

SOUL RECOVERY

A PRACTICE OF COMPASSIONATE & FEARLESS HEALING



Healing Dependent Behavior

According to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD), the cost and consequences of substance, gambling, sex, food and other addictions place an enormous burden on American society. Due to its scale and prevalence, it is often referred to as the nation's number one health problem. Addiction strains the economy, the health care system and the criminal justice system—while threatening job security, public safety, social, marital and family life.

Dependence crosses all societal boundaries, affecting every ethnic group, of both genders and in every tax bracket. Addiction and dependent behavior is increasingly recognized as a disease that can be treated and healed—though treatment is often difficult and results are inconsistent at best. A new approach is needed.

The Problem Behind The Problem

Dependence is actually the result of a confluence of causes operating on multiple levels. There are so many layers to the problem, with the common presentation of chemical addiction representing only five percent of cases. The other ninety-five percent are buried deep in our culture, our world-view, our lives and our subconscious. Most people only see the external effects of dependence behavior, and think that's all there is to it. I've often heard people say, "if only that person would just stop drinking, eating, gambling, procrastinating, being an emotional wreck (or whatever), then maybe they'd get their life together."

If only it were that simple.

But because it's not, and addiction is so misunderstood, there are millions of people who falsely believe that they are bad, horrible and hopeless rather than understanding that they are dealing with a very insidious and complicated disease—that's really not their fault.

To know what we're dealing with, let's get clear about what dependence actually is.

First of all, it is an effect – not the cause. In and of itself, dependence is nothing and means nothing, without deep contributing factors feeding it and giving it power. We experience the effects of dependence when we are attached, in bondage—or as described in the French word "attaché," which translated means "nailed to" a thought pattern, belief system or way of being.

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This might show up as being enslaved to a particular substance, like drugs or alcohol, food, sex, gambling or the other expected forms of addiction.

But it also shows up for those of us who have never had a drug, alcohol or food issue—as being in bondage to beliefs related to low self-worth, procrastination, destructive relationships, resentment, financial lack, control and perfectionism. We can even be “addicted to” or “habitually dependent” on the core wounds of abandonment, rejection and betrayal that may have contributed to the problem in the first place!

But it even goes even deeper than that.

I am convinced that the underlying cause of dependent/addictive ways of being, is based in a deeply rooted and false belief that we are separate and apart from our soul—the home of our innate spiritual intelligence. That intelligence is very clear about our wholeness and magnificence, and is independent of our experience in life.

So dependence is a disconnect from our true identity.

When we have bought into a false sense of self and a subconscious belief that we’re not lovable, not enough, unworthy, etc., those structures are operating at a lower vibrational frequency than that of our true wholeness. This belief pattern inadvertently causes a split in our awareness and we become disconnected from our innate higher vision of life—Soul, God, Love, Universal Presence, or whatever name we choose to call it.

I have come to understand that our true identity is an eternal state of being. It never changes or alters through conditions and it never leaves us. It is unchanging and constant—meaning it is good, worthy, free, lovable, brilliant and more than enough all the time. But I believe that the static interference within our minds: the illusions about who we are and the stories we’ve created to compensate for painful experiences, block us from making a strong connection between this innate higher self and our day-to-day experience. It also blocks the extraordinary benefits of having such a connection.

Why? Because who we really are—on a soul level— isn’t even aware of unworthiness, not-enoughness and all the stories we’ve made up about ourselves.

This disconnect is what Bill Wilson—who wrote the AA Big Book—called a “Spiritual Malady,” a belief that we are separate from our souls.

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Mental Obsession

When we feel spiritually disconnected, many people experience what is called “mental obsession,” which is a persistent unwanted idea or impulse that cannot be eliminated by reasoning. Mental obsession blocks out all other thought, and usually does not abate until it is acted upon (over and over again) or healed at a deep subconscious level.

When an obsession is acted upon—whether we’re talking about a substance, food, gambling, sex, a negative thought, or self-defeating ways of being (i.e., procrastination, resentment, unworthiness, feeling unsafe, unhealthy relationships, etc.)—our brain actually releases a chemical that gives us a sense of instant gratification. Even if the gratification doesn’t feel all that good, it is what we’ve become accustomed to—which keeps us going back for more.

We can all relate to having fearful life-draining thoughts over and over again, even when we try with all our might not to. Scientists have measured more than 1,400 physical and chemical responses to fear—that are independent of our conscious control. These responses are akin to a physical allergy, which often creates a physical need or craving.

Physical Allergy or “Craving”

For those of us who have had a chemical dependence issue in the past, I can tell you that the interplay of craving and mental obsession does not leave you alone. When you’re free of one, you’re often not free of the other and visa versa. You are physically compelled to ride this train to the end of the line where exhaustion, shame, humiliation, and God-knows-what-else is waiting for you.

We often feel so depleted, ashamed and wiped out after one of those physical and/or emotional binges, that we might abstain from whatever our “drug-of-choice” or “emotion-of-choice” happens to be for a few days or weeks. But we ultimately return to that which has become familiar and, because the underlying cause has not been healed, the cycle starts all over again.

“Tapping” Meets Soul Recovery

It is therefore vital that we find tools to interrupt this process in the short term and “re-wire” our thinking for the long term.

My work with Soul Recovery is a step-by-step process to do just that. Re-wiring is necessary so that we can look forward to an existence beyond the confines of our

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disease. I have found that “tapping” is a wonderful tool to support the identification of “densities” in our awareness and can assist in “re-wiring” of our brain to clear away illusions that are buried in our subconscious mind and are fueling addictive and dependent behaviors.

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) known as Tapping, is a psychological acupressure technique, which brings hidden emotions to the surface of our conscious mind, that were often created by our perception of a highly-charged, historical event.

To use a computer metaphor, I like to think of tapping as closing out files hanging out on our computer “desktop.” We might have twelve or more files open at the same time, but decide we’re only going to work on one document at a time. So, we “minimize” the other eleven files to get them out of our awareness. While we’re working on one document, the other documents haven’t been closed – they are just hidden from view and are still ACTIVE. At the end of the day, when we shut down our computer, it won’t completely shut down until we close out all the files that we’ve opened up.

With tapping, we admit the problem – which is the first document we’re working on – the obvious one – the one that’s in our face.

Once we deal with that file, another one pops up that reveals how we feel emotionally about our addiction and about ourselves—maybe reflecting how out of balance we are emotionally.

So we get to work and clear that one too, and OMG, here’s another file that’s popped up – perhaps a particularly painful and shameful event surrounding our addiction.

That one’s cleared, and now here’s the big dog. This one isn’t on your desktop. This is the virus on your “hard drive.” It’s what really matters – our deep core beliefs about life that pertain to everything regarding our identity and our addiction.

The reason why this is the “big dog,” is because **what we believe** is actually what’s running the show, and these low level beliefs are encoded deeply on our hard drive.

When we are in a dependent state of mind, we have invested our trust, confidence and faith into a view of ourselves that is not actually true. This root state generates the ideas, opinions and beliefs that make up our day-to-day experience. This is why we must get down to these fundamental issues and make sense of them.

As we resolve these issues, the negative energy we have around the effects of our lives begin to break down allowing for us to start to feel a reconnection. We can even use

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the same technique to imbue positive affirmations thereby replacing the beliefs and causes that we have inadvertently invested in.

Through this process, the spiritual malady, the mental obsession and the physical allergy can be healed, restoring us to our true identity of peace, joy, fulfillment, empowerment, confidence, freedom and wholeness.

Let's do some Tapping:

Here are the definitions for each part of the body we'll be tapping on:

KC: Karate chop

EB: Eye brow

SE: Side of eye

UE: Under eye

UN: Under nose

CH: Chin

CB: Collar bone

UA: Under arm

TH: Top of head

First, you want to clear about what it is that you're actually addicted to/what is your dependent behavior – i.e., drugs/alcohol, sex, gambling, food, anger, procrastination, fear/worry, anger/resentment, feelings of insecurity/unworthiness, etc.

Write it down in this workbook: For example, I am addicted to drugs/alcohol; I am addicted to anger; I am addicted to relationships that abandon me over and over again; I am addicted to fear; I am addicted to procrastination, etc.

On a scale from 0 to 10, where are you in terms of the severity of this addiction and dependent behavior

Now raise the two index fingers of your dominant hand and start tapping on the side of your non dominant hand (karate chop), and repeat three times:

KC – Even though I'm addicted to _____, I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself.

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Even though I've had this addiction for as long as I can remember, I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself.
Even though this addiction is ruining my life, and I just can't stop, I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself.

Now move to your eyebrow.

EB: This addiction.

SE: This dependent behavior.

UE: It's robbing me of everything.

UN: This addiction is taking over my life.

CH: This addiction has taken over my life.

CB: I have no control over this addiction.

UA: It controls me and I am powerless over it.

TH: This addiction has been with me for as long as I can remember – and I can't imagine my life without it.

On a scale from 0 to 10, where are you now on this issue of addiction?

Now, describe the emotions you feel when you think about your addiction or dependent behavior.

For example: I hate myself because I feel so out of control; I feel so powerless over this addiction; no matter how many times I've tried to heal this addiction or dependent behavior I fail; I'm so angry at myself; I'm so disappointed in myself, I don't know myself without this addiction, who am I if I release this addiction? I don't feel safe if I let it go completely.

On a scale from 0 to 10, what is the intensity of your emotions?

Let's start tapping again:

KC: I feel so angry at myself because I keep doing the same thing over and over again

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– and I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself.

Sometimes I even hate myself because I just can't seem to get better – and I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself.

I feel so angry and disappointed in myself that I'm addicted and dependent on this behavior – and I deeply and profoundly love myself

EB: All this anger.

SE: All this disappointment.

UA: I feel so angry at myself.

UN: I feel so powerless and lost.

CH: I don't know how to heal this addiction.

CB: I feel so hopeless.

UA: No wonder I feel so unworthy and ashamed.

TH: I have no idea who I am without this addiction or behavior.

On a scale of 0 to 10 where are you now emotionally?

Recall a particular event that made you feel so unworthy and so ashamed and unsafe.

Example:

That time spent the mortgage money on drugs; that time I was so drunk, I got a DUI the day before Christmas and my spouse and children were so disappointed in me; that time I promised myself I wouldn't explode in anger at my child, and I did it even when I tried really hard not to, and I saw the pain in their eyes; that time I procrastinated until the last minute for something I really wanted and showed up totally unprepared; that time my ex broke up with me and I stalked them, obsessed over them and called them – over and over again.

Write it out

KC: Even though I felt so abandoned and betrayed by: _____, I deeply and profoundly

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love and accept myself.

Even though I felt so ashamed and humiliated when that happened, I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself.

Even though I felt so angry and enraged when that happened, and I lost control, I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself.

EB: All this anger.

SE: All this anxiety.

UE: All this fear and anxiety.

UN: In every cell of my body.

CH: I feel this fear and anger in every cell of my body every time I think of that experience.

CB: All this shame when I think about how I humiliated myself.

UA: All this pain about that experience.

TH: All this fear, anger and shame I feel in every cell of my body.

On a scale from 0 - 10 where are you now on this issue?

Now for the “big dog.”

What do you believe about yourself around this experience?

Example:

I believe I'm unworthy of true happiness; I believe I'm not deserving of peace of mind and freedom; I believe I'm doomed to a life of pain and rejection; I believe I will always be abandoned and rejected because I'm not worthy of commitment; I believe happiness and fulfillment are for others, and not for me; I believe I've screwed up too many times to be worthy of forgiveness, joy and love. I believe I will die if I give up this addiction. I don't believe I'm safe if I give up what's so familiar to me. Who am I without this addiction? I don't believe I'm safe.

On a scale from 0 – 10, where are you with these beliefs?

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Let's tap:

KC: Even though I don't believe I can ever heal this addiction, I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself.

Even though I believe I am unworthy of freedom and happiness, I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself.

Even though I don't believe I deserve to be happy after all the mistakes I've made, I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself.

EB: All these beliefs.

SE: All these beliefs in every cell of my body.

UA: All these beliefs that I'm not worthy of wholeness.

UN: All these beliefs that I don't have the right to be free and happy.

CH: All these beliefs that it's not safe to change.

CB: All these beliefs that I can't survive without my addiction – in every cell of my body.

UA: All these beliefs.

TH: In every cell of my body.

EB: Maybe that's not true

SE: Maybe that has never been the truth.

UE: Maybe it's all been a lie that I'm unworthy and not enough

UN: Is it really safe for me to believe that I'm okay?

CH: Could it be possible that I am worthy, lovable and good enough?

UA: I would love to believe that. I would love to know that

TH: Maybe it's safe to believe that

EB: I'm willing to release the belief that I'm not worthy – just a little bit

SE: I'm willing to believe that I'm safe if I release these negative beliefs about myself – just a little bit more

UE: I am willing to be willing to release this negative pattern.

UN: Just a little bit more

CH: I'm willing to remember who I really am – just a little bit more

UA: I'm safe – it's okay to release these beliefs and addictions

TH: I'm letting them go even more – even more – letting go – even more.

Take a nice deep breath.

By now, there should be a slight or big opening in your consciousness where you're

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starting to feel into the possibility of something greater for yourself – where the affirmations we’re about to do won’t seem like a fantasy, but an actual possibility.

Here we go.

EB: It’s so wonderful to step into my wholeness

SE: I am centered, free and happy

UE: I deserve to be happy and free because I am worthy.

UN: I remember who I am now – in every cell of my body.

CH: Every cell of my body is waking up and remembering who I am – worthy, lovable, deserving, free, safe, whole and complete

UA: Every cell in my body is awake and alive

TH: I am free of my past addiction and dependent behavior – it doesn’t belong to me.

EB: I am free

SE: I’ve released it

UE: In every cell of my body

UN: I am worthy and deserving of all the good of the Universe

CH: I accept my freedom now – I accept my wholeness now – in every cell of my body

UA: I remember who I am – in every cell of my body

TH: I am alive – awake – free. I am free

Take a deep breath.

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Great Job!

Wow, great work beloved. You really went deep and I know you're feeling an amazing shift right now. You've closed out so many of those "files" and beliefs that were underneath the effect of the addiction.

Do not stop there.

You can take this work even deeper by making amends and cleaning up your side of the street to the people who have been affected by your dependence. This is a wonderful and powerful adjunct to the work you've just done, and it locks it in on an even deeper level.

Morning and evening meditation is another wonderful tool to add to this amazing work.

If you go over to my website www.soulrecovery.org and sign up for the newsletter, you get my twenty-one daily meditations delivered to your inbox, and more detail about Soul Recovery—a process I invite you to explore.

I am so honored to have shared this powerful process with you, and hold in my heart for you a return to freedom, peace and wholeness.

Peace and blessings,

Ester Nicholson

<http://esternicholson.com>



Ester Nicholson, author of *Soul Recovery - 12 Keys to Healing Dependence* is a speaker, teacher, recording artist and former-addict who brings her incredible journey of healing to a real-world inquiry and process that is addressing the ravages of dependence as they occur in contemporary living. Ms. Nicholson infuses the 12-Step process with universal spiritual concepts transforming the treatment of dependence, crisis living and suffering—through her riveting keynote addresses, soul-nurturing music and powerful workshops.

A gifted vocal artist in her own right, Nicholson has toured with Rod Stewart and Bette Midler—in addition to appearing on such television shows as *Oprah*, *The Tonight Show*, *The View*, *Good Morning America* and *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*.

Nicholson is a living example of healing as she explores the life-patterns that create dependence in the first place—the false sense of identity, the challenges of non-acceptance and the interpersonal issues that can tie us up in knots. Her unique *Soul Recovery* process was designed to heal these very issues, "Underneath the evidence is the cause, and those causes are not complicated to heal and resolve with the right set of tools," Ester shares. "*Soul Recovery* is the method I used to heal myself and thousands of others. I truly believe that these tools can transform people's experience into lives very well lived."