

TAKING — — CHARGE

OF YOUR LIFE

ADDICTIONS



WHAT TO EXPECT

An investigation of some chemical, emotional and social addictions to discover:

- reasons why
- emotional and spiritual keys to recovery and freedom
- life management strategies for growth
- what to do with recurring and overpowering weaknesses
- personal happiness and fulfillment
- how to gain and maintain control of your life



UNDERSTANDING ADDICTION

An addiction is a compulsive dependence upon a substance or person or behaviour. It can be driven by physiological or emotional needs. There is often a sense of well-being at the emotional and physical levels.

The “kick” or gratification never lasts long. The damage, on the other hand, can be far reaching. In the quote on the next page, the word “slave” is used. Addiction is slavery. One of the most devastating results of addiction is the loss of freedom, which is one of our fundamental needs.

ADDICTIVE AGENTS

The wide variety of agents includes chemical, emotional and relational compulsions. There is often more than one kind of agent at work to enslave an addict. Some of the agents are:

- drugs and alcohol
- food (compulsive overeating, bulimia)
- sex
- work and success
- control
- money (overspending, hoarding, gambling)
- dependency on a toxic relationship
- physical illness (hypochondria)
- exercise and physical conditioning
- perfectionism
- materialism (obsession with acquiring things)
- preoccupation with entertainment (video, computers, movies, music)
- obsession with physical beauty (cosmetics, suntanning, clothes, cosmetic surgery)
- academic pursuits and excessive intellectualising
- religiosity or religious legalism
- approval (the need to please others)

It is important to recognise the causes of addiction. All of us are either past, present or potentially future addicts.

“They promise them freedom,
while they themselves are
slaves of depravity—for a man
is a slave to whatever has
mastered him.”

2 PETER 2:19

RSV BIBLE



THE ADDICTIVE TRAP

Damaged self-esteem is often the trigger for addictive behavioural patterns.

A negative feeling of our worth can be caused by physical, emotional or sexual abuse, deprivation of love, loss of a loved one, or loss of a job. We are most vulnerable during the tender, formative years of childhood.

Damaged self-esteem can trigger feelings of isolation, loneliness, and emptiness. The various booklets, in the Taking Charge of Your Life program, will put you in touch with strategies and skills to deal with the challenges.


It is sometimes tempting to look for a “quick fix” in the form of alcohol or drugs for an escape. The relief is only short term and there are always regrets. Every addict experiences remorse, shame and self-hate.

Once locked in, the cycle continues. It takes powerful intervention to break it.




WRESTLING WITH SUBSTANCE ADDICTION

The most visible and dramatic of the addictions is substance abuse. Alcohol and other soft or hard drugs seem to offer relief to vulnerable people. Instead of meeting our emotional needs, they can lock us into an addiction cycle that is dangerous and destructive.

 **“All addictions are harmful, but the most deadly and dangerous involve substance abuse.”**
Drs Minirth, Meier & Arterburn , *The Complete Life Encyclopedia*

What percentage of addictions do these clinical psychiatrists state are harmful? See the quote above.

Notice what the Scriptures say about those led astray by alcohol. See the second quote below.

 **“Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.”**
Proverbs 20:1, NIV Bible

“ . . . Whoever is led astray by them is not.....”

SOME WARNING SIGNS

1. Deterioration in family relationships; withdrawal from family activities and responsibilities.
2. Deterioration in commitment to career, work quality.
3. Negative personality changes, including listlessness, depression, nervousness, talkativeness, lying.
4. Changes in sleep patterns—insomnia, sleeping-in late, sleeping at odd times, reclusiveness.
5. Legal and moral problems—thefts from home, shoplifting, vandalism.

TREATMENT OF A SUBSTANCE ADDICT

1. **The addiction must be identified and acknowledged.** If hard drugs are involved, the substance addict needs support from friends and professional help from a therapist.
2. **Detoxification**—it is necessary to have the substance eliminated from the body.

Medical supervision is necessary when dealing with hard drugs. It is dangerous to “go it alone.” It runs the risk of convulsions and at worst, death.
3. **Rehabilitation**—continuing support and professional help is vital. The substance addict needs help to get in control of their lives once again.

Some suggestions:

- Professional counselling
- Family or group therapy
- Therapy and treatment programmes through hospitals and medical clinics
- Drug and alcohol rehabilitation programmes
- Life management programmes

OUTSIDE HELP

Many substance addicts have discovered, often in their moments of despair, there is real comfort and life-changing power in prayer.

The bottom line is personal choice and what we do with the growth capacity that resides in all of us.



“In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me.”

Psalm 86:7, NIV Bible

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

PSALM 46:1

NIV BIBLE



WORKAHOLISM

Workaholism is a compulsive addiction to do work, business or even a hobby.

You will note, in the quotation on the next page, that the Scriptures address the need for a restrained and balanced life. Workaholism is a life out of balance.

While not as obvious as substance addiction, workaholism has the same kind of triggers and, in the long run, does much personal and relational damage.

Workaholism is an escape mechanism from emotional pain. It can masquerade as diligent commitment to a legitimate and demanding work program.

Workaholism is often used as a barrier to keep others at a distance. It is a way of avoiding having to deal openly and honestly with relationships and relational stress.

THINK IT THROUGH . . .

What is the difference between wholesome, diligent hard work and workaholism?



“So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.”

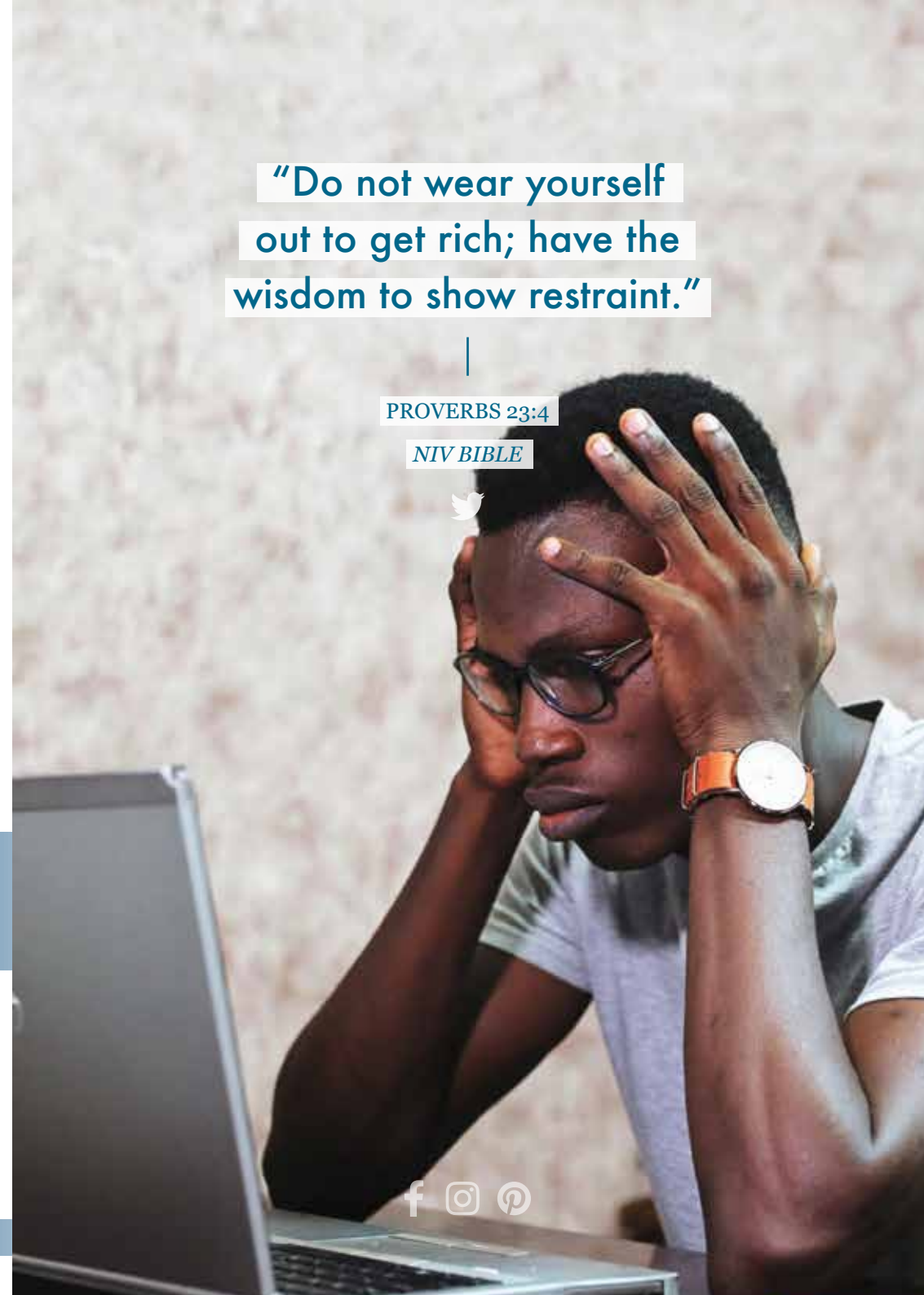
Ecclesiastes 2:17, NIV Bible

Note, in the quote from Ecclesiastes above, Solomon “hated life because he found his work grievous.” Can you think of factors that make life, and our life work positive and fulfilling?

“Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint.”

PROVERBS 23:4

NIV BIBLE



PERFECTIONISM

Perfectionists are focused on what “ought” to be, on what other people “should” do, on what they “have” to do. They set goals that are impossible to achieve. They experience “anger” when they can’t fulfil their impossible demands on themselves and others. Their strict demands actually stand in the way of getting the task done. They are preoccupied with rules, orders, scheduling & details.

Another seemingly harmless addiction is perfectionism. It, too, can do much damage. It is related to workaholism with some symptoms and causative factors in common. A perfectionist can be very demanding—a spouse, partner, parent or boss projecting their impossible standards on the other people in their lives.

Perfectionism should not be confused with excellence—one of the big words in corporate management and modern motivational concepts. The pursuit of excellence promotes positive self-esteem and emotional health. Perfectionism does the opposite. There can be a fine line between a commitment to excellence and an obsession with perfectionism.

EXCELLENCE:

Is striving for the best you can do.
Is realistic.
Says, “I want . . .”.
Makes requests.
Desires success.
Focuses on process.
Is free to pursue goals.
Is self-accepting.
Accepts others.
Functions in reality.

PERFECTIONISM:

Is striving for an impossible ideal.
Is idealistic.
Says, “I must . . .” or “I ought . . .”.
Makes demands.
Fears failure.
Focuses on product.
Is enslaved by obsession.
Is self-condemning.
Is impatient with others.
Focuses on idealised fantasy.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Examine your own life and ask: Is my life in balance? Do I feel fulfilled?
Am I enjoying the challenge of moving toward my goals?

CODEPENDENCY



“Toxic shame . . . keeps families locked into dysfunction, often for generations.”

Earl Henslin, *The Way Out of the Wilderness*

Codependency is “addiction to people, behaviour or things.” It operates on the myth that our happiness depends on another person, such as a spouse or a romantic partner.

Because the codependent is deluded with the idea that life can’t be meaningful without that other person, the need to control emerges. An obsessive, controlling behavioural pattern is central to just about all the codependent does or thinks. Codependency can masquerade as protection as he/she smothers and dominates the other person.

Guilt, shame, and dysfunction are the sad results. Healing, recovery and ongoing growth begin with an understanding and acknowledgement of our need.

The trigger for the obsessive personality traits of the workaholic, the perfectionist and the codependent can be an overly critical and negative environment in childhood. It can be sexual or physical abuse, rejection, or withdrawal of love, especially during the tender years.

Do you feel you have any of these needs?

- feelings of inadequacy - damaged self-esteem not feeling significant
- unresolved guilt and anger
- not feeling fulfilled
- feelings of isolation - loneliness
- not sure of personal values and purpose

The various booklets, in this study program, address all of these needs. Professional counselling can be an important complement.

WHO AM I?

I am your constant companion.
I am your greatest helper or your heaviest burden. I will push you onward or drag you down to failure. I am completely at your command. Half the things you do, you might just as well turn over to me, And I will be able to do them quickly and correctly. I am easily managed; but you must be firm with me. Show me exactly how you want something done, And after a few lessons I will do it automatically. I am the servant of all the great men
And, alas, all the failures as well.

Those who are great, I have made great.
Those who are failures, I have made failures.
I am not a machine,
Though I work with all the precision of a machine Plus all the intelligence of a man.
You may run me for profit, or run me for ruin;
It makes no difference to me.
Take me, train me, be firm with me
And I will put the world at your feet.
Be easy with me and I will destroy you.
Who am I?
I am a

BUT THERE IS MORE...

While we acknowledge the fundamental importance of our habits, we often find the old negative and damaging patterns difficult to change.

Do you have negative habit patterns you can't seem to change or eliminate?

It is important to explore the spiritual dimension to understand our capacity and power to make life-changing choices.

POWER TO CHANGE

It is encouraging to see how the Bible expresses the possibility, the process and the challenge to change.



*"You were told that your foolish desires will destroy you and that you must give up your old way of life with all its bad habits. Let the Spirit change your way of thinking and make you into a new person."
Ephesians 4:22, NIV Bible*



*"Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self . . ."
Colossians 3:9, 10 NIV Bible*

We are told to give up the bad habits by changing our way of thinking (Note the quote in Ephesians). It speaks of taking off the old self, with its practices, and putting on a new self (See the second quote).

Paul, the author of all these statements, gets right down to earth, however, in Romans chapter seven. He finds himself doing the "old" things, even though he does not want to. He says, "I can't help myself."

DO YOU EVER FEEL THAT WAY—DISCOURAGED, OVERPOWERED, READY TO GIVE UP?

Taking Charge of Our Lives is choosing to take a new direction—begin new habit patterns.

The old habit patterns, however, can't be eliminated altogether. There are times when we are tempted to revert to the old. Paul describes it as a war between the “old” and “new” self.



“I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do the very thing I hate. I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong, and my bad conscience shows that I agree that the law is good. But I can't help myself, because it is sin inside me that makes me do these evil things.”

Romans 7:15-17, NIV Bible

HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE A WAR IS GOING ON INSIDE YOU?

Many are surprised to discover they are not alone. Inward conflict is widespread - universal. Don't despair! The principles of change and growth are available to all.

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, as outlined on the next page, is complementary to the Taking Charge of Your Life program.

A PROVEN STRATEGY

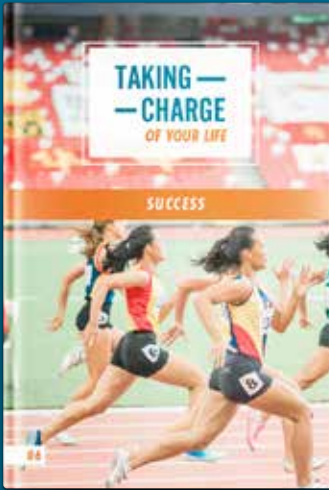
Alcoholics Anonymous was founded in the 1930s. The Twelve Steps were developed as a strategy for the recovery of alcoholics. They have been a strong influence in the lives of millions. These same Twelve Steps are the basis for the modern recovery movement. They are used as a pathway to recovery for addictions ranging from cocaine to compulsive overeating, compulsive shopping or sex addiction.

People are finding hope and liberation from their addictions through these steps. The principles are complementary to the skills and strategies outlined in the Taking Charge of Your Life program.

THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives have become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these stages, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.






CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY



SUCCESS

The next booklet takes you further in tapping into your inner potential as it focuses on the motivation and success factors. Email or call HopeChannel to receive your copy and continue in your journey.



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