form: *the fixer, the peacekeeper, the hero, or the silent sufferer*.

These roles help the family survive in the short term, but they prevent long-term healing. When the focus remains on managing the addicted person, family members lose connection with themselves.

The Cost of Staying Codependent

Unchecked codependency can lead to anxiety, depression, burnout, and fractured relationships. It can also delay recovery by shielding the addicted person from natural consequences. Most painfully, it teaches families that love requires self-sacrifice rather than self-respect.

Healing begins when families understand this truth

'You did not cause the addiction, you cannot control it, and you cannot cure it!

2. Codependency cont...

A Family time of healing

Steps Toward Healing and Independence

Overcoming codependency does not mean abandoning your Addict—it means changing how you show up.

Healthy steps include:

- Shifting focus inward: Ask, “What do I need right now?”
- Setting clear boundaries: Boundaries protect relationships; they do not punish
- Allowing natural consequences: Growth requires accountability
- Separating love from control: You can care deeply without rescuing
- Seeking support: Therapy, family programs, and peer groups offer clarity and relief
- As families heal, they often discover something unexpected: when they stop managing addiction, they start reclaiming their own lives.

A New Definition of Love

Healthy love in families of addiction is grounded in compassion, honesty, and boundaries. It allows space for responsibility, growth, and dignity—on both sides. When families step out of codependency, they model strength, self-worth, and resilience.

Recovery is not just possible for the person struggling with addiction. Families heal too—and when they do, **everything changes.**

3. Boundaries

Where the Family ends & the Addict begins

Boundaries Are Love in Action

Boundaries do not end relationships; they redefine them in healthier ways. In families of addiction, boundaries are not walls—they are bridges to healing, dignity, and hope. When families learn to hold boundaries, they stop revolving around addiction and start building lives rooted in strength, clarity, and compassion.

What Are Boundaries?

Boundaries are clear, healthy limits that define what behaviors you will and will not accept, what you are responsible for, and what you are not. They are not punishments or ultimatums. Boundaries are about self-respect, safety, and clarity.

In families of addiction, boundaries help separate:

- Love from control
- Support from enabling
- Responsibility from rescue

Healthy boundaries allow each person to own their choices and consequences, even if the Addict's choice may seem harmful... Remember to **Let God Drive!**

3. Boundaries cont...

The uneasy part that always pays off!

Why Boundaries Feel So Hard

Addiction creates fear, chaos, and emotional urgency. Families often respond by over-helping, over-explaining, or over-protecting. Saying “no” can trigger guilt, anxiety, or fear of abandonment. Many family members were taught—directly or indirectly—that love means sacrifice and endurance.

But without boundaries, families become exhausted, resentful, and emotionally depleted. Over time, the absence of boundaries can unintentionally keep addiction in place by removing accountability.

What Boundaries Are—and Are Not

Boundaries are:

- Clear, calm, and consistent
- About your behavior, not controlling theirs
- Rooted in self-care and safety

Boundaries are not:

- Threats or punishments
- Attempts to force sobriety
- Expressions of anger or revenge
- A boundary sounds like:

“I love you, but I will not give you money.”

“You are welcome here when you are sober.”

“I will not lie or cover for you anymore.”

3. Boundaries cont...

This is how Families & Addicts Recover

How Boundaries Support Recovery

Boundaries create structure where addiction creates chaos. They allow natural consequences to occur—often the very experiences that motivate change. More importantly, boundaries protect the emotional and physical health of the family.

When families set boundaries, they model:

- Self-respect
- Emotional regulation
- Personal responsibility

This shift often brings unexpected relief. Families report less anxiety, clearer communication, and a renewed sense of peace—even if their loved one continues to struggle.

Building Boundaries with Compassion

Setting boundaries is a process, not a one-time decision. Start small. Be honest. Expect discomfort—and remind yourself that discomfort does not mean you are doing something wrong.

Helpful steps include:

- Identifying what feels unsafe, draining, or harmful
- Deciding what you can and cannot tolerate
- Communicating boundaries calmly and clearly
- Following through consistently
- Seeking support from therapists or family recovery groups

3. Boundaries cont...

Boundaries Are Love in Action

Boundaries are more than ‘tough-love’. They are tangible and specific behaviors that Families can implement that designate a clear line where the Family ends and the Addict begins. When these Boundary lines are clear and consistent, The Family dynamic will begin to regain stability and the Addict will ultimately respond in positive ways and move them closer towards establishing a lasting recovery.

Remember, the Addict will not change until they have to change

Boundaries do not end relationships, they redefine them in healthier ways. In families of addiction, boundaries are not walls—they are bridges to healing, dignity, and hope.

When families learn to hold boundaries, they stop revolving around addiction and start building lives rooted in strength, clarity, and compassion.

See next chapter for specific solutions

FINAL THOUGHTS

Gotta stop thinking “rationale”

Start thinking “Sickness”

How does an otherwise smart, talented, educated, ambitious, hard-working person “choose” Addiction? *Don't they see what they're doing to to themselves?*

Nobody chooses Addiction! It's a disease, so, please don't forget that. That doesn't mean there shouldn't be accountability, but we would never look to a family member who had Cancer and say “*Don't they see how this is ruining their life? The missed work, the Doctor shopping, the revolving doors of endless treatments...*Well, Addiction is exactly the same thing. We are so put-off by the bad-behavior of Addicts that we hardly recognize them as Human.

This is all good news: If Addiction truly is a disease, no matter how nasty the behavior can be, that means it can be treated successfully, if we will follow the processes.

Families must stop seeking to make the Addict's life more comfortable, hoping that eventually they will come to their senses.

Start implementing the strategies in this book and **Both of you will recover.**

FINAL THOUGHTS

Specific things you can begin today

In sickness, Addicts are takers & manipulators.. From here on out, Families must level the playing field. Stop doing all the work. Remember, the Addict won't change until they have-to, so, it's time to make them 'have-to'.

Anything Families do for their Addict must be reciprocated by the Addict. This will be relative to their situation, so make changes, as needed.

Require your Addict to act first!

Addicts have a long history of broken promises. Stop falling for them.

1. **Make every transaction a 'value-for-value' deal**
 - a. *"Ex: We will pay you car payment but you must begin counseling"*
 - b. Demand the Addict does their part first, or no deal
2. **Don't do anything for them that they should do for themselves, even it means they will lose something**
 - a. Don't pay a bill they didn't earn with you
 - b. Don't call their work with excuses for them
3. **Let them fail!**
 - a. It's ok if their cell phone, electricity, water, gas, gets cut-off. They may even lose a job. Let it happen!
 - b. No free bedrooms or un-used rental homes- These only keep the Addict in relief mode (*no change*)

FINAL THOUGHTS

Expect resistance, keep saying ‘No’

Addicts don’t take kindly to being told ‘No’. Buckle your seat-belt and prepare yourself for what’s coming once the Family starts implementing consistent boundaries.

Resistance is only a test. Eventually, the addict will accept that the jig is up and accept help. I can’t give you a time-frame for when the Addict will cave after a period of Boundaries tends to correspond to how long the Addict has heard the word ‘Yes’. The more families say ‘No’, the closer you are moving your Addict to accepting help.

In the beginning, the Addict will increase their level of intensity in resistance to ‘No’. This is a strategy to get families to back off. **It’s a message;** “If I don’t get what I want I will show you my anger and make your life miserable”

In the past, families typically back off when resistance begins, just to keep the peace. **Don’t do it anymore!** Call the police if you have to and allow whatever consequences come without intervening.

**Keep your perspective, this is about saving a life,
not nurturing feelings**

working with professionals is highly recommended. I suggest finding someone in your area to guide you through the early process of moving your addict closer to accepting recovery help

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