

Overcoming Addiction

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Two classes of addictions:

1. Chemical
2. Process (or behavioral)

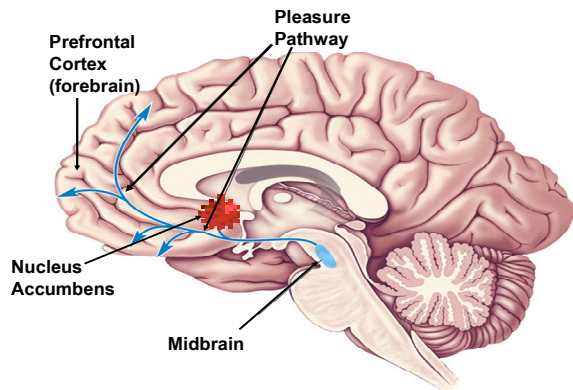
Definition of Addiction

An addiction is a pleasure- based behaviour that is out of control and causes harm.

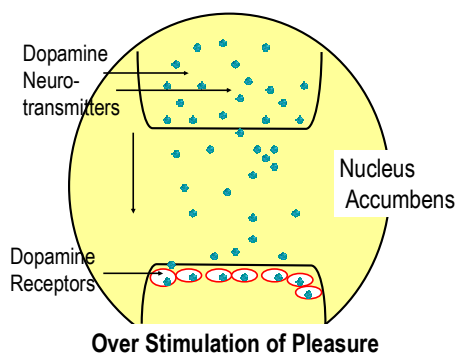
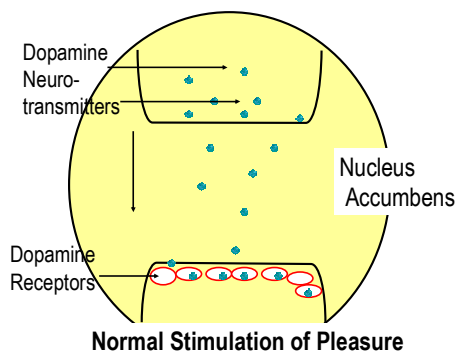
1. Pleasure Based Behaviour:
 - A. Excitement and stimulation
 - B. Tension reduction and comfort
2. Distinguished from Obsessive-compulsive behaviour
OCD is *not* pleasure based, but rather control based.
It is trading a painful stimulus for another painful stimulus, which can be controlled.
Example: Excessive neatness or cleanliness, counting, checking
3. Loss of control
 - A. There is a diminished, but retrievable capacity for self- regulation.
 - B. Loss of control may be intermittent and require a trigger, i.e. the binge drinker who only drinks on the weekend .
The trigger is freedom from the fear he will lose his job.
4. Causes Harm: Examples
A young mother – “I sold my washer / dryer for a gram of crack.
I didn’t know what I was doing”.
The gambler at a casino who abandoned his children in the car.
The rageaholic man who put his wife in the hospital with multiple injuries.
The teenager on marijuana who died playing ‘chicken’ with a train.

Biochemistry of Addiction

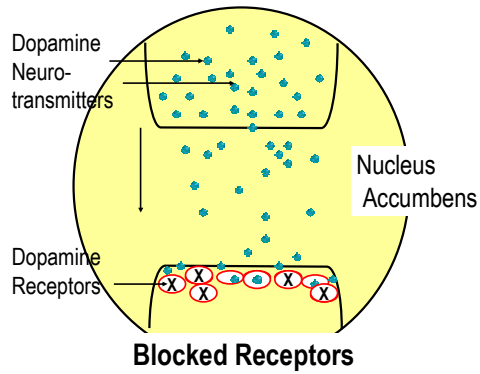
1. There is a reward circuit in the brain which involves the **emotional centers in the midbrain**, the **intellectual centre in the forebrain**, and the **nucleus accumbens**, which acts as the governing centre for pleasurable feelings.



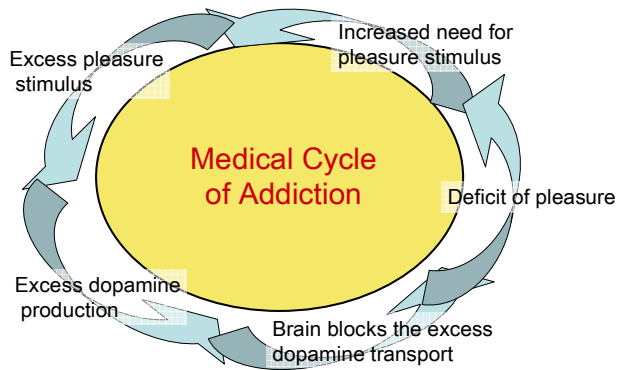
2. There is a chemical neurotransmitter called **dopamine**, which is generated in the midbrain in response to pleasurable thoughts and stimuli. The dopamine accumulates in the nucleus accumbens, where it is bound by receptors. It is then appreciated as a pleasurable feeling.



3. There is a control mechanism in the nucleus accumbens which stops the prolonged stimulation from excess dopamine.
4. The receptors are blocked, which means that more and more dopamine is required to achieve the same level of pleasure.



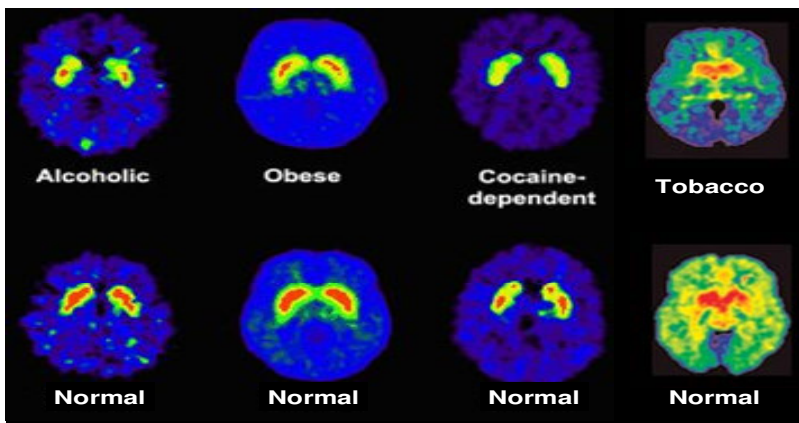
Medical Cycle of Addiction



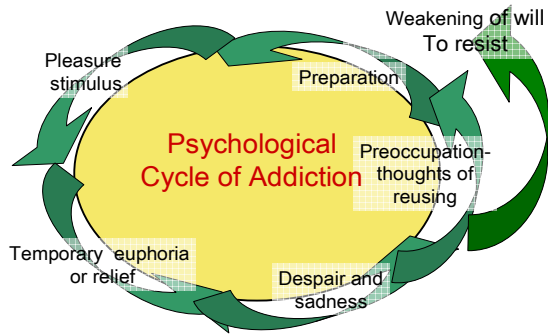
Studies of the brain using positron emission tomography (PET scans) demonstrate the presence of blocked receptors in the brains of addicted people.

Notice that there are similar results with process addictions as well as chemical addictions.

This is proof that process addictions use the same biochemical pathways.



Psychological Cycle of Addiction



Causes of Addiction

1. Genetic
2. Personality
3. Parental teaching and example
4. Social Pressure
5. Pain
6. Spiritual poverty

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery.

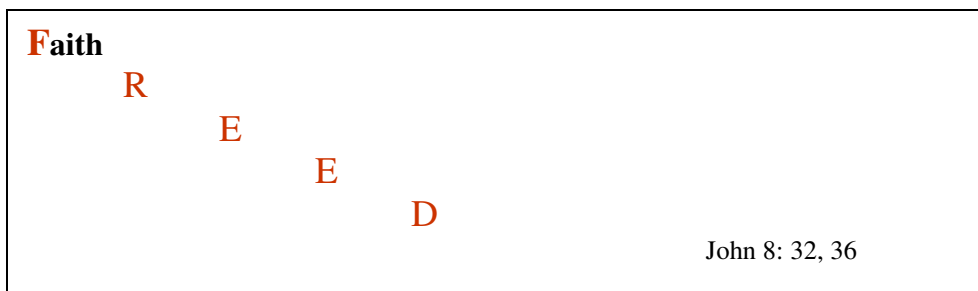
Eph. 5:18

“Everything is permissible for me”– but not everything is beneficial.

“Everything is permissible for me”– but I will not be mastered by anything.

I Cor. 6:12

Part Two: A Christian Model for Recovery



A. Faith according to A.A.

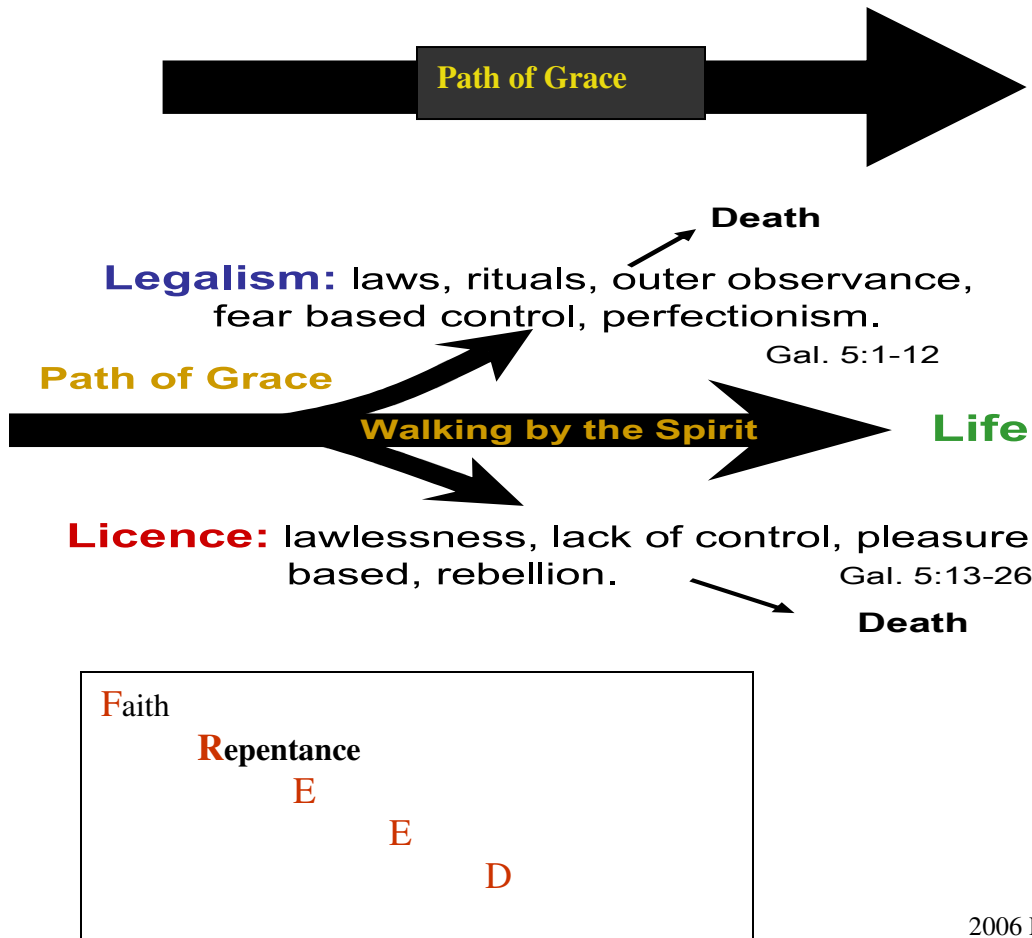
1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol-that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

B. Faith according to the Bible

For by grace you are saved through faith.” Eph. 2:8

Grace is the ability to move in a beautiful, balanced, and timely way.

Grace to me : *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. John 3:36*
Grace In me: *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Phil. 4:13*
Grace through me: *Through love serve one another. Gal.5:13*



Repentance is a change of mind which leads to a change of behaviour.

1. It is an ongoing process.
There are three parts to the process:
 1. Confession
 2. Commitment
 3. Contrition (sorrow)
2. Each part has a God-ward and man-ward component.
3. If one or more of the parts is missing, then repentance is incomplete.
4. **Confession** is a change of mind about my behaviour when I admit that what I am doing is wrong.

A. God-ward: Addiction is sinful because it violates the principle of self-control.
I Cor. 6:12, Titus 3:3

B. Man-ward: I confess to others.
James 5:16, Proverbs 28:13

5. **Commitment** is a resolve to change, to leave the bad behaviour and replace it with good.

A. God-ward: This is the principle of baptism.
Rom. 6:12-14; Rom. 12:1-2

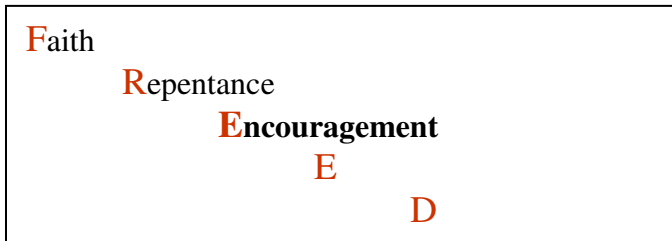
B. Man-ward: An ongoing commitment with another person or persons, to whom I am accountable.
A.A. calls this person 'a sponsor'.

6. **Contrition (sorrow)** Addicted persons have many emotional conflicts including a 'woe is me' kind of self-pity.

The Bible calls this 'the sorrow of the world'. II Cor 7: 10

A. God-ward: Godly sorrow is being sympathetic with God's pain. When complete, it brings a hatred of the old behaviour and a love of the new.

B. Man-ward: Feeling the pain that others experience as a result of my addiction.



Encouragement in Community

1. One of the most powerful stabilizing forces is the experience of communal love and encouragement.
2. It is one of the most healing features of A.A.
3. Alcoholics who enter A.A. are encouraged to attend 90 meetings in 90 days.
4. ***The church is meant to be just such an encouraging community.***

Heb. 10:24-25



Endurance is the ability to keep on keeping on.

Heb. 10:36

1. It takes time to break old habits and establish new ones.
2. Some believe that you never fully recover from an addiction, you only control it. It is a weakness you can fall prey to if you are not diligent. I Cor. 10:12
Pride and complacency are unwarranted.



John 8: 32, 36

Addiction and idolatry go hand in hand.

An idol is anything I love more than I love God.

I Cor. 10:7; II Tim. 3:4

Idol worship of ancient times was associated with the excess of addictive behaviours.

I Pet. 4:3-4

The Practice of deliverance

1. We defend ourselves from the devil by the prayer of faith.
Matt. 6:13
2. We resist the Devil by speaking a word of faith out of our mouths.
Jam. 4:7
3. The prayers of other believers, especially those with spiritual authority, are powerful to deliver.
Jas. 5:14-15

God is **the** God of true pleasure

Ps.16:11

1. He made us to be seekers of pleasure.
2. True pleasure cannot be attained by seeking it as an end in itself.
3. It is the by-product of living with, and for, the True God of Pleasure.

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