

The Saint Jude Program

by Mark Scheeren

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*Two roads diverged in a wood,
and I, I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

Robert Frost

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ntroduction

Baldwin Research Institute

The Baldwin Research Project began in 1989, and the Baldwin Research Institute, Inc. a New York State 501(c) 3 not-for-profit substance use research corporation was founded in 1992.

The Saint Jude Retreats® (founded in 1992) is a division of Baldwin Research Institute, Inc. At the Baldwin Research Institute, Inc. research data have been collected through onsite qualitative and quantitative analysis for the past two decades. That data combined with independent research data from the past half century demonstrate that conventional alcohol and drug treatment programs, including 12-step based programs and many of the new age, holistic, alternative programs, have success rates in the 0-20% range (Appendix A; Appendix B).

Research also indicates that brief intervention, that is, no treatment program at all, has at least a 30% success rate, and that the current treatment paradigm is a failure and may even be detrimental (Appendix A; Appendix B). No treatment produces success rates ranging between 30 and 85% (success rate decreases with an increased exposure to conventional treatment models) (Heyman, 2009), 12-step based treatment programs and support groups produce approximately a 5% success rate (this includes those participating in opiate replacement therapy such as methadone or suboxone maintenance) (USFDA, 2006). And conventional treatment also lowers a person's chance of moderating use. The Saint Jude

Program® has a corroborated independently verified abstinence based overall success rate of 63.5% over its 17-year history (as of 1/09.) More than 75% of our guests have been exposed to multiple conventional treatment programs prior to attending the Saint Jude Program®.

Educational Characteristics of the Saint Jude Program®

The Saint Jude Program® is an educational process to help people learn to overcome substance use problems. The Saint Jude Program® teaches people that the key to changing their lives lies in taking responsibility for their choices regarding drinking and/or drugging. The program then educates them on how to live a life filled with the rewards of their success.

The Saint Jude Program® (SJP®) is based on the Freedom Model® philosophy which holds that all people always move in the direction of what they believe will bring them the greatest level of happiness. The Freedom Model® is also based on the universal principles described herein as the Five Universal Axioms.

The approach laid out here is straightforward. Cognitive Behavioral EducationSM (CBESM) teaches how to make better choices and find success and satisfaction using the proprietary Option Presentation method that has worked for thousands of other peo-

ple with similar problems.

You will learn the meaning and value of self-directed Neuroplasticity, the science of how the mind changes the brain, and how you can put this scientific discipline to work in your life.

The program is educational and based on an entirely different approach from the ones used by the more common counseling, therapeutic, or new age holistic programs. These other methods do not allow individuals the rights of choice, accountability, and power. CBESM lets each person use those qualities which empower him or her to accept personal responsibility for all past, present, and future behavior; to exercise choice based on internal strength, rather than perceived weakness, and to delight in the rediscovery of his or her power. The idea that you can easily change your substance usage habits, which is contrary to the premise of all other treatment programs, is just one of the ways the SJP[®] helps people find a happy, productive life.

Conventional treatment programs teach that abuse of substances is caused by other life factors, usually circumstantial negative factors such as past traumas, a bad marriage, anxiety, mental illness, depression, or job-related pressures, etc., or by genetic or biological factors, all of which are out of the substance users' control. The SJP[®] dispels the myths about genetic and biological causes and then separates two unrelated topics: substance use and negative life experiences. This separation allows you to deal with each independent of the other. The SJP[®] differs from all other programs in that it is based on choice, personal responsibility, and freedom from fear. Specifically, it does not maintain that sobriety can only be achieved when a certain moral living code is achieved, or a certain spiritual belief is accepted, or happiness is attained.

The SJP[®] separates and addresses substance use options from other life behaviors and choices. You will learn how to achieve success in both the "sobriety choice event" and as a separate topic altogether in the "continual process called living." Once you have learned how to separate substance use issues from life quality issues, and you make the final decision as to which substance usage option best fits your goals, needs, and values, you will immediately

become ready to tackle the most fulfilling aspects of this program. You will learn how to attain and then keep joy, peace, love, purpose, and empowerment alive every day of your new living experience. The life change choices you make will continue to evolve and expand and produce greater joy and fulfillment with time and practice. If you build your new life on the time-tested methods contained in this program they will bring about personal changes for the remainder of your life.

For more detailed information about Cognitive Behavioral EducationSM, the proprietary educational methodology developed by Baldwin Research Institute, Inc., please refer to the following website: www.cognitivebehavioraleducation.com.

Social Characteristics of the Saint Jude Program

The Program is structured so that the opportunity exists for people to learn how to function and interact with others in an appropriate and adult manner.

Learning how adults productively work together is a vital aspect of the retreat house experience.

Retraining yourself on how to relax, combat boredom, and participate in pleasurable activities that do not involve substance use is an important component of the program.

Participation in the various social activities is optional but strongly recommended. You will have the opportunity to participate in a myriad of activities throughout your stay. Please feel free to speak with the Director if you have an idea for an appropriate group activity that may not already be offered. If available, we will do our best to accommodate your request.

However, just as in life, the benefits received from a social/educational program are directly proportional to what one personally invests in it. The primary responsibility for change is created by the guest rather than the program. We teach what success is and how to achieve it, but the guest has to "do it."

The educational component consists of reading, work assignments, and practicing newly learned techniques in real life situations.

Self-evaluation

The first thing to understand is that no one can assess another person's drinking or drug problem(s). You are the only one who can realistically evaluate your alcohol and drug use, so only you can assess the seriousness of your problem if, in fact, there is a problem. If you enrolled in this program because you were pressured to by your family, spouse, friend, etc., you have a unique opportunity to take a step back and evaluate your life. Take heart in knowing you are here because your loved ones care and truly want you to find happiness in life.

For those of you who may have legal problems associated with substance use hanging over your head, remember your situation could be much worse: you could have been forced into traditional residential treatment where you would be taught to believe in a false disease. The SJP® will provide you with an entirely new outlook that opens doors to opportunities that may help you avoid far more serious future problems. This program does not force people to adhere to a method or philosophy. Our mission is to educate and empower you to make mature, productive, and positive choices in all areas of your life. In the SJP® you hold all the cards and have complete freedom to learn or not to learn, and to apply what you have learned or not.

The Three Paths

You can complete this program with one of three outcomes:

- You can use substances again.
- You can choose abstinence or moderation and remain generally unsatisfied with your life.
- You can choose abstinence or moderation and become fully satisfied with your life.

The choice is yours. The program leaves open all possibilities. The SJP® does not make judgments regarding moderation. Research shows that most people who have not been subjected to the conventional treatment model can and do moderate or learn to

abstain. With that said, the SJP® recommends abstinence, as it is the safest option. We sincerely hope you pick the path that brings you the most happiness and long-term satisfaction, which, after all, is why you enrolled in this program.

This program will discuss various aspects of culture, psychology, religion, career, family, goals, maturity, immaturity, as well as many other facets of life. We have found that for some who are enrolled in this program the mere mention of the word "religion" or "God" causes anger, anxiety, or suspicion. This is usually because they have been to one or more treatment programs that advertised as being non-religious, only to find this assertion was untrue and actually hid a back-door religious agenda. This hidden religious agenda is not just misleading; in some cases it is harmful to assert that a religious program is the only way to overcome substance use problems.

In fact, sobriety is not dependent on a belief in God. This is proven every day by the thousands who moderate or abstain based on a simple choice, internal fortitude, and changed values. The truth is alcohol and drugs have no power. They are inert substances, not living, breathing, supernatural entities. Therefore, no supernatural element is needed for a person to make the choice not to ingest them.

The vast majority of those people enrolled in this program have a religious belief system, and this is highly personal. The SJP® has no desire to get involved with anyone's personal religious beliefs. Let us reassure you that the SJP® has neither a blatant nor hidden religious agenda. The SJP® teaches that you can believe whatever you want to believe. The beliefs of the atheist are held in the same regard as those of people whose beliefs include a God or spiritual being. Your personal religious views are yours alone.

In the subsequent chapters, when God or religion are mentioned it is merely in general terms for educational purposes only. Approximately 75% of our participants have at some time in the past been involved with negative treatment models. Be reassured that in this program you will not be asked to believe in concepts that defy your common sense or your own private personal views. The SJP® has none of that! Its

purpose is to empower you to think for yourself in a confident, mature, and productive fashion. It will teach you how to have the courage to make positive choices. It will also offer insights into the basic principles of love, compassion, honesty, and of course, courage. There will be discussions on goal-setting, keeping commitments, correcting your past mistakes, and how to enjoy living life to its fullest potential.

If done correctly, this program will replace a life of misery (or general unhappiness or discontent) with a life of fulfillment, long-term happiness, and joy. Not only will it have a dramatic impact on your life, but as your life changes, you will make a positive impact on the lives of those around you.

For those who feel their life is satisfactory (except for the drug and alcohol problems, of course) what the Saint Jude Program® will do is help you to improve and enhance your life experiences, dramatically.

Our good wishes are with you as you begin, as thousands have before you, a journey into a life free from substance-use problems and filled with new insights and personal power.

Now, please refer to Workbook 1, read over the learning objectives for this particular section, and answer the review questions. Once complete, you can then continue on to Chapter 1 or the Allegory of the Sun, which many have found helpful.

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llegory of the Sun

Imagine that the sun represents life. The sun is light and warmth, and it creates the ability to navigate and function for all the creatures of the Earth. Now, further imagine you were born onto a large, flat, smooth surface where all the necessities of life are available for the taking. Food is provided from the sun's energy. This in turn nourishes you, and keeps you alive. You do not need shelter because it is always the perfect temperature, and there is always the perfect amount of light.

You and the others born here grow up together in ease and comfort. Every day the warmth of the sun brings smiles to you and the other children. Every day is full of playfulness and happiness, tranquility and peace. Then something happens. As you grow older you begin to question why life works the way it does. Your travels and perception of the world broaden. Around this time, let's say you're seven, someone hurts you, and you react with anger. At the exact instant that you choose to feel anger a small boulder appears in front of you. Just like that, BOOM! You have seen this happen to other people, but never before to yourself. You don't know how the rock appeared or from where, but it was clear that bad or negative thoughts or actions brought about this strange phenomenon.

Sometimes the rocks are small and other times they are jagged and large as a house. You notice as you get older that some of the other young men and women have a lot of these boulders in their living areas while

others have none at all. Occasionally, during difficult times, a few stones appear around you. You learn to accept this, but wondered why this kept happening.

Then one day on your way to go play with some friends, you pass by a man about 30 years old who is surrounded so completely by boulders he can no longer move. There are so many rocks that their shadows cover him in a thick blanket of darkness. You can't actually see him, but you can hear him crying. He sits there wailing and cursing the darkness. He curses everyone for abandoning him. Every time you pass, you try to help him, but he is so busy yelling that you can't get him to hear you. "He must be insane," you think to yourself, "only crazy people act that way."

Every day you pass this man, and it begins to bother you. Why does the world work this way?

A furious, sickening feeling of resentment wells up inside you. It's just not fair! Suddenly a shooting pain darts from your foot to your knee. When you look down you see that a large jagged rock has pinned your foot to the smooth earth. You look around for help, but the only people close to you at this moment are others in the same predicament. Some are completely buried, others only partially. To your left you can see your friends playing happily, but they are too far from you to hear your cries for help.

Instantly, you become jealous of them and another boulder lands in front of you. You curse, and another rock appears. Now you are in the shade. The pile is getting deeper, and the sunlight can no longer reach

you. You feel a part of you slowly dying. Each time another boulder lands rage wells up inside of you. Now the rocks are piling so fast it seems uncontrollable and overwhelming. The pain becomes unbearable.

Fear fills your heart and with it, more rocks! Frightened and furious you scream for the boulders to stop. Without sunlight you cannot find your way out of this horrible nightmare, so you demand that the sunlight find you! But nothing happens. Why, you ask, does life have to be this way? Self-pity dominates your thoughts accompanied by anger and arrogance. The rock walls close in and your movements are restricted until you are left totally immobile.

If the sun will not shine on your terms, well, then you will simply live in darkness; and that is just what you do. Weeks, months, and then years pass by and your anger continues to build, first at the sun, and then at humanity for abandoning you. "This is so unfair," you say to yourself, "Why do these rocks keep falling on me?" You feel cold and uncomfortable and

dark. Memories of the good years haunt you and you curse life for giving you such pain. As you grow older, you begin to see that your life could be filled with darkness and despair forever. The light and warmth of your childhood are now distant memories and difficult to recall. You are cold, uncomfortable, and afraid. You give way to despair, and finally accept that this will be your lot in life. You feel there is no reason for you to be alive. Year after year, your mind contains only habitual negative thoughts and your connection to the light and heat of the sun are now so distant it seems impossible you will ever experience them again. You begin to wonder if the sun ever actually existed.

You wonder if your memories are real or just some crazy childhood fantasy. You feel hopeless. Your hatred for mankind grows, as does the weight of the pile. Your self-pity is piling up on you and killing you. Day in and day out you brood over the injustice of this horrible life and despair. You want to die, but can't find the courage to kill yourself. Deep in your heart

you know that your thinking is flawed, but your pride cloaks the harsh truth: that all of this misery is your responsibility.

Memories of the good years haunt you and you curse life for giving you such pain.

you slowly have become crippled by the weight of the rocks now pinning you down.

You hear happy people pass by and you sit and shiver. They ask if you want help. You yell back, "Where were you before when I wanted help?! I don't want anything from you now. Besides, I'm fine. Do I look as if I need your help?" Even as you say this you feel completely embarrassed by your pathetic situation. Their words of pity and compassion only make you angrier. 'How dare they pity me?' you think to yourself.

Another passerby offers his assistance. You want to make sure these people understand that under no condition would you ever want their help, now or in the future! After all, you have everything under control. You reply, "Get away from me! I'm not a charity case. Go bother someone else." More rocks crush you in the silence and darkness.

As the years go by, you become accustomed to the

Then one day you remember that pathetic man from your childhood trapped in the enormous pile of rock, and, in a moment of lucidity you realize you have become that wretched man. Memories resurface and things you have not thought about in years flood your consciousness. The time when your life was filled with the joy of running free with the friends you loved, the sun on your back, and the smell of flowers in the air, a time when you knew nothing about loneliness. You begin to cry. You feel as if you live in hell and now you begin to wonder if this is a hell you have created. You whimper one simple statement to yourself, "I can't live like this anymore—please help me." Then with all the strength you have left, you scream, "Help me—please help me!!"

Suddenly, from far away, you hear a voice shouting through the maze of stone; "Is someone in this pile?" You keep screaming for help. The claustrophobia

has become unbearable. "Please find me," you keep yelling. Over the next few days, you notice the crippling weight of the stones above you eases a bit and a few small rays of light filter through the darkness. Your eyes squint and sting from their brightness. As the sunlight begins to illuminate the horrible place where you have been living for the last 20 years you see how hideous it really is. For a moment you think remaining in the darkness might be better. At least in the dark you did not have to look at your situation.

You can hear voices from outside calling that they will help you get out as long you are willing to keep trying to communicate. You say, "Yes, yes, I am willing." And you strain and force yourself to move. The pain is excruciating and blood flows hot through your body; your head pounds. You are able to move just enough for the stones to move slightly, and sunlight begins to stream through the holes you jarred open.

People are now surrounding the pile. You can hear them. For several days they slowly pull away the weighted mass above you, making it easier for you to move. The sunlight continues to filter in bringing increasing heat and light. You can hear people talking as they work, saying things such as, "I didn't even know there was someone in this mountain. I've been walking by it for years."

You hear another person warn, "Get ready to help him; he will not be able to see very well. He will be weak and malnourished. Sometimes these people are blind and riddled with cancer." These statements frighten you. For the first time in 20 years you can move enough to take a look at your hands, arms, and legs and you are horrified at what you see. You wish for a brief moment that the sunlight would go away so no one, including yourself, could see what you have become.

As soon as you have this thought you hear cries from above, "Be careful! The pile is collapsing!" A familiar crushing weight overwhelms your weak frame. The sunlight and warmth are almost completely shut off again, but a few beams still filter through. The people's voices, more faint now, seem frantic. They are yelling, "I can't see him anymore! Move that rock! Hurry, get the shovel machine, we're losing him!"

You realize it is time to make a decision. If they are

to find you before the weight and darkness crush the life out of you, you will have to cooperate, and take action. With all the strength you have left you scream so they can once again locate you in the mass. Your weakened heart pounds and doubt grips you. What if the sun can't make enough light for the people to find me? What if I am too embarrassed to face the healthy people above me? What if I manage to live another 20 years in this rocky prison? What if, what if, what if...? You begin to weep.

Even with doubt and fear racing uncontrollably through your very soul you continue to scream so the excavators can locate you.

Although fear consumes your mind, your mounting faith and courage give you hope. For the first time in 20 years you must rely on your strength and on the sunlight to shine brightly enough for you to be found. It is not the same as when you were a child. In those days the sun was always shining down upon you. You never lived in shadows, so you knew nothing but sunshine and smiles. Life was good, and it was easy. Youth is like that. Now the light feels painful and uncomfortable, and yet, it is vaguely familiar and... well... it's warm.

Faith is a difficult concept for you. You learned about it when you were younger, and you never really understood it. You can have faith in what is right in front of you, things you can control, but now you have to have faith in the goodness of a world that has hurt you, in a system called life that allows for pain and darkness as well as sunlight and happiness.

You are standing at a crossroads in your weakened condition and must either continue the fight or be crushed one last time. With tears streaming down your face, you decide to continue the fight and yield to the laws and rules of this world. Almost immediately your arrogance, fear, and sadness begin to fall away. You begin to realize the vast amount of energy it took to be unhappy all those years.

Suddenly, you feel hands and two strangers reach in and pull your limp body out of the excavated hole. What you witness through painful eyes is startling. Squinting, you see what looks like a dormant volcano composed of thousands of stones. You are overwhelmed with emotion as tears of joy flow. The first thing you notice is happy faces of those who worked

so hard to help you, but what you notice next is almost too much for you: the sun is in exactly the same location it was when you saw it last, 20 years ago as you walked down the street, learning how to hate and fear life. The sun never went away, you did.

As the rescuers carry you out of the crater, the horror of your rocky prison overwhelms your senses. It is a monument to fear and a physical manifestation of a determination to be right in spite of the pain it has caused. It is a prison built from an unwillingness to accept the idea that life could be difficult, but you had to remain positive, nonetheless. Unhappiness, arrogance, and adolescent pride created the barrier between you and the life-preserving sunlight.

Those who have helped you are now saying that it is your fault you have had to live in this hellish prison, and that your adult life has been postponed because of your choice to hide from it.

They remind you that people were willing to help you from the time that first jagged boulder landed on your foot when you were young. They explain how the sun and all its warmth were always there; it was just that you decided to build a fortress to block it out. Now, they say, if you want to truly be and remain free, you must accept this as the truth. You eagerly agree, because you now know that anything is better than the way you have been living, anything!

They say you have to begin by figuring out how each boulder was made. Your liberators say that although you may rebel at the thought that you created the stone prison, if you look at each and every stone and describe honestly what you see, it will become quite obvious that each was fashioned by your own mind, from your thoughts, decisions, and actions. The sun did not leave you; you built a fort that literally blocked you from life. You have ignored the fact that every time you made a poor, self-centered decision you were creating a barrier of hate and fear.

You had convinced yourself that the boulders were constructed and controlled by the sun and came out of thin air to punish you. Now you see how silly and tragic this belief was. The sun never moved from its place in the sky. Its presence was unwavering. You realize the way you connected its presence to the rocks was irrational. While it is now becoming obvious to

you that the sun did not create the boulders, it sure seemed believable then. These were the thoughts of an adolescent who was unwilling to accept adulthood. Your own dishonesty allowed for this faulty thinking.

You decided a long time ago to lie about the countless hours you spent constructing each and every stone. The rest of the world watched you with pity as you spent every waking moment sculpting each negative emotion into a boulder or jagged stone, a process of slow, self-indulgent martyrdom. While you were constructing the prison of darkness in which you might have remained for the rest of your life, you blamed everyone for not helping you get out.

If the sun never stopped shining and you are responsible for the rocks that imprisoned you, and each one is labeled and signed with your name, it is time to stop building walls and reach out to those around you with love and acceptance. It is certainly time to stop being so arrogant and begin living a mature life caring for your loved ones.

Suddenly you can remember making the decision to cop-out on life, to give up and hide from the sun and from a life that seemed too difficult to face. All the memories of building the awful fortress come flooding back. Every stone, whether jagged or smooth, large or small, has a negative memory associated with it. These memories open the door to an epiphany: for years you have convinced yourself you were the victim of some cosmic fate, but the workers are right. It is your fault. Then you realize with overwhelming relief, this means you have the power to change it.

You are now armed with the truth. The workers instruct you how to classify and dispose of the prison piece by piece. This will take a tremendous amount of effort, but you begin and it feels good. Each time you throw a stone in the crusher the memory of it diminishes. Each disposed-of stone is one that can never be used again.

There are times when your faith in the future is tested. You have to rely on the simple idea that life will not always happen on your terms and how you react to the way it does happen decides your fate. You realize it has always been up to you. The sun will shine — forever. The decision to stay in the sun or not is completely up to you.

Within a short period of time, about six weeks, you become an expert in disposal techniques, and you have become much stronger from the hard physical work. There are days when you wish the pile would simply disappear, that the sun would get rid of it. But maturely you realize this is your job. The sun's only job is to shine, to provide enough light so that you can take care of business. The mess is yours to clean up and the future is yours to build.

Luckily, the workers stay by your side and give you advice, direction, and encouragement. The workers keep telling you that you have to work hard to stay in the sunshine even when you feel you do not deserve to be. The workers tell you that, although the sun is not directly on you at all times as you walk through life, you are always receiving enough light. Sometimes in life you may walk through the shadows thrown by someone else's mountainous creation, and the sun may not be in direct view. But because of your experience you now have faith and confidence that the sun is still there, even when it is temporarily out of direct sight.

For 20 years the sun has been waiting patiently to shine on you once again. Because of its light you were able to see your signature on the rocks with clarity. This all makes sense to you now.

At this point you dispose of the last stones because it seems silly to do anything less. It feels too good to be back in the light — too good to leave any stone in place. The workers let you know there is still more work to do — much more. The only way to avoid building a new prison is to make absolutely certain you do not allow the old thoughts and habits to overtake you again. This is not hard because now that you have found out the truth about yourself and how childishly you had been living, why would you go back to that? The sun's rays are revitalizing you, but as the days wear on, boredom creeps in, and new goals must

be set. Although your life has improved considerably, there has to be more to it than sitting in the sunshine taking up space. It is now time for you to become a worker. This is an honor, but it also scares you. You are not used to being productive. However, you remind yourself that you climbed out of a horrendous self-created mess and achieved peace so anything is possible.

As a starting point you begin by trying to remember the dreams you had 20 years ago. You are now ready to dream again and start setting and achieving new goals. This new life is uncharted territory. As the years pass, your eyes, limbs, and heart grow healthy and strong. You have the knowledge that good things come to those who work hard and care for others. You feel strong and confident, able to tackle obstacles in life that once seemed impossible. You realize that faith in yourself grows stronger as your confidence and experience grow.

As time passes you discover that adulthood is not something to be feared, but should be enjoyed with action and love for others. You see that the only real difference between your mature life and those days of easy youthful living is that your new playfulness has a much greater impact on the world and much more than your 20 years of negativity. The sun will continue to shine and you will remain as energized as you were when you were a child playing with your friends for hours on end. This is your job from now until your death — to be happy, so you can pass this on to the next generation. Let the light become a working part of you, until you can shine as brightly as the sun, itself.

Now, please refer to Workbook 1 and read over the learning objective for this particular section, and also answer the review question. Once complete, you can then continue on.

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Chapter 1

The Freedom Model®

Denial Does Not Exist

Most people enrolled in this program have been through the alcohol and drug treatment mill, and have learned many ideas about substance use that are incorrect. These erroneous ideas, methods, and theories can become serious stumbling blocks that stop people from gaining the wonderful life that awaits them. Labels like “alcoholic,” “addict,” or “co-dependent” can actually stop people from seeing who they really are and how they can effectively deal with their problems. If people blindly accept these labels and base their actions on wrong assumptions, progress towards happiness can be hampered or even blocked completely.

Traditional programs label people. These labels become central to each person’s understanding as to who they are. They forget they have choices and the ability to change their own lives for something much better and certainly less self-defeating. These same people, if misguided long enough, behave as the labels specify, and eventually the label becomes a part of their identity. In other words, what they believe about themselves, they become.

In the field of helping people overcome substance use problems, there are two camps: the control model programs and the Freedom Model® developed by Baldwin Research Institute, Inc. This program is based on the Freedom Model.® A comprehensive discussion that explains the differences between the two philosophies will be presented in detail later in this text.

By way of a brief explanation, the control model is any program that teaches how and what to think according to moral and behavioral standards created, for you, by others. In contrast, the Freedom Model® empowers you to establish your own moral and behavioral standards based on what you decide are best for you. The Freedom Model® does not use coercion or “bait and switch” tactics to force you to think in a particular way. Rather, it uses certified Cognitive Behavioral EducationSM techniques such as our proprietary Option Presentation method. The instructors present options, educating you on Universal principles that are time tested and proven to positively change lives. Ultimately, you will rebuild your life to the exact extent that you decide is appropriate for you.

The Denial Theory

All control model alcohol and drug rehabilitation programs promote the denial theory. This is where the indoctrination of powerlessness over your own life begins. As such, this chapter is the beginning of working to reverse any damage that may have been created by “learned helplessness” techniques that are the foundation of control model programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous® and Narcotics Anonymous®, and drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs in general.

If a person says to a trained control model professional, such as certified counselors, therapists, or other addiction professionals, “I do not have a problem

with alcohol or drugs,” the immediate response from the professional will be, “You are in denial. The first sign of a true alcoholic or addict is that the person denies that the problem exists.” This, of course, is a circular argument that defies any reasonable logic. After a trained control model professional asks, “do you think you have a problem,” whatever you say will be self-incriminating.

As the conversation continues, the client may say, “So what you’re telling me is, if I deny a problem exists, that means it actually does exist, and the only other alternative is to agree that I have a problem. Either way, I end up having a problem!” The client’s frustration serves to validate the professional’s argument: “If you really don’t have a problem, then why are you upset? Why all the defensiveness and aggression?”

The very idea that a person who uses alcohol or drugs to excess does not know there is a problem is simply absurd. What these pro-denial theorists are really trying to do is rationalize why heavy substance users consistently behave in a ways that seem foolish, tragic, and many times destructive, hurting themselves and those around them. It is impossible for a person who has never struggled with substance use problems to understand why substance users continue this behavior when it has become so problematic for them. Pro-denial theorists believe that people would stop their self-destructive behavior if they knew the seriousness of their condition and the obvious lack of judgment in their choices.

But this theory does not stand up to scientific scrutiny. The truth is scientific research shows that people can only move their lives in a direction of their choosing, not in a direction of their not choosing. In other words, people do have control over their decisions and actions and will do exactly as they choose, all the time. Substance users, who may experience severe consequences for their behavior, make the conscious decision to use, in spite of negative consequences, because that is what they want to do. They certainly may lie to others about their motives and/or their behaviors, but this form of denial is not internal to the user. It is for the purposes of self-preservation so they may continue their behaviors while attempting to avoid the judgment of others.

The first reaction by pro-denial theorist to the idea of personal responsibility is: “How do you know substance users know what they are doing? You cannot read their minds. You cannot really say that substance users always know what is or is not their problem. Look at the evidence! These people would never hurt themselves or those around them if they truly knew what their habit was doing to them and others!”

This emotional argument certainly makes perfect sense at a glance, but in actuality is fatally flawed in two fundamental ways. First, when a pro-denial theorist states that the “substance user is in denial,” it is they who are making the judgment of what the substance user is or is not thinking and feeling. Not only do they say they know what the substance user is thinking (i.e. “This person is in denial about his addiction!”), but they also claim to know what substance users are thinking more accurately than the substance users themselves! Their reasoning goes something like this: “I know substance users are in denial, because if they knew what they were doing, well... they wouldn’t do it! Anyone can see that!” The arrogance of this logic is quite astonishing.

In stark contrast, the Saint Jude Program® takes an opposite and far more enlightened position; we listen to what you are saying, and we believe you. That is the basis for the Freedom Model® principles and the CBESM method of instruction. You know yourself better than anybody knows you, and only you can judge whether your behavior and choices are a problem for you. That is not to say that your substance use does not affect others negatively, as in many cases it can and does. If and when it does, that is usually quite obvious to everyone involved, as those people impacted by your choices and behaviors will oftentimes tell you all about it. The truth is regardless of whether or not your behaviors have a price, (i.e. hurt feelings, destroyed marriages, lost jobs, health issues, legal problems, etc.,) you have already decided that you are willing to pay that price.

At this point your options are clear: you can either continue to accept the price or change the behavior. It is not the purpose of this program to make that decision for you. Instead, this program will present options and guide you to a set of tools that already exist

within you. These tools will enable you to make lasting changes in your life. The program will not coerce you, nor will it presume to know what you are thinking. As for identifying what needs changing in your life, we leave those decisions completely up to you.

We know from research that people are not able to conduct any action in their lives, including seemingly destructive behavior, without cognitively choosing to do so first. (Thagard, 2008) When people, regardless of who they are, judge the substance user's behaviors as inconceivable and wrong, and then draw the conclusion based solely on this judgment that the substance user must be in denial or they would not behave this way, the denial theory is then used to support and explain the bad or wrong behavior. This round robin rationale is based on the value system of whom ever is making the judgment; in other words the family member, friend, or professional makes the judgment based on what they believe is good and bad or right and wrong. From this explanation it becomes easy to see that denial is a theory implemented to excuse the destructive choices and actions made by an active substance user.

Distinctly lacking in the denial theory is the reality that substance users already know that the choices they are making to create their own personal happiness do not fit into the accepted notion of responsible behavior. Therefore, the only way for substance users to continue to enjoy themselves, while limiting harsh criticism and judgment of others, are to openly deny knowledge of the consequences of their choices.

Internally, substance users know they are paying a steep price for their instant gratification. This process is not unlike a teenager who gets caught doing something wrong and simply lies about it. In these cases, it is usually true that a lie stuck to is as good as the truth. That is not to say that repeatedly telling the same lie eventually becomes truthful. Rather, it's observing that never admitting what is actually true, allows substance users to remain in the lie that suits them.

With respect to the choices that negatively affect

other's lives and society in general, substance users either outwardly deny the problem or blame others for the negative short and long term results of their choices. This lying and laying blame makes the denial theory seem even more plausible. The substance user will then continue the problematic behavior to receive its temporary benefits, but the only denying going on is to those who are displeased with the substance user's instant gratification indulgence. Inside, substance users know what they are doing and are quite committed to it.

So, the first flawed assumption made by control model theorists is that the "substance user is in denial." The second false assumption is that substance users must not be in control of their thoughts and choices. However, as we have already discussed human actions cannot occur without mental consent first; therefore all actions, whether bad or good, are within the full control of the person creating them

All actions, whether bad or good, are within the full control of the person creating them.

(barring a minority of individuals with certain traumatic brain injuries, certain neurological illnesses or severe mental disorders, etc., and even these examples have been up for debate).

It is difficult for those who are well intentioned and who work within the substance abuse treatment industry and, most difficult, for families and friends who care deeply for the substance user, to understand the reason for the substance user's continuing problematic behavior. Seemingly, substance users destroy everything worthwhile in life driven solely by their desire for a little temporary relief or happiness. To the non-substance user the price paid for that momentary happiness seems far too high. It is even more difficult for professionals, family members, and friends to comprehend that the substance user repeatedly makes the choice to use substances, regardless of the negative consequences that are likely to occur. They think, "Obviously, people don't choose to use alco-

hol and drugs over their career, their family, their health..., do they?" The truth is, yes, they do.

This is a hard pill to swallow. The reality of how human nature works proves over and over again that people knowingly choose options that they, personally, believe will bring them the greatest benefits, albeit temporary. They make these temporary choices even though their choices may not be the most productive or result in positive long term outcomes. Then, there are substance users who simply do not care about consequences at all. Substance use is so enjoyable for them they continue the behavior right into their grave. Their happiness option list may be so short-sighted that it contains only one option: getting high or drunk. This is why this program's CBESM Option Presentation approach is so beneficial. Any time you present a person with new lifestyle choices, that individual then has the ability to move towards these new options, if they so choose. Without new options being presented, that person may simply assume their current circumstances are the only option available. They proceed through life as if they have no choices and waste what could have been a productive and enjoyable life; or worse, they meet an unnecessary early demise due to their perception of their limited options.

As mentioned previously, the CBESM method presented in Saint Jude Program[®] of allowing the substance users to rebuild their own lives, with their own motivation and creative power, rather than a professional or therapist telling them what and how to conduct themselves is based on the Freedom Model[®] principles.

The Freedom Model[®]

The Freedom Model[®] is not a program. It is a universal philosophy that states that all people have the right, the ability, and the inherent tools to think freely and to exercise those thoughts through free choice and free will, from birth to death, and that a single drive motivates every person in the human race: the pursuit of happiness.

Examples of the Freedom Model[®] in action are the principles set forth in the Constitution of the United

States of America and its Amendments, the Bill of Rights. The positive results of personal empowerment and responsibility that are set forth in that document for our society, and the world as a whole are, and have been, massive (The Constitution of the United States). The principles of total freedom of mind and the pursuit of happiness allow for people to exploit the immense power of thought and subsequent positive action that exists within every human being. That same power resides inside of you. That power can be used to overcome and/or regulate substance use and to build a profoundly more productive and happier quality of life.

Both the residential Saint Jude Program[®] and its companion program, the Saint Jude Home Program,[®] are based on self-empowerment, self-assessment, and lives motivated by the pursuit of happiness. Both have provided freedom of mind and thought to thousands who once felt trapped and depressed. Even the method of education, CBESM, is Freedom-Model[®] based.

The writings and lessons throughout this program will not coerce you or tell you how to think or what to do, and they do not make any judgments about your current lifestyle or presume to know what may be best for you. Instead, the CBESM instructor helps you identify areas in your life that you think may be problematic and then presents you with a variety of life options that offer motivation for you to change the parts of your life you currently find dissatisfying. These two philosophical components, non-confrontational option presentation and happiness driven motivation, will have a profound effect on your life if you have the willingness to keep an open mind and to change.

Happiness is a relative concept. A person who shoots heroin or drinks a case of beer each day may see this as happiness while another individual may find happiness in changing careers or landing an airplane or... You get the point. The span of preferences of what brings happiness to each individual is completely personal and the options are infinite. With CBESM you literally get to write your own script and plan your own life.

The primary purpose of this program is to provide you with information and guide you through a process that will allow you to choose the path to greater hap-

piness in your life. The ultimate result of the CBESM is empowerment, encouragement, and confidence-building that you create by following through with the process presented in the subsequent chapters.

The Control Model

Any substance abuse program that is not based on the Freedom Model[®] Axioms is a control model program. Within the control model are various programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous[®] and all its derivative programs, the Minnesota Model, methadone maintenance programs, doctor-driven opiate replacement therapies, antabuse therapy, various counseling and therapy models, etc. There are thousands of variations of the control model. Many derivations offer programs for behaviors other than substance use such as gambling, sex, phobias, and the like.

While these control model programs are less than helpful, there are beneficial applications for the control model in other arenas. The military is one example of an institution that is dependent upon the control model philosophy to create conformity in the chain of command as a means of greater safety and effectiveness in wartime. In this case, the control model has the ability to create structure in extreme chaos. However, when it comes to substance use programs, there is absolutely no need for a control model formula to exist, as substance use is completely a personal choice, and as such can only be controlled by the individuals themselves. The Freedom Model[®] philosophy is revolutionizing how substance users are helped, and has the potential to bring positive change to public policy and public perceptions of the substance use problem. People deserve and have the right to run their personal lives.

To understand this life-changing philosophy is to fully understand the following statement: all people always move in the direction of what they perceive will bring them the most happiness at every given moment of life. This statement is bold, absolute, and follows certain logic that you may initially reject. It is the essence of the Freedom Model[®] principles.

Because a certain individual makes choices and behaves in a way that is seemingly destructive or does

not follow someone else's code of ethics or morality, does not mean their choices and behaviors are not thought out and thoroughly intended to bring about some level of personal happiness. These choices are a perceived path to happiness for that particular person at that particular moment in time. This is true of all people, substance users and non-substance users alike. What one person may perceive and judge as downright awful may bring happiness to another. Removing personal judgment by others about good and bad and right and wrong allows for some strange and sometimes horrific behaviors to bring about personal happiness. People who choose to self-mutilate, people who choose to use substances to excess, and people who are racist and filled with hate are examples of culturally unacceptable behaviors that seem to be contrary to the statement about happiness being the motivation behind all human decisions. The list is endless, as are all human behaviors and choices.

It is vitally important to understand that the Freedom Model[®] is not a philosophy that encourages moral anarchy or creating a lawless or a self-destructive society filled with abusive or suicidal behavior. The Freedom Model[®] does not champion the negative behaviors listed above, but simply uses these examples as extreme cases of where happiness to one person is impossible to understand by another, yet these negative behaviors are nonetheless happiness to the participant. The Freedom Model[®] states the truth that all behavior is subjective and what brings happiness to one person may be impossible for others to comprehend. Therefore, trying to control what makes others happy is impossible. Attaining happiness exists within each person completely independent from everyone else.

These examples are not the commonly held view of happiness and joy, but not all people fall into the largest part of the bell curve of accepted behavior. Many live on the edges where, for example, the harsh racist may find a moment of increased confidence by cutting down others they perceive as different. This sense of being "above" or "better" than others offers a perception of gratification. The heroin user finds happiness in the temporary euphoric sensations of injecting heroin, just as the drinker finds happiness

in the temporary euphoria created by ingesting alcohol. Other choices that are more generally accepted as bringing happiness such as attending your child's graduation, getting married, or winning a championship basketball game, makes the theory that people are always motivated by happiness much easier to accept and comprehend.

In regards to this program, the Freedom Model® philosophy uses CBESM as the learning technique that you, the participant has control over. You will evaluate your problems, you will critique your lifestyle, and you will decide what truly makes you happy. In this process you are your judge and you are the teacher. The program will simply lay out the tools for you to search for greater happiness and fulfillment in your life. Unlike programs based on judgments by others, you get to exercise your own thoughts, dreams, and aspirations in the privacy of your own mind.

Saint Jude Program® instructors are not counselors, addictionologists, or therapists. They are trained Certified CBESM Program Instructors who are there to help you with any and all questions you may have about the Saint Jude Program®. They will not probe into your privacy or claim they understand exactly how you feel. The truth is no one can understand exactly how another feels. These Certified CBESM Program Instructors do, however, understand a fundamental principle: how you can change your life. Their job is to provide only the help you ask for so that you are better prepared to make decisions about your life and what you would like to change. This is not therapy, it is education.

While the Saint Jude Program® curriculum is designed to put all control where it belongs, in your hands, programs based on the control model do the opposite: they take away your control, not allowing you to make your own life choices. Control model programs are ineffective because they teach individuals they are powerless to change their own behavior, powerless to make the choice to abstain, and powerless to change their lives on their own. Control model programs create a learned helplessness which is the opposite of confidence and maturity. These programs have been ineffective for more than 70 years. In fact, control model substance use programs

that systematically teach people they are powerless to change their behaviors have been, through extensive research, proven to be harmful (Appendix A; Appendix B).

People who find happiness in activities that are seemingly destructive certainly may want to be introduced to other options that may provide greater long-term and even greater short-term satisfaction. Again, that is what the Saint Jude Program® and CBESM is all about: option presentation, not judgment. In presenting new options to the student, a new world may come into view, one much more fulfilling than the choices currently being made.

We know from decades of research that when individual thought is controlled by others, such control offers poor results at best. And, in many cases, this external control can erode self-confidence, break down self-esteem, and frequently produces intense unhappiness (Seligman, 2002). Why, as a culture, would we still utilize these methods in the name of helping people? Control-based substance abuse treatment does not work and in most cases, the learned helplessness that is forced on individuals results in shaken confidence, lowered rates of moderation or abstinence, increased anxiety, increased rates of depression, and a lower quality of life.

By controlling other's thoughts and choices through fear tactics, control model treatment has resulted in greater fear of future excessive substance use and greater misinformation about people's innate ability to moderate and control their usage to levels that are tolerable and perhaps enjoyable or abstain completely. It is time for an alternative, an effective model that allows people the freedom to find happiness for themselves.

In summary, the theory of denial is an American phenomenon that was created to explain the repeated recurrence of unacceptable behavior in others. This erroneous theory continues to be the golden goose for the control model treatment industry marketers. The theory sounds plausible to the thousands of desperate people who are seeking help for their loved ones, and it provides the perfect catch-22 for substance users who may or may not feel as if they have a problem and want to change. The control model places users

in an impossible situation: If you say you have a problem, you do; if you say you don't have a problem, you do. As with many ideas that sprout from myth, common sense and truth have a way of triumphing in the end. The Saint Jude Program® will help you place the

power back where it belongs—within you.

Now, please refer to Workbook 1 and read over the learning objective for this particular section, and also answer the review question. Once complete, you can then continue on.

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Chapter 2

The Freedom Model[®]

Part 2

The Disease of Addiction Does Not Exist

During the middle of the last century the American culture willingly adopted the disease of addiction theory, even though it took more than 200 years for this concept to gain a foothold in society. Millions of dollars spent on massive propaganda campaigns slowly forced the theory into public acceptance. The disease concept became a credible explanation for choices people make that are many times too horrible for the average mind to accept. However, one should not lose sight of the fact that, not only is “addiction” a choice, but so is the immense suffering it causes.

When faced with the tragedy that years of substance use can cause, the average person looks for a logical, unemotional, scientific explanation for the substance user’s recurring immature behavior. Denial and the notion of a disease of alcoholism and addiction provide an emotionally tolerable explanation. So now, alcohol and drug users have ready-made excuses for their behaviors, excuses that society now accepts, supports and even encourages.

When you think about it, what possible defense is there for having a drinking or drug problem—or a felony DUI charge—or testing positive for cocaine at work? What can the substance user say after waking up hung-over and remorseful, surveying the damage to the furniture, car, and walls from the night before? What possible defense can be offered for coming home late and drunk (or high) for the fifth night in a row? When substance users are confronted with

these facts in a sober moment and told that they have a problem, the response is predictable: “No, I don’t!”

Substance users can respond in a variety of ways, but every response will be colored by the need to maintain a positive self-image. Their reactions might be: “You think I’m an alcoholic—what about your drinking?” And, for those adults who are gainfully employed and financially successful there’s the “I’m in charge” defense: “So long as I’m making the money, you don’t get to say that I drink (drug) too much.” Then there are those who may partially agree saying: “You’re right, I have been getting high (drunk) too often—you know I’m under a lot of pressure just now. I’ll slow down. But a problem, no, I don’t have a problem.” And oftentimes these people do moderate their substance use or take some time off from using.

Another popular defensive response that is used is to go on the offensive: “Hel-lo, is anyone in there? It’s the 21st century. People drink and get high. It’s not a problem. It’s just life—what planet are you on, anyway?” An even more aggressive response is the threat defense: “Problem, what problem? You think I got drunk (high) last night, just wait until tonight, I’ll show you what drunk (high) is.” And then, of course, there are those people who may become openly hostile and threatening: “I don’t want to talk about it. I said I don’t want to talk about it! For the love of God, shut up!” And, for people who have already been exposed to alcohol and drug treatment and/or 12 step meetings, they may use the disease defense, “Don’t

you understand? I have a disease. I can't stop once I start! Please, just give me another chance. I will go back to meetings. It will work this time."

There are certain responses that are common to specific groups, for example, adolescents.

Most adolescent defenses are guilt-based. "You made me this way. If you would just leave me alone, I'd be fine." And, "Oh, sure, when you drink, it's not a problem. But when I smoke a little dope with my friends, all of a sudden it's a problem. Did you know that drinking is worse than smoking a joint? You're such hypocrites."

The professional treatment community views all of these defensive responses by people they diagnose with alcohol and drug problems as symptoms of their addiction disease. However, it is well documented that many substance users who are referred to professional

stance user become totally mystified. The substance user sounds as if they are ready to quit their habit; yet, they keep going back to it. For those witnessing it, the frustration is enormous and the addiction disease theory once again emerges as an easy explanation. Some may think, "My God, they must really be in denial to keep doing what they are doing," or they might think, "This really is an awful disease." For the substance user, the frustration is equally detrimental and depressing. What at first seemed to be a great explanation and excuse for drinking and drugging to excess suddenly has become a severe burden.

This vicious cycle of misinformation can have tragic consequences. Unless the truth about substance use is made clear, the truth being that substance use is a choice, substance users may completely give up hope and drink or drug themselves, literally, to death. It is

Regardless of how seemingly hopeless and self-pitying substance users are, they are only as hopeless as they think they are.

extremely important to understand that regardless of how seemingly hopeless and self-pitying substance users are, they

treatment (by the courts, by family members, by employers, or by way of other interventions) do not actually have substance use problems. These people simply get caught up in the "treatment machinery" of the culture, often as a result of experimenting with substances or experiencing one negative consequence as a result of a brief lapse in judgment. So when they claim that they don't have a drug or alcohol problem, often the truth is, they don't.

Faced with pressure from loved ones, substance users may become defiant, abusive, self-pitying, or even severely depressed. Their defense response may change from, "I don't have a problem," to "I do have a problem. I'm diseased!" At this juncture they may begin the cycle of treatment centers, psychiatrists, and admitting surrender and defeat over and over again. Yet the vast majority will continue to get high and drunk, but now they have an industry that supports their learned helplessness and powerlessness over substances and over their life in general.

This is when therapists and those close to the sub-

are only as hopeless as they think they are (Schaler, 2000). That is why teaching the disease myth to an already vulnerable, emotionally immature, struggling individual is counterintuitive and certainly counterproductive.

In the absence of the denial theory and the disease concept, there are no excuses. Without the empty theories and rationalizations, substance users realize that it is within their power to choose sobriety or to continue alcohol and drug use. Even the seemingly gray area, where denial looks somewhat plausible, is seen clearly for what it is: false. Fictitious theories and incorrect diagnoses only serve to prolong indecision and actually contribute to the self-destruction of substance users.

There are approximately 10 million substance users admitted to treatment programs in the United States each year, learning that they have a disease and that they are in denial (SAHMSA, 2008). As these people accept the misinformation from treatment programs, it provides them with an opportunity to avoid their re-

ality and an excuse to avoid making the hard decision to abstain or moderate their usage or continue using substances to excess. In essence, treatment programs replace the substance user's natural powers of common sense and free will with an external imaginary power of a simple, inert substance.

Millions of these "hopeless" types have had the courage to search out and find better lifestyle alternatives. They have chosen to stop drinking and drug using and have attained happiness for the rest of their lives. In fact, the vast majority of these people do this on their own (Heyman, 2009). What keeps people active in their substance use is their perception that there are no better alternatives to using drugs and alcohol for sustaining a level of happiness and fulfillment. This lack of more attractive lifestyle alternatives is the simple, but accurate, explanation to a seemingly complicated problem. Choosing to change is the beginning of a life transformation and must not be underestimated.

Positive alternatives to drug and alcohol use are infinite. Prior to the medical community creating excuses (such as the disease theory) for substance user's inappropriate behavior, those who used substances excessively simply got over their problem, were locked away in jails or institutions, or died. There was no middle ground. There was no tolerance for their abusive and sometimes criminal behavior. It was a simple problem; change your lifestyle or pay the price and the truth is, most changed.

However, during the last century the American culture has shown an ever-increasing intolerance for any personal discomfort, which has created a fertile soil for the seeds of the disease movement to grow. If there are excuses, like the disease theory, for people's poor behavior and immature, selfish choices, then the growing pains associated with personal change and maturity can be avoided.

Today, the cultural need for an expert medical opinion concerning normal life struggles is a major stumbling block for substance users. Many want to stop, but modern therapies with their inconsistent, confusing, and complicated solutions have not, and do not offer substance users an option that can adequately compete with the pleasures they get from

using alcohol and drugs. Not only does the modern approach not offer a better alternative, but it compounds the problem by providing substance users seemingly viable, yet false excuses for continuing their inappropriate behavior.

Why is it acceptable to offer treatment that does not end in a fulfilling, successful life? So far, addiction treatment has stumbled along with the same abysmal success rate that existed since treatment first began! And, in most cases, getting treatment actually lowers an individual's chances of moderating or getting sober, forever. This is why it is so important to dispel these false theories and find a solution that works.

This program was created as a solution for those in need of a clear path to success. It is completely devoid of modern therapeutic errors and disproved theories. Once rid of contemporary approaches, a substance user can become open to lifesaving information.

The problems of selfishness, fear, unfulfilling choices, and negative behaviors can be discussed once the illusions of disease and denial are dispelled. You may want to refer to the appendices located in the back of this text for a more in-depth discussion about the myth of the disease of addiction. The following chapters offer information and lessons to help you achieve a level of happiness that surpasses the comfort alcohol and drugs provide people living in the gray area between sobriety and active use.

Note: The following two subject headings about co-dependency and enabling are written specifically for you to understand the perspective of those who have been trying to help you.

Co-Dependency Does Not Exist

American culture has had an alarming increase of labeling and classifying normal human struggles as disorders and syndromes (Brown, 2002; Lane, 2007). Regarding alcohol and drug use, the theory of denial and the disease concept have continued to grow and mutate throughout the last 70 years. One of the many mutations of the disease theory is "co-dependency." According to this idea, people associated with substance users on an intimate level, from spouses and family members to coworkers and friends, are also

considered sick because of their association with the sick alcoholic or addict. This is a classic case of one unproven theory fostering additional unproven theories in an attempt to lend more credibility to the original unproven theory.

Here is the chronology. First there was the disease theory, the roots of which began as far back as the early 18th century. Then came the denial theory; which originated in the 1930s. Next, there was the co-dependency theory, a theory that developed in the then-growing medicalized drug and alcohol treatment industry of the 1970s.

As was the case with the development of the denial theory and the disease theory, the codependency theory was born from well intentioned professionals and authors who were searching for the answer to some very troubling questions: why do people stay involved with a substance user when it is causing them harm or distress to be with them? And why do people repeatedly go back to these relationships time after time when history seems to indicate that the same problems will be repeated?

These questions are nearly identical to the earlier questions: "Why do substance users behave in a fashion that is proven to be self-destructive, and why do they repeat the same patterns that cause their own misery?" It is not happenstance that these questions are the same. Once a particular theory is accepted (whether true or not) it will naturally spread and expand. For example, the 12-step model is statistically proven to be harmful to most of those who adhere to its premise of powerlessness, disease, and ongoing relapse. In spite of its overtly religious dogma and agenda, it was accepted by the medical establishment in our society for a number of social, societal, and monetary reasons, and today there may be as many as 300 different 12-step iterations, providing treatment and support for such dreaded "diseases" as overuse of Chapstick, nail biting, going into debt, and hoarding.

The initial theory of co-dependency was created to explain a non-problem: the often volatile relationships between substance users and non-users. The co-dependency theory makes two false assumptions. The first is that substance users are sick (diseased) people,

which they are not. And the second is that if an individual stays in any type of relationship with a substance user, the non-user is just as sick as the substance user. Both assumptions involve "illnesses" that take the place of individual responsibility for thoughts, behaviors, and actions. In reality, both the substance user and the non-user are making their own choices based on their own desires and needs at any given moment, they are certainly not suffering from an illness.

To mislabel a person's voluntary relationship motives and behaviors is to cause non-users to look for solutions in modern co-dependency therapy and family days at drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs. Being that the premise of "sickness" is patently false, the therapy to address the "co-dependency sickness" is also false. It is a mythical problem in search of a nonexistent solution. For substance users, this search can last too long and some die before finding the truth. For the non-user in the relationship (spouse, sibling, friend, co-worker, etc.,) they are taught that they are also at least partially at fault for the substance user's erratic choices and behavior. They spend their days with guilt and confusion as to where they went wrong.

Those trying to help families with alcohol or drug users must understand that people do things they believe will satisfy them or make them happy. For the active substance user, that activity involves getting high or drunk. For non-users, a part of their happiness comes from staying involved with the substance user regardless of the substance user's chaotic and sometimes abusive behavior. Because these relationships often cause both participants pain and unhappiness they are classified by the drug and alcohol treatment industry as "sick" relationships. Unhappiness, however, is a normal consequence of certain choices. It is not a sickness.

There are relationships in which the participants truly love each other unconditionally. These people usually do not look for outside help because they do not feel they need it. However, most relationships that include a substance user are not so accepting. It is in these relationships that the term co-dependent would seem to apply. This is especially true when the non-user complains bitterly about the drug or alcohol

use. The non-user is deeply hurt over and over again, sometimes for years or even decades. Yet the user and non-user remain steadfast in their relationship. These people do not remain in these relationships because of a sickness. Rather, they stay for two dominant reasons: the hope of love (no matter how little) and an internal desire to “fix” the other person. Sometimes this drive to fix the other person is based on their perception that by making their loved one better they will in turn experience greater self-esteem and happiness. The desire to fix their spouse is not a sickness; it is an intense drive to make the other person happy so they, too, can then be happy.

The underlying driving force in these relationships is the pursuit of happiness, much as it is with all areas of life. Sometimes this is very hard to recognize because these relationships can be incredibly painful. But, much like the substance user’s nearly futile search for happiness through the use of drugs and alcohol, the comfort found in these types of relationships is usually sporadic, fleeting, and just barely satisfying enough to keep these people together. Yet, it does.

In those cases in which the relationship’s balance of love and pain are teetering on total collapse but remain in this volatile state for years, the participants are unwilling to find other options for love and comfort in their lives. This situation is defined by the participants having found a state of being together that does little to demand personal change, regardless of the consequences. In short, these limited relationships may be the only love option they see at the time, and the miniscule return of emotional happiness is enough that any major personal changes are not seen as immediately needed. How many marriages, in your opinion should have split long ago, but have remained intact? When asked why they stay together, most often the honest answer is simply, “I love him (her.)” Perhaps this is true, but as an outside observer there seems to be a steep price to pay with limited benefits for the non-user. Like the non-user, the substance user’s option list does not include breaking apart. The relationship stays together, albeit turbulently and emotionally draining. The return each receives is enough to avoid what may be a difficult change and a move

into an unknown future.

Love can mean different things to different people. In some cases non-users may have a personal perception that love and their self-image is tied up in a learned behavior of trying to “save” the substance user. In those rare instances in which they appear to have saved their spouse from certain destruction, they feel happy. This pattern can happen over and over, and sometimes for a lifetime. From the substance abuse treatment industry’s subjective, judgmental viewpoint, these relationships are labeled as “sick.” This could not be farther from the truth. Behaving in a relationship such as this is not a sickness, but rather a form of acquired happiness that has little return for the emotional investment. But it is still happiness for the participants.

This phenomenon of accepting such little positive return for the massive emotional effort expended is driven by the perceived lack of other options that non-users believe they have at that moment. So, much like those who hurt themselves physically to “feel” again or gain attention and love, non-users often stay involved to gain a marginal amount of comfort. Many of these perceive they have little internal worth. This lack of self-worth can be caused by any number of factors, many of which may have nothing to do with the relationship. Regardless of the cause of this lack of self-worth, their value is then placed on the substance user’s behavior and response to their ultimatums.

This fixation on being emotionally tied to their object of love can be lessened by creating options that do not include the relationship. For instance, the pain of being emotionally tied to a substance user’s lack of attention can be lessened by non-users developing new goals and moving towards these goals, thus personally fulfilling themselves and lessening their need to look to others for happiness. Creating confidence and independence does not mean that the relationship must end, but rather, that the relationship can be enhanced. There are, of course, many relationships that end once one member decides to grow beyond the confines of the relationship.

A person, who chooses unhappy relationships, does just that, they choose it. In the same way substance users continue to choose to get high, non-us-

ers remain in relationships to be happy for moments, however fleeting. If the non-user is able to convince their loved one to straighten out one time out of ten tries, it brings such satisfaction that it is worth the other nine times the substance user fails. But, sometimes one out of ten is not enough. When the respites of fleeting happiness are no longer worth the effort expended, new options for personal happiness must be created.

The last thing those in an unhappy relationship need is a label that portrays them as sick and therefore unable to make alternate choices. With a negative label, people focus on their own defects providing reasons to stay rather than on their immense power of choice, which would make available options for something better. Once choice is taken away, so is the possibility for any future change. Once choice is restored, the future possibilities become infinite.

Enabling

The theory of enabling is applied when people continually give their kindness, money, love, and generosity to substance users in hopes of helping them. This is one of the most misunderstood and misused theories in conventional treatment.

The first question this theory raises is whether anyone has the ability to hurt others with kindness. Does anyone really have that kind of control or power? The second question to ask is how non-users should react when substance users squander the kindnesses (in whatever form) that is given them? And lastly, how much of a role do non-users actually play in a substance user's attempts at sobriety?

Substance users very rarely say no to the generosity of others. They will almost always be on the taking side of a relationship. That being said, non-users should not kid themselves into believing that substance users will be selfless if given a chance or that they will use the objects of generosity for their betterment. Almost across the board, substance users have a deep desire for immature instant gratification that drives them to seek relief in whatever form it comes. Taking and squandering that which is given is the norm. Anyone with any experience with a substance user knows this

to be true.

However, hurting someone with love and generosity is oxymoronic. You cannot hurt someone with love, generosity, or kindness of any kind. Generally speaking, love and kindness are not a cause of pain and hurt feelings in those receiving the love and kindness. Love, by its very nature is universally good, resulting only in the positive, by definition. So what is the real cause of the pain we feel when we love someone and want the best for them, and our efforts are wasted in drug and alcohol use and selfish, inconsiderate choices? In a word: expectations. Expectations are not love; nor are expectations a form of kindness or generosity. These concepts have nothing to do with each other. Expectations are standards for behavior that we hold for ourselves or others.

Because substance users cause strife in others and don't seem to care about the opportunities presented to them, non-users become angry and hurt when their expectations are not met. Non-users expect different results for their efforts and sacrifices, in essence a quid pro quo: I give you this and you will do what I want you to do. They expect the substance user to stop the erratic behavior. They expect the substance user will no longer squander money. They expect the substance user to adopt healthier behaviors. They expect love to be returned in some fashion. All of this is normal and understandable, but frequently a source of pain. Expectations are a setup for hurt feelings and resentment. Unfortunately, it is rare that substance users will fulfill the needs or wants of others before their own wants and needs are satisfied.

There is an old saying that "The only way to win is not to play." This is the short answer to the riddle of dealing with an active substance user. Once non-users realize that projected expectations will most likely not be met by the substance user, reality bites back in resentful and painful disappointment. It is usually at this emotional breaking point that most parents or loved ones begin the process of "not playing" in the game "give to the substance user."

Substance users are committed to their pursuit of instant gratification and will find relief one way or another, no matter what. If they can no longer find it from the generosity of those close to them, they will

move on to someone new to manipulate. Substance users are masters at getting what they want, and no one will stop them from getting it until they decide to change. In the meantime decisions must be made by the non-users as to the best way to handle this reality.

And non-users must now consider how to hold on to their remaining material, monetary, and emotional resources. Once this decision is made the substance user will most likely move on to the next person or persons from whom they can receive some benefit.

As effective as letting go of the substance user is in retaining a semblance of personal sanity, it does not relieve the intense fear and sadness that comes from watching a loved one slowly die from alcohol, drugs, or other harmful behaviors. The irony is this: once a person close to a substance user stops investing resources in the substance user, which could be invested in others who desire the non-user's comfort and love, the non-user has actually gained control over the situation. The non-user, who once spent time, energy, and emotions on an individual who would not reciprocate, is now free to spend those resources on people who will care back and will most benefit from their generosity and kindness.

If, for some reason, there is no one else in their lives on which to spend their resources, nonusers can empower themselves and spend their resources on charity work or on themselves. There is nothing wrong with spending your physical and emotional resources in a way that gives you a greater emotional return. That is what life is all about: the pursuit of satisfaction and happiness.

Most situations are not black and white and the decision to cut off resources can be a heart-wrenching affair, especially if you have spent years providing such resources. As an example, if a husband gives his crack-using wife money to bail her out of jail on drug charges, this could be considered enabling her to return to the streets to use more crack. But is that true?

Let us look more carefully. Let's say the husband does not bail her out of jail. Are her chances of not returning to crack any greater when she gets out? The answer is, probably, no. But not bailing her out leaves you with the same results minus one: you still have

your money. All forms of personal resources are limited. Therefore, an analysis must be made on where these resources are best allocated.

In this case, leaving the substance user in jail probably would not promote sobriety. But does this mean that the husband should continue to give money and affection until his wife dies from an overdose? Certainly not! The husband can choose not to participate in her chaotic lifestyle. The husband has the right to a sane life, devoid of the chaos that crack use causes. It may be the husband's decision to leave her in jail and break away that finally makes his wife realize what is truly important and motivate her to make a change. Unfortunately, just as often, she may choose not to abstain or moderate no matter what the consequences, including the breakup of her marriage or the loss of her children. So, over what do family members or friends have control in such difficult situations? They only have control over themselves and their own resources.

Substance users with a severe problem, if given the chance, will drain their family and everyone close to them of all that they have. As we have said, substance users are typically on the taking side of their relationships and their insatiable desire for instant gratification can leave a family destitute. Eventually, the family is forced to make a difficult decision. The only behaviors that anyone has control over are their own choices and their own behaviors. But when do you stop investing in the substance user and save your resources so the rest of the family can have an opportunity to live a more prosperous, sane life? What if you say enough is enough and then the substance user dies alone in the street? This is the concern of most non-users when faced with this decision. Still, the question they must consider is what if I continue making this investment and my loved one dies here in our home, in spite of my repeated attempts to help?

Consider a family with a father, mother, and three children. The middle child is a 20-year-old young man, and his sisters are 12 and 22. The young man uses heroin and the rest of the family is totally drug and alcohol abstinent. The young man was at one time an athlete, was on the honor roll, and was sociable and likeable, but now his life has spiraled into

a desperate antisocial state. Nearly all of the family's time and resources are being spent on bailing him out of trouble and paying for two separate drug treatment programs. Emotions are constantly on edge as the young man's fits of self-pity and spoiled anger are regular disruptions. Dad wants him out of the house, but Mom could not bear to even think of it. Yet, both are at the breaking point. And their two girls are tired of being put on the back burner as their brother's extreme problems always take center stage. Resentment in the household is at an all-time high. What are they to do?

Current "tough love" thinking would say put him on the street and change the locks on the house. Emotions say to love their son back to health. Which

ily has little to no actual control over their son. For some, this has become painfully apparent. So now a new set of rules must be put in place, and it goes like this: If what you are doing is not working, try something else and do it quickly. This seems so simple and almost impotent at first glance because it is characterized by what seems like so little actual control. But the obvious question must be raised: up to this point how much actual control have these parents had over their son's behavior? It is fairly obvious that the resources of time, money, emotions, home, and career have all played a key role in the son's choice to continue the unwanted behavior. It is obvious that all of the family's resources are now being controlled by their son!

This is where each family member can decide to

Where most families fail is they continually offer the same options with little or no leverage to support their ultimatums.

present new options and once again take back control of their own resources. If the son continues to get high, he can

method is right? As it turns out, they both have merit, yet neither adequately addresses all aspects of this problem.

Eventually, practical choices become more limited as new methods to help their son are tried and fail and legal problems pile up. Where most families fail is they continually offer the same options to the substance user with little or no leverage to support their ultimatums. Should their son be tossed into the street or should the family get a second mortgage and pay for yet another lawyer to get him out of trouble? Or, should they simply do nothing and let their son run the show until his 21st birthday and then kick him out of the nest? These are all options that are often considered and that may be presented to the user.

Still, through all this confusion and heart-wrenching decision-making, there is only one option that gets results, and it has nothing to do with enabling, tough love, co-dependency, interventions, denial, or diseases as those labels come with all sorts of implications and misinformation. There is a better alternative and it is much more effective in solving the problem.

First, it is important to understand that the fam-

live somewhere else.

If this is too heart-wrenching for the family, maybe a lesser option is presented. But whatever option is offered, it is offered once, clearly, and never offered again should the son squander the opportunity. Whenever these options are presented, they are presented as choices because that is exactly what they are. However, before setting up the choices and consequences, the family must be ready and willing to follow through with the planned consequences.

To do nothing or to do the same thing twice with a substance user is to become a willing and active participant in the substance user's manipulation. This program does not recommend tossing a loved one out into the street nor is it saying to keep providing them with your resources. These are decisions only the family can make based on the family's wants and needs. What is being recommended is to have the courage to try something different every time an attempt fails. This is vital.

The approach is to limit the number of options until the son either finds a solution or demonstrates that he is intent on continuing his lifestyle, regardless

of what he must give up to do it. Ultimately this is his choice. The family's job is to weigh their options and try them all, if that is what it takes. Each family's options list is different, as are their resources. When a family is tired of the substance user's selfish antics the list of resources being spent will naturally get much smaller. This is OK and it is fair.

Remember, when it comes to a loved one who is struggling, it seems you are always racing against the clock, so your courage will be tested. It is crucial when the family makes a decision, they stick with it. If the attempt does not get the desired results, then it is important to move on to the next solution. This is about searching for a solution that works.

In the above scenario, let's say the son is unwilling to live according to the limits placed on him and the parents agree to have him leave. He moves in with a friend and dies of an overdose a week later. Although utterly tragic, the truth is almost twice as many substance users die every year of substance use as compared to all those who died in eight years of the Vietnam War (DrugWarFacts.org, 2008). To assume that every parent, friend, or professional failed with users who overdose and die, either accidentally or intentionally, is completely unrealistic. Substance users who die of an overdose selfishly impose their misery on those who loved them. Under these circumstances, substance users' loved ones are left crushed by guilt and helplessly broken-hearted. But ultimately, it is not the fault of those who grieve but rather a tragic result of the choices made by the substance user. No one forces substance users to use alcohol and/or drugs—it is their choice to do so and they are well aware of the risks.

It is also important to note here that, depending on the situation, the options presented to the substance user need not be small steps. For example, the family does not have to say one day, "OK son, we know you're shooting heroin in your bedroom, so now you must leave your bedroom door open." This is going to do little to move the son in a positive direction. The options must be an obvious progression to greater consequences. If the son is shooting heroin in the bedroom, having him arrested or forcing him to leave the home provide a greater opportunity for peace to

return to the home. It is about rewarding those who do not cause mayhem and not rewarding those who squander the family's collective resources. You cannot control the son's decisions but you can control your own decisions and your home. You also have control over the effect your son is having on the rest of your family.

Substance users make their own beds while screaming that their problems are everyone else's fault. Non-users must ask themselves, have I continued trying the same things over and over, or did I have the courage to try something new each time the substance user decided to squander the previous option given. Furthermore, the non-user does not have to wait for things to change before introducing new or additional conditions as to the user's behavior.

While non-users do not have control over the substance user's behavior, they can control how that affects the rest of the family. The label "enabler" implies that the non-user has some control over the substance user's behavior. They somehow enable the substance user to behave poorly. This is sheer nonsense; the poor choices and behaviors are the substance user's choices and behaviors alone, not the family's. The family can only control their own resources, and realizing this can have a productive and life-changing affect on the family as well as on the substance user.

Considering the previous discussion, there is a positive replacement label for the "enabler;" it is "option presenter." It is accurate, empowering, and gets results. It also puts the responsibility for change right where it belongs, with the substance user.

As an option presenter you can set the stage with options and then measure the results. This lets you know how serious an active substance user is in finding a solution. If an option is given and the substance user does not respond appropriately, you probably should move on to the next option. Only the non-user can be the judge as to what the next option should be, when the next option should be imposed, and how many different options there will be. In the option presenter role, you are taking the rightful position for the helping role. The responsibility is on the substance user to perform and the non-user gains the right to passively sit back and watch. If non-users are

working harder for a solution than the substance user, then non-users have become ineffective and have exceeded their responsibility.

What the option presenter is trying to find is a solution that contains the right combination of attractive and inspirational ingredients that the substance user considers more attractive than using. Once they discover an option that brings happiness, the substance user will accept it. That is why it is important to keep trying, as no two people are the same. Some substance users will want to moderate and will be successful, while others will be looking to abstain completely. Others will be looking for a spiritual route, while others will be looking for more tangible goals. Still others will be looking for a combination of all of these. And there are still others who tragically decide to use substances to their death, regardless of what options are given them. It is in those cases where you may have to cut all ties to rebuild your own happiness and emotional stability. In any case, there are no victims, only choices that bring a level of happiness and satisfaction or a level of unhappiness and dissatisfaction.

It must be emphatically understood that when substance users die as a result of their behavior, it is the fault of the substance user, and that person alone. As an option presenter, it is important to understand that sometimes the substance user simply enjoys getting high more than any option the world can offer, and there is nothing that can be done about that, no matter how many options are presented. Still other times substance users' lives can be cut short, by a mistaken overdose or a car accident or the like, prior to finding one option that makes the most sense to them. Although tragic, it must be remembered that these sorts of mistakes are made by the substance user and have nothing to do with the option presenter.

An option presenter's job is to live happily, present options, and weigh the cost of the substance user's behavior on the family resources and then act accordingly with strength, courage, and conviction. Keep in mind that option presenters must achieve an obvious level of peace and happiness in their own

lives. One cannot give away that which they, themselves, do not possess. Option presenters have to become a power of example for their options to be believable and enticing. The good news is that the following chapters can be an option that will help even the most hopeless of cases.

A Time to Change

This chapter highlighted topics that have contributed to the destruction of millions of lives in the last century. As you will see, there are common sense solutions to seemingly complicated problems. And, although we have covered each of these concepts only briefly, the rest of the program will address these topics in much greater detail.

It is important for you to clearly understand that those who drink and drug to excess and to the detriment of themselves or others, do so with the full knowledge of what they are doing. And it is obvious that substance users can overcome their problems with the same power of free will and choice that is intrinsic in every human being. With this in mind, it is important to recognize that the most common method for people to overcome the excessive consumption of alcohol and drugs is by choosing to do so on their own (Heyman, 2009).

The following chapters will provide you with a comprehensive method of positive self discovery.

This program will demonstrate exactly how to build a more fulfilling way of life. Your understanding and your improved lifestyle will be a living testimony that certain processes taught here can have a remarkable positive impact on anyone's life. For our friends who use substances and who want to stop, going through the following lessons will help you begin rebuilding and changing your life so you may experience new levels of joy and peace.

Now, refer to Workbook 1, read over the learning objectives for this particular section, and answer the review questions. Once complete, continue reading on in the text.

Chapter 3

Neuroplasticity:

The Science of Personal Change

“A man is literally what he thinks, his character being the complete sum of his thoughts.”

-As a Man Thinketh, James Allen, 1902

In order to fully appreciate how you will be able to prevail over substance use, depression, and self-defeating behaviors, it is important to understand the science of change. Change is a simple word, but for a person in deep depression or with self-destructive personal habits, change can seem impossible.

Personal change begins within each person. In other words, someone cannot inject a “medicinal positive thought” or sets of positive emotions and values into you to make you feel better. Personal change, by its very nature, must be created by you and then enacted through your decisions, emotions and physical actions. All personal change is derived under full control of each individual. Some might say, “Well, what about the mentally ill? They do not have control over their thoughts, so this process cannot work for them!” To some extent and with some people, this may be true. However, the mental health field is just beginning to learn how to heal the sufferer, or how to teach the sufferer how to heal himself.

The rates of the severely mentally ill getting better are quite small, which truly indicates society’s general lack of understanding of the problem. However, diagnosing and/or curing severe mental illness is beyond the scope of this program and is better left for another

discussion. With that said, if you are able to read this text, understand the general concept of personal responsibility, and are willing to challenge your personal self-image and your world view perspective, you can change whether you have been diagnosed with mental health problems or not.

Change happens as a function of will, discipline, and desire. To start the change process you must be motivated, and you must gain an understanding of what motivates or drives you. Ask yourself, what do I value in life? Who is the person I want to be? Who is the person I want to present to others? These very questions will be asked and analyzed in detail throughout this program, giving you a much more accurate and healthier self-awareness and a heightened sense of clarity in your new life’s mission. As you journey through the Saint Jude Program® you will learn how and what needs to be changed for you to achieve your life’s mission.

The Plastic Brain

Neurology is the branch of medicine that deals with the structure and function of the nervous system and the treatment of the diseases and disorders that affect it. Television ads, talk shows, scientific journals, and websites relentlessly claim that the human brain is permanently affected, altered, or even re-wired by substance use. Some treatment providers and scientists take this concept even further by stating that the

disease of addiction changes the very structure of the brain forever rendering the addicted person in perpetual need of support and rehabilitation.

This type of misinformation is based on three main components: neuroplasticity, a brain function recently studied within the discipline of neuroscience; localizationism, a form of neuroscience that dates back centuries; and learned helplessness as taught through a variety of religious based 12-step models. What is interesting about this mix is that each component contradicts the other two. To get around this the industry cherry picked only those aspects of each discipline that made the current treatment model at least appear plausible.

The following is a brief summary of the modern substance use treatment model. The logic trail used to support the theory of addiction begins with neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity refers to brain change. Modern substance use treatment says that alcohol and drugs change the brain to render the person “addicted.” Then, localizationism says the brain cannot change, as people are hard wired. Thus, the newly “addicted” can never become “un-addicted.” So modern treatment uses one belief system to create addiction, neuroplasticity, and another to explain the permanence of addiction, localizationism. Finally, modern substance use treatment seals the addict’s fate with the notion of learned helplessness promulgated by religiously based 12-step programs.

As the treatment industry is absolutely devoted to the claims of the brain changing into a chemically altered organ that is then incapable of being changed back, we need to understand what types of change can and do occur, and which are proven and which are not. Neuroplasticity is the science of the brain’s natural ability to physically alter itself. It is the science of thoughts, emotions, learning, and motivation and how these seemingly innocuous activities actually affect the brain’s structure. The truth is your brain is continuously adapting to external circumstances, making new decisions and accommodating all of life’s challenges.

But what is most important is what neuroplasticity is not. It is not the science of an outside agent physically changing the brain. The science of an outside

agent physically changing the brain, or for that matter any other organ or cells in the human body, is “toxicology.” The body can suffer toxicity from just about any substance that is introduced into the body in intolerable amounts. For example, small amounts of poisonous snake venom injected into the body may cause some toxic discomfort, while large amounts of the same venom may cause severe brain damage or death. Hence, the science of any outside agent physically changing the brain is “toxicology,” not neuroplasticity, as claimed by the drug and alcohol treatment industry.

Neuroplasticity is the physical way the brain reacts naturally. For instance, a stroke may cause massive brain tissue damage. The stroke, itself, and the resulting damaged tissue, are not examples of neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity explains the change that occurs in the brain after a stroke has occurred, when the brain then compensates for the tissue that has been damaged by the stroke. The brain is forced to adjust if a person is to regain function. The process of a stroke victim’s re-learning to walk is an example of the brain’s remarkable ability to adjust to this damage. The brain is malleable; it is plastic, meaning easily adaptable or able to be molded.

As with a stroke, brain damage and temporary chemical alterations of the brain as a result of active alcohol and drug use are not examples of neuroplasticity. Those changes, like a stroke, are the result of brain tissue damage and are caused by a slow poisoning resulting from active substance use. The process by which the body restores itself after a poisonous buildup of toxins in the body is eliminated is called detoxification. Once away from alcohol and/or drugs for a period of 3 to 30 days, the physical body, including the brain, is once again returned to a normal state. Therefore there is no physical addiction, nor “brain addiction,” to substances once the body has been successfully detoxified.

What About Psychological Addiction?

Because the brain is able to reorganize itself to adapt to an individual’s most repetitious and dedicated thought patterns and motivations, there is a case

to be made that “psychological addiction” or “mental addiction”—that is, cravings that occur after detoxification—are generated by the individual’s dedication to alcohol and drugs. A variety of habitual behaviors go along with substance use and the brain is the recording device for all of these behaviors.

For example, a habitual drinker may have stopped at a roadside bar every day after work. After the substance user has quit or moderated, the neuronal connections remain quite well established. This makes the idea of stopping at the bar seem very easy, almost natural. However, a habitual thought is not unalterable. People train their minds to change the neuron paths every day they are alive. It is called the learning process.

The substance abuse treatment industry claims that a form of neuroplasticity occurs in the brain as a result of substance use, altering the physical brain chemically and structurally forever. Their scientists claim that once a person has used drugs for a certain period of time, the brain is rewired and cannot change back to the state that existed prior to alcohol and drug use. After the detoxification process is complete this is simply untrue. With the alcohol and drugs gone, there is once again a clean brain. Neuronal paths that existed to support the alcohol and drug using lifestyle (such as going to a crack house, obsessing on the good feelings brought on by the substances, etc.) can now be changed through methods we will discuss in detail later. Neuroplastic changes can begin immediately if that is what you choose but it will require dedication and your best efforts to complete the lessons in this program. The claim of “permanent brain addiction” in heavy substance users is simply false. A better way of looking at it is that there are neurological changes that occur as a function of repetitive thoughts independent of the effects of the actual substances ingested.

Numerous studies conclusively report that substance users most frequently quit by virtue of their own neuroplastic power—they think their way to new goals and values that do not include substance use (Schwartz & Begley, 2002). The substance use treatment industry ignores this.

The brain’s malleability explains many things. It

explains why we are so adaptable as a species and, just as important, how and why humans can get “stuck” and feel as if we are victims of an inexplicable fate. Neuroplasticity cuts both ways; our physical brains can become a slave to positive thought or a slave to negative thought, but we get to choose.

What is Hebb’s Law?

Hebb’s Law states, “neurons that fire together, wire together,” which makes a larger, more efficient pipeline for repetitive thoughts. This explains why people become used to making certain choices, and why it becomes easier and easier to make those same choices the more often they are repeated. The decision-making part of the brain does not know the difference between a “bad” choice and a “good” one. It only knows that you keep making the same choice, and if you make that same choice repetitively, e.g. going to the bar after work every day, your neurons will connect to support that inner-brain choice and thought pattern.

In Western culture, this repetitive pattern of choosing negative life options is called “addiction.” But because that label is loaded with cultural baggage, this program will not use that label to explain why people become stuck in negative patterns. Rather, it accurately calls the pattern repetitive choice. Choice is something you have the power to make, unlike the common view of addiction that says you are powerless and permanently altered.

In the classic definition of addiction, there is a loss of control, a physical craving beyond the user’s ability to say no. However, millions of substance users have chosen, and will continue to choose, to stop. The body quite naturally detoxifies itself and a person is left with an infinite number of choices. No one loses control without deciding to do so first. You must make a choice to believe in loss of control. This means that the decision to lose control is controlled, which is self-created choice!

If addiction is actually a choice-driven pattern of decisions, those choices can be changed by each individual. The first requirement is to stop reinforcing the erroneous idea that you are addicted, which in

turn will break that self-created neuronal lock. Do this, and your brain will change!

The more one thinks about a certain topic (“I am going to the bar to get drunk,”) the more the neuron structure of the brain changes and adapts to accommodate that thought. Neurons will then group together to build a bigger, more efficient path for that particular thought. Sections of brain not currently being used will then begin to adapt to allocate greater resources to that thought. This is known as the “use it or lose it” phenomenon first described in the mid-sixties by Dr. Michael Merzenich (Doidge, 2007).

The more repetitious the thought, the more dedicated the brain’s structure will be to adapting to it. This explains why some people become habituated,

attempted and failed to prove for centuries.

Alcohol is a commonly used substance that is widely known to cause major damage to the brain, pancreas, liver, kidneys, digestive system, and heart of those who use it heavily over a length of time. However, this is a slow poisoning and if the user stops early enough, the body can regenerate and mend itself. Some people drink heavily for so long they can have permanent brain tissue damage, but this cannot be considered addiction or a neuroplastic change, but rather a destruction of tissue resulting from slow alcohol-induced poisoning. According to researchers who are addiction proponents, addiction is the inevitable result of the above described poisoning.

Yet millions of people labeled as chronic addicts

simply stop or moderate their usage and move on with their lives (Heyman, 2009). It’s as if the “addiction” that is

Being addicted implies being powerless.

repeating certain choices. We have heard much the same story over and over again from the many crack users with whom we have worked, “I was going about my business with no intention of using. I was totally dedicated to moving on with my life and then, all of a sudden, the car took a turn and I ended up at the crack house. Then, I was off to the races again smoking crack for the next week! And, you’re trying to tell me that I’m not addicted!”

That is exactly what we are saying: “You are not addicted.” Being addicted implies being powerless. Instead, this example illustrates a pattern of desire and motivation, two qualities of thought that force neuronal adaptation geared towards going to the crack house. If an individual sees value in a certain choice, based on excitement or his or her life experience or desire for a new course of action, and is motivated to make that choice repetitively, the brain adjusts itself to support a more efficient way of carrying out the behaviors associated with that thought. This makes each subsequent similar thought that much easier to process. In other words, in much of our time on earth our thoughts affect the brain, not the other way around as science has

so easily identified, simply vanishes. This fact has always been the problem with the theory of “alcoholism.” Millions of habitual drinkers (and drug users) all over the world have simply stopped with no treatment whatsoever and have thought and acted their way back to health.

The addiction proponents claim, “Those people weren’t real alcoholics.” In other words, let’s just throw out any portion of the sample that does not support the addiction theory. Wait a minute, that’s not science at all.

There are reasons for the substance abuse industry’s research to have such a dedication and bias towards attempting to prove physiological causes for people’s substance use. Pharmaceutical companies profit from creating medications that alter the brain’s functions. These companies spend an enormous amount of money attempting to prove that people are victims of their brain’s chemical dysfunction. Neuroplasticity refutes all of these theories. The mind has full control over the brain, with just the one exception being cases of the most severe traumatic brain injuries where the damage is so extensive that the mind and brain

processes are unintelligible.

For thousands of years people have pondered the question “What is thought?” This discussion we will leave to the philosophers and metaphysicians, as these concepts are beyond the scope of this program. For the purposes of this program, we will simply accept that we all think. For example, we can’t engage in any physical activity without first thinking about it. Try to do something without thinking about it first. Stop listening and try it now... You will quickly learn that it can’t be done. From reading this program, to driving your car, to going to work in the morning, all of these activities require your thought processes to make the necessary physical actions occur. If you are, indeed, the result of your choices that are acted out on some cognitive level, which is the case, then you have ultimate power over your life. The question is, why is knowing this important?

Either Nothing is Addicting or Everything is

Addiction, as defined by Webster’s Dictionary states, “Compulsive need for and use of a habit-forming substance (as heroin, nicotine, or alcohol) characterized by tolerance and by well-defined physiological symptoms upon withdrawal; broadly: persistent compulsive use of a substance known by the user to be harmful.”

“Compulsive need, persistent compulsive use...” This shortened version of the definition describes the process of (1) thought, and then (2) physical action. This is a simplified neuroplastic process description of mind and body adaptation. If you repeatedly think about something and you are highly motivated, the structure within the brain will positively adapt to make those thoughts more efficient and easier for you to have the next time. The mind and body thus become physically and mentally tolerant of substance use. Changes in the body and brain accommodate both the substance and the thoughts of using substances. These thoughts and consequences can be reversed as easily as originally conceived. This happens for millions of people every day. They stop ingesting a substance, detox if needed, and then make choices that are devoid of substance use. Seemingly miraculously their minds go back to a neutral state or perhaps cata-

pult to an improved state.

Consider that Webster’s definition of addiction says addiction is a “compulsive need for and use of a habit-forming substance (as heroin, nicotine, or alcohol)...” It is significant that the examples (i.e. heroin, nicotine, and alcohol) used by Webster’s definition all have a negative social reputation. And, according to Webster’s definition, these three substances are “habit-forming substance(s).”

Insomuch as “habit” plays an important role in defining addiction, what is habit? According to the Merriam-Webster’s American English Dictionary, habit is defined as: “...a usual manner of behavior ... a behavior pattern acquired and fixed by frequent repetition ... an acquired mode of behavior that has become nearly or completely involuntary.”

Not surprisingly, these definitions of “habit” also describe neuroplastic change. “...a behavior pattern acquired and fixed by frequent repetition” wears a neuronal path in the brain which by definition puts in place a neuroplastic change resulting in a habitual action.

Still, does this mean that everything you think about has the potential to be “addicting?” If you were to look at how the brain and body are positively and negatively affected by your dominant thoughts, the answer is yes. If addiction does exist, it could be defined as a normal process of brain adaptation that occurs constantly within our bodies and brains. Thus, addiction, in the classic negative western culture definition, falls far short of its mark because it only deals with negative thought processes.

Consider this statement: everything is addicting or nothing is addicting. Doesn’t each part of this statement say the exact same thing? Positive thoughts create positive “addiction.” In other words, the classically defined addiction is nothing more than a normal neuroplastic response to what you decide to think about, repetitively, good and bad. A person who dwells on the negative worries of life builds a neuronal pathway that makes those thoughts easier to repeat.

Whether thoughts are positive or negative has no bearing on neuroplastic change. If your thoughts are negative and highly dedicated, the effect upon your physical body and welfare will be negative. Your world

will reflect your negativity. You essentially create a negative state in the mind, which then has a snowball effect in the body and finally manifests in your external life. On the other hand, if your thoughts are positive and highly dedicated, the effect upon your physical body and welfare will be positive. Your external behavior will thus be affected, positively. The brain literally does not know the difference; it simply reacts to thought and then processes those thoughts as instructed by the information given to it by the mind.

This is all good news. Whatever damage you think has been done by your choice to use substances, your body and brain have an incredible capacity for over-coming and repairing this damage. And your brain is simply a tool of the mind, which can be changed at will, reversing any and all poor habits you might have.

Based on the new sciences, the “addiction movement” became, and continues to be, an amalgamation of religion, neuroplasticity, and localizationism. Originally, “addiction” grew out of the 1930s fundamentalist Christian group known as the Oxford Group. The Oxford Group was the predecessor of all 12-step groups and a myriad of other new age alternative programs. Subsequently, localizationism was added to support the erroneous claim that the brain cannot be changed back to a normal state once substance use has changed the brain to the addicted state. Neuroplasticity was incorporated into the addiction treatment industry late in the 20th century. Neuroplasticity offered a plausible explanation as to why people become “addicted.” In order to make the addiction theory fit into the idea of a neuroplastic change, this credible science was distorted, misrepresenting that substance use irreversibly changes the brain. Hence, the substance abuse industry built a fail-proof (but flawed) paradigm using a hand-picked mixture of religion and science that resulted in the notion that everyone who abuses substances will need treatment, forever.

One must wonder where this train wreck started. If we back track, it all begins with the foundation of the belief in powerlessness. Are people truly powerless? Certain facts tell a very different story. People get over substance use and abuse all the time. It is quite common. Consider, the fellow who drank for 20 years and then finally said, “Enough is enough.” He was tired of losing everything and just stopped. Or the woman who concluded, “I lost my kids, and I said to myself, I am done with cocaine! It’s over! I am going to move on and build a better life for my children.” And she did.

The list of people who stop on their own without treatment† is endless; there are hundreds of thousands in the United States every year that stop destructive behaviors on their own. If the brain were unfixable, then all neuroplasticity would be in question. It is not. Neuroplasticity is the natural state of the brain; it is built to adapt—both ways—all ways!

For everyone, the process of living exists in this way: first, thought; second, brain processing; third, changes in the brain tissue; and fourth, action. In much of day-to-day living, thought is the engine and the brain and body are the cars and the caboose. This does not mean that all brain functions are thought-derived. But current science abolishes the once widely accepted idea that the brain is the source of all human function and that all emotion and thought are caused by the brain.

For centuries research has had the caboose powering the train, telling the engineer where and how fast to go. The belief was that a person was simply an organism guided by electrical and chemical impulses emanating from gray matter caused by external stimuli. People were thought to be reactive beings, constantly shoved here and there by life’s ever-changing circumstances. People were victims of their environments. But this narrow theory could not explain the complexity of living life, the mystery of the contents and depth of emotions, the excitement of desire and

† The term “treatment” that is used sporadically throughout this program means conventional alcohol and drug rehabilitation services, not hospital or clinical detoxification for the physical elimination of alcohol or drugs. Detoxification in a hospital or clinic is a valuable and sometimes life-saving service and should not be confused with treatment.

joy, the remarkable ability to overcome great physical damage and adversities in life, or the ability to build goals in the mind's eye for the future. It could not explain a person's creative nature and abilities.

Neuroscience and, specifically, neuroplasticity, the science of an ever-malleable brain, has changed all that. Your thoughts and emotions do guide you and they can change everything about you, including changing and remapping the once believed unchangeable organ, the brain. This is fantastic news for those who desire a better life. Not only can you change your present circumstances, but science proves that

your choice to change can force your brain to adapt and further support the decision to change.

It is now time to make some decisions. The next chapters begin the process of personal change, the first aspect of which is dealing with the actual activity of substance use. Your journey is just beginning. (For more information about Substance Use and Locationalism refer to Appendix E.)

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Chapter 4

Deprivation or Motivation?

If you are want to believe you have the disease of addiction or alcoholism, this program will be very difficult for you to apply in your life. A prerequisite for success with this program is to accept total responsibility for the poor choices you have made. This does not mean you are responsible for the possible negative actions of others when you were a child and how those actions may have affected you. But it does mean you must be responsible for how you allow those past actions to affect you now.

Moving away from thoughts that are based in personal powerlessness is the first change to make to begin rewiring the brain's neurons that support your self-created depression, anxiety, and general unhappiness. By using methods that are similar to CBESM, a neuroplastic change can occur in the brain, making changes in lifestyle easier as a function of time and practice (Schwartz, 2002). The goal of CBESM, of course, is to create a change in thoughts and actions as a means to stave off negative emotions and behaviors.

In studies where the effects of CBT (which has some similarities to CBESM) were compared with individuals who were administered anti-depression medications, the rates of lowered depression were of longer duration in those who were taught to think more effectively and cope more positively with CBT techniques. This was groundbreaking research. You have control and it begins by the simple belief that your future can be in your control. That's the beginning.

For more than 18 years the Saint Jude Program[®] has helped individuals create positive neuroplastic changes by teaching how to overcome substance use, how to problem-solve more effectively, and then how to put those ideas into practical action. This cannot happen for you if you have a belief system that is based on having no personal power. This latest edition has taken all the lessons that have been taught over the last two decades at the St. Jude Retreats[®], and you now can receive the benefit of all that experience, knowledge, and research.

If you are hanging on to the disease concept, the information prior to this chapter may be reread, and you may also want to read additional information in the appendices of the book. If, after you have done these things and you still desire to hang on to the disease concept, you might want to continue moving forward with this program anyway, trying to keep an open mind. But remember, disease-based programs actually diminish your probability for achieving abstinence and are frequently linked to failure.

This program can be and has been used by those without a drinking or drug problem, by people who were looking for a better way of life and trying to find meaning and happiness in their day-to-day living. Many people with multiple years of sobriety have also found new success with this program. In these cases, abstinence or moderation had already been achieved, but a happy, fulfilling quality of life continued to elude them. After implementing this program,

it became obvious what was missing, and they found a new way to live, happy and fulfilled.

This program can be used to help with any choice-based problem, from general unhappiness and lack of direction or focus in one's life, to eating disorders, compulsive sex issues and gambling problems, to name just a few. The root of these human problems is a perceived lack of life options. As a person becomes used to coping with life in a certain fixed manner (even if it is inadequate) that individual may continue to repeat certain behavior until it becomes second nature. Once a particular mode of living becomes habitual, no matter how poor the results, other more productive lifestyle options become less and less a reality for the individual. The perception of a "good life" becomes something of a dream and not something that can be a reality for them. This is usually when desperation and depression becomes daily habits, furthering an already inadequate set of coping methods. Remember, the brain will simply wire itself to accommodate repetitive thoughts, thus making it easier to fall prey to one's own learned and practiced negativity.

As was stated in the first chapter, the Freedom Model® is defined as a universal philosophy which states that all people have the personal right and the built-in tools to implement free thought through free choice and free will, from birth to death, and that a single drive motivates the human race: the pursuit of happiness. With the Freedom Model® you are providing yourself with the quickest known route to personal happiness.

Many choices that may look simply insane to the outside observer (e.g. the crack user who gives up her children to continue to get high) are in fact the best option that person sees at that particular moment. So your job in this program is to search out, discover, and attain new life options that will build a joyous, long lasting, deep sense of happiness and fulfillment for you rather than giving you a life based on short-term gratification with a high level of negative consequences.

Life is always changing, therefore you have two main objectives in creating a cornerstone for change: one, adapting positively to the challenges that life

thrusts upon you, (e.g. a spouse leaving, a job loss, a natural disaster, etc.) and, two, creating a set of goals for your new resilient life (e.g. by reducing or ceasing your substance use, changing or ending abusive relationships, securing or creating a more fulfilling career, etc.) The path to fulfillment is hampered by the unwillingness to change and adapt to life's challenges and avoiding the process of hard work to build lasting success for the future. Much of the misery that individuals accept as part of their life centers around repetitive choices that are characterized by a drive for immediate results and gratification, rather than the accepting that long term happiness is dependent on a change in perception and a devotion to hard work.

Every human being is fundamentally motivated by a drive to find happiness. Since the underlying problem of human struggles is caused by a perception that options to happiness are limited, people have a tendency to grasp that with which they are most familiar rather than planning and working for more productive options. Their limited options may include such things as drinking, drugging, or being involved in unsatisfying relationships. Once an individual feels as if there are no better options to find happiness, the downward spiral of increased anxiety and depression as well as substance usage may occur. In short, you go to the options you know best instead of reaching for better options.

The negative consequences of using alcohol and drugs can have a hidden benefit. First, consequences have been known to cause people to look for better life options, including reducing or stopping their substance use. They might do this because of a negative event, such as a car crash, physical complications, loss of a marriage, etc. In such situations, the motivation for quitting or moderating is positive enough that the change is often permanent. Hundreds of thousands of people in the United States and around the world stop abusing themselves by a simple decision to do so. However and with that said, this program is going to assume you are searching for a greater level of personal change other than just the benefits of abstinence. If, for example, drinking and drugging have become so prominent that the landscape of your life looks barren and depressing without it, then the fol-

lowing chapters, where you are introduced to new more satisfying options, are going to be key to your willingness to change.

Let's look at someone who did just that. Don, a 55-year-old father of four, contacted the St. Jude Retreats® for help. When he arrived it was obvious he was utterly spent. His children were grown, he was bored with the aviation company he started 20 years prior, and he was drinking daily to quell anxiety attacks. He felt there was little that could be done for him. He spent most of his retirement on two previous rehabilitation stays, both of which caused greater hopelessness. He was desperate and wanted an answer to his unhappiness.

What happened is typical of how the CBESM works. He was open to discussion on how he could change his life, and he completed the six-week program. When he returned home he followed his written plan to the letter. Most of what he wrote seemed like a dream really, but he moved forward with courage nonetheless. He was on shaky ground, but he knew he had to keep moving forward. In his case, he sold the business he started decades earlier, paid his outstanding tax debts, and spent the next three months traveling with his wife. This was something he thought he would never be able to do, yet there he was. His marriage improved, his anxiety lessened dramatically, and he continued to update his goals lists as he traveled. When he returned from their travels, he began a small business, one that had much less stress associated with it, and he found out that he had control over his destiny. His fear of life went away the more he tackled his challenges and overcame the obstacles in front of him. His relationships with his grown children have improved and he knows that the process of personal change does not have to be something to fear. He is a changed man.

For many, the idea of a better life may seem almost impossible, as it did initially for Don. That is why we will encourage you every step of the way. It all starts now. People react differently to a negative event when that event is followed by something that motivates them positively over the long haul. This process usually results in positive lifestyle changes that are followed by still more positive events, and soon you will have a

long string of accomplished goals resulting in a deep sense of personal confidence. Confidence builds on itself and results in a successful life without alcohol and drugs.

While this is a simplified view of the program, it cannot be stressed enough that you be absolutely realistic when completing the following chapters and lessons. Do not set impossible goals. Remember, success is within your grasp. Without an accurate and reasonable starting point, all the subsequent course work may be more difficult and less productive.

Deprivation – “Why can’t I drink anymore!?”

Many conventional treatment programs give the impression you are giving up something dear to your heart when you quit alcohol and drugs. This is just not so. You do not give up anything but a poorer quality of life; you gain everything! The idea that you are being deprived of an activity that used to bring happiness is a sure-fire way to return to that behavior. Many programs discuss a “love affair with alcohol and drugs.” This relationship can be abandoned if the person is able to move forward with new options that bring equal or greater pleasure and purpose. This is where most programs fail miserably. Because the methods are so focused on the loss of fun and pleasure associated with drinking or drugging, a person lives with a feeling of being deprived of the positive effects of that lifestyle. With deprivation the only neuroplastic effect on the brain is that of reinforced negative feelings of loss and depression. In order to move past this initial stage, one needs only decide (remember, the brain is a slave to your thoughts) to an attitude that you will gain a positive future, and that giving up substances is merely a beginning to that long-term mission. With these thoughts being constantly generated and reinforced by self-changing actions (to be described in detail later on in the text), new neuronal paths are generated, supporting your newfound choices.

Think about how much of your personal resources in money, health, and time have been spent on getting and using alcohol and drugs. The amount of valuable resources lost has been considerable. Now replace those negative thoughts with thoughts of what

could be gained in that same amount of time if drugs or alcohol are no longer an important part of your life. Make this your future focus!

Negative Motivation

People do not always react rationally to negative motivators. Even threats of dying or losing one's family as a result of substance use or other selfish inconsiderate habits do not necessarily result in personal change. Much of the time, negative aspects of substance use are simply viewed as the price to pay for the euphoria substances provide. This is just another reason for us to emphasize creating new more positive options as a more productive motivator for lasting life changes. Until you view and concentrate on life options that are more fulfilling than substance use, you may not see the wisdom in letting go of those old ways. The pursuit of happiness is what drives the human race, not the fear of consequences. Fear will initially push people to make some changes, but fear generates only temporary effects.

For instance, one might say that an individual being pursued by a raging lion is running away from the animal that wants to eat him. However, this is only half true. He is initially reacting through fear by running away from the danger. But that motivation is quickly replaced by a more positive motivation to run to safety. When people decide to quit substances, the decision might initially be an emotional roller coaster of fear and a sincere desire to "never feel like that again." This moment may be followed by a feeling of being deprived. But just as easily one may have an epiphany and a change in direction to a more positive lifestyle. It is your choice which neuroplastic effect you create for yourself. Just like the charging lion analogy, fear is replaced almost immediately by the much more powerful motive to search for deeper happiness and purpose.

How many people do you know, maybe even you, who have said "I cannot live like this anymore," while staring at the wreckage of what used to be their life, only to be drinking again in short order? Why does this happen? It happens because, at the moment they decided that they could not live like this anymore,

they were motivated by fear of the same awful consequences happening again and again. Once their occasion of fear passed, they were free to return to their destructive behaviors.

Again, fear is only a temporary motivator. It is an emotional response to a threat, danger, or unpleasantness. When the threat, danger or unpleasantness passes, so does the fear. In contrast, happiness is a permanent motivator. Humans are always in the pursuit of happiness and deeper purpose. If your moment of pain and fear is not replaced by a positive motivation to move past substance use, your mind may default to using substances in the pursuit of happiness because that is what your mind knows. Simply put, fear is temporary; the pursuit of happiness is permanent. Which will you choose?

Powerless? An Absurd Idea!

As we stated in the first chapter and in the various appendices, powerlessness in regard to alcohol and drug use does not exist. It never has and never will. Throughout the ages, the most seemingly hopeless of alcohol and drug users have found ways to abstain from all drugs and alcohol without treatment (Heyman, 2009). You are absolutely no different. They were able to see past the alcohol and drugs and they had the faith and courage to try things that seemed impossible. They followed up their abstinence with positive goals and changed their self-defeating attitudes. Some people do not radically change because the new habit of living without substance use is enough of a positive change for them to feel satisfied.

These folks succeed in remaining sober despite neglecting changes in the other areas of their lives that could bring about greater joy. People who abstain but who also decide to remain unchanged in the other areas of their lives may be missing out on greater happiness they could be enjoying with just a little more courage and work. Life is not meant to be one dismal day trudging into another, wishing for the good old days when drinking paid off. This is living in a deprived mental and emotional state. Why put yourself in that mindset?

Life is meant to be a series of new, exciting events

that create a history of smiles and friendships. It is about feeling successful at work and home, having faith in the future, and developing an internal confidence that comes from handling anything life pitches. You are not here to be passive and powerless. You are here to exercise free choice and to use your talents and drive to achieve greater happiness and to propel your life through new frontiers. Once you choose to be sober, you have begun a long string of events that will lead you to an entirely new and confident lifestyle.

The following chapters will teach you how to create positive lifestyle changes. Many of you who suc-

ceed with quitting alcohol and drugs may want to read on to find a better quality of life through the added coursework. No one should stop now. The following chapters illustrate in fine detail ways to deal with greater personal accountability and greater control over one's life no matter what their lifestyle includes. Are you ready to change or are you going to relive the past and feel deprived? It's your choice.

Now, please go to Workbook 1 and read the Learning Objectives and answer the Chapter Review Questions before you read on.

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Chapter 5

The Universal Axioms

Alcohol and drug use can often produce an existence filled with damage, dissatisfaction, and confusion. This damage can also be collateral and affect everyone around the substance user. Once he or she is sober, even if it is only for a short period of time, the negative consequences of his lifestyle will come into true focus. This clarity may be emotionally overwhelming.

Being overwhelmed by the truth can make for a convenient excuse to drink and drug again. Our Western “addiction” based culture fostered in the treatment industry, has promoted the idea that if a substance user has stress and/or poor coping skills, he or she is doomed to continue to get intoxicated or high. In the face of this erroneous information, why would anyone attempt to fix the damage left in the wake of his or her substance use, especially if it may be “too much to handle?” The good news is that this is not true. Many people with limited coping strategies, emotional struggles, and horrible living conditions do not use substances. A person’s strength lies within him or her, and this program will show you how to tap into yours.

What Causes Substance Use?

While it is true that in some instances people make the decision to get high or drunk to avoid changing or to deal with their lack of positive life skills, there are other times when those same individuals use sub-

stances when their life is simple and good. Reporting only those factors that link substance use to negative behaviors and circumstances provides the researcher with a quick and easy explanation for substance use.

So what is the actual reason for substance use? The answer is choice-based decisions.

There are two general paths to happiness: immediate gratification and deferred gratification. Someone who moves beyond immediate gratification to achieve greater success and satisfaction is in the process of maturing into a fully functional adult human being, having discovered that deferred gratification produces happiness that, more often than not, will last a lifetime.

However, those who use substances rarely look for happiness beyond the instant rush. For them, the buzz, high, or euphoria, however fleeting, is all there is. The temporary happiness they know is their choice. Unfortunately, these choices for immediate gratification disrupt the maturing process. Adolescents and adults who continue to select immediate gratification train their minds to reject all other options.

So the repetitive decision to get drunk and high is made from within and is not caused by outside factors. Outside factors such as peer pressure and differing norms can influence decisions, but, ultimately the power to use substances as well as the power not to use substances come from a personal decision about what creates individual happiness at any given point in time.

People use substances when life is going well just as often as when they are pressured by outside circumstances. Substance use when times are good is called celebrating. So if the substance user gets drunk and high during both happy and stressful times, which circumstance is the real cause of their using? The answer is neither—outside circumstances do not dictate rates of substance use. Personal choice dictates behavior. If you see value in getting drunk and high and that value seems greater than what you would obtain from other choices, then the more highly valued option is what you will choose.

Looking for underlying reasons for substance use is like looking for the troll under the bridge. That is: there are no underlying factors. Do crack users stop getting high when they come into a lot of cash or when they run out of money? Does the nightly drinker stop drinking if his daughter decides to marry a prince or a frog? Does the heroin user decide to quit when she looks like death and hasn't eaten in days? The answer to all of these questions is a resounding yes and a resounding no!

There is only one consistent factor in both the cause for substance use and the cause for changing an individual's personal substance use habit: the perceived benefits of the choice at hand. How many times do you hear a person say: "Just when things were looking good, I sabotaged it by getting drunk again!" These are not the words of a desperate person, but rather someone who has chosen instant gratification over the work involved in accepting responsibility for personal success. The decision to get high when things look bad or good is a choice to take the path perceived as more desirable. What is so tragic is that the path to instant gratification is littered with the bodies of those who could have chosen what they perceived as the more difficult path.

But the perceived "easy path," the path of irresponsibility and quick fixes, is never easier. The price of irresponsibility and quick fixes is indeed much higher than the price of achieving happiness by way of deferred gratification. Most people learn this lesson through pain and as we have said before, some eventually change. Others continue down the miserable path of continuously trying to make immediate

gratification work.

Armed with the knowledge that all options are open to you, how do you decide to move past substance use and an instant gratification lifestyle to a life of stability and sustained happiness? The obvious answer is first to quit drinking and drugging or, at the very least, to moderate your usage. Then, begin to look back at your life and learn from your past mistakes. After that, you should create options that you believe will bring a great level of satisfaction and happiness. As you set and attain your new goals you will increase confidence-building behaviors and internal strengths. All of this is covered in the following chapters.

Maturity

We begin the process of helping you change your life with a brief discussion of a term we use throughout the program: maturity. What is maturity, and why is it important? Webster's Dictionary defines it as, "the quality or state of being mature, especially: full development." But what is "full development," and why is that important?

In order to feel joy people must be able to adapt to or overcome life's challenges. There is a saying, "The only constant in life is change," and this is absolutely true. As such it is the first universal axiom.

Universal Axiom I: The only constant is change.

Life is constantly changing. People move, children grow up, careers change, health wanes and then improves, the weather changes, and life's cycles begin and end. Whether a person can adapt to these changes and become an active participant in a constantly changing world is key to "full development" or maturity.

To illustrate this point, look at life from two different perspectives. On the one hand, the immature child is dependent on those around him or her. On the other, a mature adult is responsible for those around him or her. Being responsible makes the ever-changing circumstances of life more challenging. The adult or fully developed human is a participant, not a spectator, in the process of life. Fully developed

adults create their present circumstances and sometimes must react to unexpected situations (often very difficult ones) in positive ways. Children observe life. They have little or no concern for or much affect on the outcomes.

Many adults never reach full development; that is, they fail to mature. In certain aspects of life they may mature, such as their work life, their financial life, and/or family relationships. But in other areas they are unable to move beyond instant gratification. They can't seem to move beyond substance use and a tendency towards drama and chaos.

Physically they grow up, but emotionally and mentally they develop ways of coping using the same or similar techniques they used as children, such as seeking immediate gratification. These non-matured adults see themselves as victims because for them the world and its flow of changes are too tough to handle. They may have panic attacks and develop debilitating fears. They often develop phobias toward everyday responsibilities of living. Their careers are shaky, as are their relationships. They feel a sense of impending doom and tend to become depressed.

When an adult uses childhood coping strategies, such as tantrums, pleasure seeking, or comfort seeking it is often to avoid needed change. The result is usually plummeting self-confidence, loneliness, despair, depression, anxiety, lost resources, and emotional instability. Then the "non-matured adult" may use alcohol, drugs, food, sex, gambling, etc., to gain greater comfort and happiness. Unfortunately this can have drastic and counterproductive results. The person begins to feel stuck, watching others move on to build satisfying lives while he or she is left wallowing in yesteryear, trying to hide from today's responsibilities. This problem is created because of the person's desire to be happy, but because he perceives so few options, he keeps returning to activities, methods, and relationships that bring only fleeting moments of happiness, usually followed by deep remorse and self-pity.

What defines a fully mature person is the ability to initiate and embrace internal and external changes. Everyone is able to adapt to change. Yet some people do not accept change, no matter how much

discomfort must be endured rejecting it or ignoring normal adult responsibilities. Look at those who remain mired in self-pity many years after a divorce. Or look at the person embittered by the untimely death of a loved one who becomes incapacitated because of the loss. Yet another example is the financial head of a household who becomes unemployed because of downsizing and rather than seeking out new and exciting prospects dwells on the lost job. These are examples of an individual's unhappiness resulting from avoiding needed change. Rather than accepting that change must occur if one is to attain a more satisfying experience, such people decide not to change, and instead decide to remain mired in self-pity, embitterment, and fear.

The question is why people would choose self-pity or fear over happiness? Simply put, they don't or rather they don't know this is what they are doing. Their self-pity or fear literally becomes their "normal" condition. They are not rejecting happiness in favor of self-pity and fear, but rather they are clinging to their self-pity and fear as their learned level of comfort. As time passes and they continue these thoughts, it becomes far more frightening to think beyond their neuroplastic learned behavior than to stay the same.

Life's progress never stops and everyone must learn to adapt. Some of the most successful people, after completing this program, have been astounded at the level of immaturity with which they had been living.

To find out how open you are to the process of personal change, a further understanding of certain universal life truths is needed. There are certain indisputable axioms that do not change. Maturity (accepting the ability to change oneself) and joy are the results of enthusiastically embracing and putting these truths into action. For most people, maturity is simply a function of living. As people grow older they see the ineffectiveness of hanging onto old ideas that seemed to work when they were adolescents, but do not work in adulthood.

Selfishness is a characteristic of children and for most people this trait continues throughout adolescence. Selfishness in the human young is a survival mechanism. When a baby is hungry, it cries. He doesn't know or care what everybody else is doing,

he only knows that he is hungry. This selfish behavior is rewarded. Every time the infant is hungry, he cries, and bingo, someone comes to feed him. The infant learns cause and effect: I cry, I get fed. Without the infant's inherent selfishness, parents might sleep through feeding times slowing the baby's development.

Then as the infant matures into a toddler and begins saying words, his cry changes. A toddler's cry as compared to an infant's is dramatically less compelling. The crying that worked well for an infant does not work nearly as well for the toddler. In fact, it can become downright confusing when mother says to the toddler, "Danny, if you don't stop that crying, I'll give you something to cry about." For Danny, the universe just changed. If he refuses to change with his universe and continues to hang on to the infantile behavior of crying to get what he wants, he will be setting himself up for failure and unhappiness the same way adolescents and adults often do.

Children are the center of their universe because they have not seen enough to know otherwise. Adolescence is that period between childhood and adulthood when perceptions change and it frightens most people as they struggle through it. On the other side of adolescence is where adulthood and maturity wait. Enough life experience and greater ability to keep an open mind will allow the natural maturing process to occur. However there can be snags along the way.

It is the purpose of this program to analyze first where you may be snagged and then to help you identify what areas of your life lack maturity. You will be given the tools to create a path for yourself that will direct you out of your immaturity and into a life of change and open-mindedness. This will ultimately lead you to a happier more fulfilling life.

What Are the Axioms?

There are certain life truths (e.g. "the only constant is change") that guide people to a level of maturity which produces happiness and success. This program will discuss exactly how you have behaved in ways that are in conflict with these truths, and how this has caused you unhappiness and an unsatisfy-

ing life. Once these topics are covered in detail, we will teach you how to live with these truths and find security and a joyful life. Many times we are asked who established these axioms and what makes them indisputable? Rest assured, we did not come up with these ideas ourselves. Baldwin Research Institute is a research organization. All of the material you will learn has been thoroughly researched. The axioms are what we discovered through researching hundreds of different cultures and religions from all over the world. We boiled down the positive commonalities they all shared and set them forth as the following material.

There are five major axioms that guide people to success, regardless of their circumstances. Three are listed below and the fourth and fifth are explained in subsequent chapters. The first three are as follows:

- The only constant is change.
- You are what you think.
- Happiness is the most effective motivating factor in the human condition.

As Axiom 1 was covered in detail earlier in this chapter, now we will discuss Axiom 2.

Universal Axiom 2: You are what you think.

As discussed, the body can only do what the mind tells it to do. For instance, you would not be able to feed yourself unless the mind told you to do so. How you react to the world is totally dependent on your mind. There are some life situations over which people have little control such as natural disasters, or the death of a loved one. However, you do have control over how you react. You also have a tremendous amount of control over what you learn from past situations and how you proceed with your life so as not to repeat past unwanted patterns and choices.

This program is based on common sense and designed to show you that every time you make a choice something happens, either in a positive direction or in a negative one. It guides you toward choosing your options with confidence and conviction rather than remaining a victim of circumstance. After completing the program you will be able to take control of your

life and live in sync with universal truths that will enlighten and motivate you as never before.

It is essential you understand that you are the master of all the choices you have made in life and all the choices you will ever make in your future. Those who believe they are victims are choosing to remain in an immature state. There are many individuals who are competent in their chosen profession, but who have areas of their lives that remain in an unnatural, immature state. Maybe they have held onto resentments from childhood or they have intimate relationships in which they are unwilling to give love but expect to receive it. These are typical problems of those still in an underdeveloped state of emotion and perception. It is natural for a child to be loved by the mature adults around him; however, other adults do not react the same way to a 30 year old.

Most emotional development occurs during the adolescent and young adult years. The learning curve is steep during this life passage. Unfortunately, there are many people who don't change certain childhood behaviors and live their lives feeling unsatisfied and resentful. Their lack of maturity develops into a constant state of disappointment and a deep sense of internal loneliness.

The second axiom states you are what you think, so if you think about what you don't have you are unfulfilled and resentful. The cause of this unhappiness is first, unwillingness to accept that you are what you think, and second, unwillingness to accept responsibility for your own mind-created choices and actions. This means that to change you will have to accept many challenges in life which may seem difficult, such as deferring gratification for things that are much more satisfying down the road.

Lesson 5.1

Please refer to Lesson 5.1 in Workbook 1 and make a list of every negative idea, thought, principle, and all resentful thoughts you have had over the last year.

The more thorough and honest you are, the more helpful this exercise will be for you. Take a look at the following example:

Negative Thought and Emotion List

Example 1. I am tired of fighting with my wife/husband.

Example 2. I hate my job and coworkers.

Example 3. I am sick of drinking/drugging every day.

Example 4. I am afraid of letting anyone know my thoughts—who I really am.

Example 5. I don't love my wife/husband.

Example 6. I am afraid that I am not good enough.

Example 7. I hate who I am.

Example 8. I hate who I have become.

Example 9. I am so alone.

Example 10. I want to get high.

In order to begin to change your thinking to more positive thoughts, you must first identify the multitude of negative thoughts that go through your mind throughout the day. To do this you will write your own Negative Thought and Emotion List.

Now, stop and go to Chapter 5 of Workbook 1. In the space provided under Lesson 5.1, make your own Negative Thought and Emotion List.

Look over your list. Each of the negative statements is reflective of the negative patterns within your life. Remember, you are what you think. This list is just the beginning of understanding the patterns of the thoughts and emotions that are hurting you. You will get into much greater detail on how to change these thoughts thereby effecting real change in your life later in the program.

The next list you will write plays off this Negative Thought list and requires you to write down an abbreviated version of each statement that encompasses just your feelings. Using the first example, "I am tired of fighting with my husband" becomes "I am tired." So next to your first statement, you would write, "I am tired." Then next to number 2 you would write "I hate." Next to number 3 you would write, "I am sick." and so on.

The point of this exercise is to identify just how negative you can be when your thoughts and emotions are predominantly negative. When people bring childhood habits into their adulthood the results are often devastating. How you perceive, think about, and

react to events, people, and things, often defines who you are. If you have thoughts of fatigue, sickness, and hate you will become tired, sick, and full of hate.

Lesson 5.2

Remember, you are what you think. Like gravity, this law won't budge or change for your convenience. Are you ready to accept and embrace this truth? If so, fill in the spaces provided in Workbook 1 under the Negative Character Description List (Lesson 5.2) with the appropriate negative character descriptions, so you can look at what your personal thoughts have created within you.

Example of a Negative Character Description List

- Example 1. I am tired.
- Example 2. I hate.
- Example 3. I am sick.
- Example 4. I am afraid.
- Example 5. I don't love.
- Example 6. I am afraid.
- Example 7. I hate.
- Example 8. I hate.
- Example 9. I am alone.
- Example 10. I want.

Please go to Lesson 5.2 and convert your Negative Thoughts and Emotions from Lesson 5.1 into a negative Character Description List in Lesson 5.2.

The list you have created in Lesson 5.2 provides a shorthand look at what your thoughts and emotions have created by your not moving into an adult, mature state of mind. When your list is complete, ask yourself if what you read explains why you are so unhappy. Is it possible you have created a living situation that is nearly impossible to manage?

In your upcoming autobiography (Chapter 10), you will examine how many of these unhappy feelings were caused by your failure to adapt and change. You have chosen to be underdeveloped. This state is painful because there are fully developed people all around you. The contrast can be embarrassing and depressing, but it can also be an

incredible force to get you to embark on the process of change.

People sometimes unknowingly create self-defeatist attitudes and become trapped. It is not that people consciously hurt themselves, they simply spend time doing things they find makes them happy for the cheapest price and in the shortest term. This is like a child in a room full of toys who goes from one toy to another, until he becomes exhausted and bored. Or like the child who on Halloween eats all her candy in one night, regardless of the warnings from those who know better.

The Third Axiom

A bored or unhappy person naturally seeks relief and happiness. The immature person usually seeks relief via the quickest route (immediate gratification.) This has some temporary positive results, but is followed by a sense of loss, sickness and hopelessness when the temporary happiness fades as quickly as it came. That sense of loss creates a greater need for more quick fixes. Instant gratification rather than mature deferred gratification leaves a person wanting more, always more.

Happiness, whether it is short-lived (instant gratification) or long-term (deferred gratification), is the one universal goal people search for throughout their lives. This brings us to Axiom Number 3.

Universal Axiom 3:

Happiness is the most effective motivating factor in the human condition.

Many people who struggle with maturity do find things that motivate them and bring them happiness, but usually not for very long. When alcohol and drugs produce that good feeling, these people use it to excess and fantasize about having enough to be happy forever. Using drugs or alcohol and fantasizing about how good life is going to be works well for a brief period. Crack and heroin are extreme examples of temporary fast fixes that fade quickly and leave the user depressed. Food and sex are other common quick fixes that fade quickly. All are counterproductive and incredibly destructive.

The point is that even people with substance use problems (or any form of instant gratification) are motivated by the desire for happiness. This is why we do not judge a person's use of substances or any habits people create for themselves. They have a deep internal motivation to seek pleasure. But if they seek and usually find it in activities that are fleeting and quickly lost, this easy pleasure fix can have an enormous price tag and in some cases be fatal.

All choices have an effect on the person who makes them. Stable, happy, mature individuals tend to function by putting their energies into activities that bring happiness over the long run. Unstable, sporadically happy, immature people have a tendency to choose the short-term, instant-gratification happiness. This could be crack users who have lost their families because of their drug use, overweight individuals who suffer heart attacks, or gamblers who lose their homes and retirement funds.

Stable individuals invest in their futures. They "grow up." Unhappy people tend to seek satisfaction in chasing glimmers of happiness, sometimes for years on end, never bothering to ask whether it is worth the price they are paying for these brief mo-

ments of pleasure. Then the consequences for their choices hit them. It is at the stage that life changing events occur for many. The rest of this program is designed to show you how to move past instant-gratification pleasure-seeking (immature) and toward deferred gratification (mature) to experience joy and happiness.

It is not the fact that "happiness is the most effective motivating factor in the human condition" that causes substance users so much misery. It is the misuse of this axiom. Their approach is "I will find happiness the quickest and easiest possible way!" Substance users certainly understand happiness as a motivator, but they pick ineffective and often destructive ways to achieve it. They tend not to look at other options that might provide a deeper sense of satisfaction and lasting joy. For most of our readers this all makes sense. However, a more detailed look at some stumbling blocks and solutions to finding happiness will be discussed in the next chapters.

Please take the time now to answer the questions in Workbook 1 for Chapter 5. Complete these before moving on to Chapter 6.

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Chapter 6

*H*appiness Knows No Shortcuts

Some people have the idea you can simply cut short the hard work necessary for achieving lasting happiness by identifying the negative aspects of life and then avoiding them. Although there is some truth to this, there is more to it than that. Negative events and habits don't consistently motivate personal change because all negative motivators, by their nature, produce limited, temporary results. Negative motivators are constructed in fear, and fear-based avoidance is not nearly as effective as a drive towards positivity, which can last for an entire lifetime. Fear exists to drive us immediately to a safer position. Once there, we are quite naturally motivated to move beyond mere safety to something "better." Think of the lion story in Chapter 4.

A substance user who has had a recent near fatal drug overdose and is afraid of dying may stay away from drugs for some period of time, only to return to using down the road. Why? The simple explanation is that their desire for happiness (i.e. getting high again) outweighs their fear of overdosing again. Even people who are temporarily driven by fear will soon begin to seek either instant pleasure or a more contented existence. The fear fades and their desire for happiness and the quick fix re-emerges. It is what they know. With limited options and experience comes a limited perspective on what possibly could bring happiness.

A threat from your boss will fade with time, and the behavior problem that got you in trouble at work in the first place may resurface. Advice from a doctor to

change your diet, get more exercise, and lower stress after a near fatal heart attack has limited long-term effects. Over half of those who have heart attacks change their behaviors because of their fear; however, as time passes, their habits of poor eating and sedentary lifestyle return. These are examples of negative motivators having a temporary positive effect, followed again with the same behavior that produced the problem. Moreover, regression to the same behavior that was the original cause of the trouble is most likely to be of the "quick fix" variety. Not knowing other options is the problem. Had the heart attack victim been offered alternatives to the perceived pleasures of sedentary living and greasy foods he might have had a change of habits, thus adding longevity and a better quality to his life. Until these options are understood to exist and their benefits recognized, the decision to change may never occur.

But it does not have to be that way! Many people learn from their mistakes and stop having to run from the lion over and over again. They create ways to get through the mountain passes to a place where they have heard no lions exist. They are driven by a vision of walking without fear of an attack.

The failure to change and accept adult responsibility has killed millions throughout time. For them, the option of short-term immediate gratification was more important than an investment in long-term sustainable happiness. Witness the substance user choosing to go back to old habits and the heart attack vic-

tim enjoying fried chicken week after week.

When we talk about happiness being the most effective motivator, we are talking about looking toward a future filled with long-term positive goals, instead of running away or looking fearfully back over our shoulders at past failures. Sustainable success and happiness is not about chasing a high, day in and day out, or looking for that quick fix.

Universal Axiom 4:

There is no shortcut to lasting happiness.

Fundamentally, there are really only two options. One is to mature into a life driven by individual responsibility, planning, goal-setting, and personal achievement. The other is to continue to relive past failures by hanging onto proven methods for bringing fleeting moments of relief. One is a positive option and the other is negative. One way has lifelong positive effects, and the other offers only temporary positive effects, usually followed by emptiness and failure. With one you charge forward to new and exhilarating accomplishments, and with the other you look back reliving fears and failures. With one you faithfully and courageously believe in tomorrow, while with the other you continue to repeat yesterday's failures..

Generally speaking, negative motivators push a reluctant participant down a positive path for a brief time, from which he falls back into the same patterns as before. You see this in the extremely low success rates of negative (fear-based) alcohol and drug treatment programs and 12-step programs. The negative basis for these programs (the fear, disease, never being cured) produces a 0-5% success rate. Once the consequences of substance use are suspended by abstinence, the fear lessens and the person looks for a known path to happiness once again. Consider how many previously convicted felons return to prison during their lifetime, more often than not, for the same crimes. The lure of "easy money" along with a lack of social responsibility is chosen for the "immediate" happiness it brings the criminal; so the price of possible imprisonment is worth the risk. They are relatively happy conducting their lives in this manner. Options such as working at a long-term career simply are not appealing enough to tempt them away from

the habits that they believe have brought them satisfaction in the past.

Both substance use rehabilitation programs and the criminal justice system use fear-based motivators to try to effect behavioral changes. Both of these motivators, negativity and fear, fail to keep an individual on a productive path over the long term. The truth is that everyone can be temporarily motivated by fear. Initially, they may be motivated to change their lives. However, and as you may have experienced, fear fades over time and life becomes more comfortable with the reduced level of fear. The old behavior seems, once again, acceptable. We begin to think, "You know, my life really wasn't that bad."

If you really make the decision to change your life, but the fear that motivates you at that critical moment is not converted to something positive, your chances of moving past your poor habits are minimal, at best. So how do we interrupt this vicious cycle?

The answer is that your initial fear and depression must be replaced by enthusiasm for and commitment to your future. It is the goal of this program to help you understand that you can live your life empowered and independent, not powerless and relying on support networks, meetings, and the like. First, you need to believe in a positive future. Remember that your brain is wired according to established habits. If you have spent days, weeks, or even years being negative or fearful about your future and have a generally gloomy outlook, those thoughts are now supported by the brain's neuron memory and structure. You can change this by consciously choosing to learn positive thinking thereby creating new options for yourself.

Conventional treatments such as AA and NA are designed to do just the opposite. They teach the scared and vulnerable to fear their own thoughts. This creates a need for perpetual support from others. Predictably the support provided at AA and NA reinforces their own paradigm, making the person dependent on that model for the rest of their broken lives. This is counterproductive neuroplastic change. Through AA and NA the brain learns to support fear-based, self-limiting thoughts.

The notion that you are "sick" is false and leads to failure. You are not sick. You might be scared and

have little confidence, but you are definitely not beyond hope. You must learn how to choose better alternatives for yourself. Confidence and a new self-image must replace your current fear and self-pity.

To rewire your neurons to support your new ideas, you must learn how to think creatively and positively, even when things look darkest. A deep desire for happiness must begin to dominate your thoughts. The purpose of this program is to build motivation and confidence and to stimulate courage from within and faith in yourself to overcome fear. After all, no one is going to be there holding your hand. Your dedication to this program is a way of saying "Enough is enough. I will choose better for myself and for those I love." To begin the process you must form a renewed self-image. Remember that all action and change in life begins in your mind. Imagine your new self-image and for that instant, you have already changed. You are what you think. After that, it is just a matter of time and practice before that new self-image is, in fact, you.

In some cases, you may need to put immediate wants on hold to achieve joy. Then, you will have to construct a plan to put into motion those things necessary for a future filled with accomplishment and well-earned satisfaction. Constructing such a plan takes commitment, integrity, and maturity, things many people have chosen to ignore or with which they have little practical experience.

To summarize, happiness motivates all people. Avoiding negative events and habits out of fear usually provides momentary positive results which are followed by a return to the instant gratification path. In the long run, instant gratification usually ends up causing more unhappiness than planning and working toward lasting happiness. Lasting happiness is attained when a person chooses to mature and look beyond the immediate for sustained success and stability. You can, of course, continue down the path of instant or short-term gratification. Please keep in mind that even short-term gratification, temporary

happiness, is in fact, the real thing. Quick fixes can and do achieve temporary happiness, but may result in a high price to pay.

Real or perceived happiness derived from quick fixes can be repeated rapidly over and over to create extended happiness. Unfortunately, the effort needed to keep these short-term fixes coming quickly enough eventually demands all of an individual's resources, all of his or her time, all of his thoughts, all of his money, all of his love, all of his dignity, and eventually, all of himself.

There is a place in life for temporary highs, even for those who have matured. Roller coasters exist to give a temporary high and they are fun. Mature people sky dive, race cars, go white water rafting and rock climbing, have parties, date, go out to eat with their spouses and children, and fly airplanes. But they

Lasting happiness is attained when a person chooses to mature and look beyond the immediate for sustained success and stability.

don't live on roller coasters, nor do they sky dive every waking moment of every day constantly seeking that one fleeting rush they felt the first time they did it.

To attain lasting happiness, a person has to work in sync with the natural universal axioms and do it long enough that it becomes natural as positive neuroplastic brain changes occur. If someone lived on that roller coaster for several years and then made the decision to get off and live a normal life, simply walking on solid ground would seem nearly impossible at first. His brain would have adjusted itself to life on a roller coaster, from physical balance to motion-adjusted eyesight, to the way sounds are heard. Habitual destructive choices create similar neuroplastic brain changes that make the negative lifestyle possible and enduring.

This is where belief and faith in the future are required. Once you believe you can walk again, hard work and faith in yourself take over. With practice, before you know it walking comes naturally again and the idea of living on a roller coaster seems, well...

downright silly. By working through this program and making the life changes it outlines, your new existence will take over and become your norm. The neurons in your brain will slowly but surely re-wire to accommodate your new motivations, thoughts, and choices.

When people decide to change their lives, especially people with a habit as extreme as substance use or habitual negative thinking, a dramatic effort has to be expended in the first stages of the change. Why do you think adolescence is so hard? It is the time of letting go of constant support and becoming supporting. It is the time of drastic change from looking to others to provide your happiness, to becoming someone who provides happiness not only for yourself but for others as well. It is when you begin the process of relinquishing your immediate wants for those wants that initially seem harder to obtain. It is also a period of huge neuroplastic brain adjustments and rearrangements.

If you believe choosing short-term happiness is the only relief from your uneasiness and unsatisfying existence, then that becomes your reality. At this juncture, it would be wise to allow your perceptions to change. Try to believe that there is a way of life better than the one you are living today. This belief is the beginning of progress toward a new, more fulfilling life.

Although maturing is a natural process, not everyone matures at the same rate nor does everyone mature out of every childhood behavior. Any behavior that avoids change, when a need for change is indicated, is destructive. This could mean neglecting your health, smoking, using drugs, overeating, driving too fast, being unwilling to give in intimate relationships, or avoiding the hard work necessary to advance your career when you know you have the ability to do it. The list is endless. But it's never too late to adapt and change. Now is the time to begin looking introspectively at how to transform your life.

"How can I be sure it will be better than what I am doing now?" you might ask. The answer is quite simple. Is what you are doing now bringing you all of the success and happiness that you expected at this time in your life? For most people in this program the answer is a depressing "No." Clearly, if we are to get to the happiness and success we have always

wanted, we must relinquish our love of quick fixes and embrace deferred gratification. We must work on becoming mature.

It makes sense that in order to free yourself completely from a lonely, destructive existence you need to understand Axiom Number 4: There is no shortcut to lasting happiness. To move forward with this process you may want to simply believe and have the courage to accept this on faith. Faith is belief in the future when you have no direct evidence that anything will ever get better.

Having courage does not mean you are without fear. Courage means you act positively in the face of your anxiety and fear which are both normal human emotions even for the most courageous. Those people who conquer fear do it daily by working as if all will be well, regardless of the trepidation they feel inside. If you follow the second axiom, "you are what you think," then faith is actually not faith at all, it is your new reality based on your choice to believe in it. The moment you faithfully decide that the future is going to be positive, you have already begun to make it so. Once you courageously act on your faithful thinking, fear begins to dissipate and confidence replaces it. This is the start of a successful pattern of adult living.

The simple fact is this, even in your moments of deepest depression and greatest anxiety, you are governed by the same natural laws as those who are wildly successful and happily matured. The only difference is how you have applied those laws. Unhappy adults live the way children do; they believe their way is the best way, regardless of the evidence to the contrary. This is no different from the out-of-shape individual who refuses to change even though gravity is detracting from his quality of life. Conversely, the body builder uses gravity to help him build muscle. Both men work with the same universal law of gravity, yet they produce opposite outcomes. It is the use of the law that creates either happy or painful results.

The four axioms, when put together, are a description of the process of growing up. Accepting reality is part of going from the naturally self-centered child-like behavior to that of a selfless, successful mature

adult. Unhappy, delusional people attempt to carry their childish viewpoints into adulthood. Of course, this does not work because reality is not set up for that. Are you ready to accept these axioms and begin the real work required to grow up?

The natural truths described here should not be classified as religious dogma or agenda. Rather they show how a person can accept reality or live counter to reality. People reap the rewards of positive thoughts or suffer the consequences of negative thoughts. This is simply the way life works.

We are talking about unavoidable truths, about being human and struggling. When one is immersed in a life of unhappiness, it is important to open the mind to ideas that are different from, and possibly better

than, your current thinking. In the previous chapter we discussed the idea that the only constant is change. For many, ideas that challenge their current thinking become a stumbling block to the maturing process. At this stage there is nothing that makes attaining a joy-filled life harder than a closed mind. No matter what has happened in the past, we have full confidence in you and your ability to overcome your internal disadvantage. People do it every day and you can, too. Let us now move to the work necessary to overcome your past and build anew.

Please take the time now to answer the questions in Workbook 1 for Chapter 6. Complete these before moving on to Chapter 7.

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Chapter 7

*T*he Fifth Axiom — To Give is to Receive

There are physical laws that maintain order in the physical world, and there are truths that sustain us emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Even if people live in concert with these truths, it does not mean they will be happy all the time. However they could be, because happiness is a matter of personal choice. These truths or axioms also allow for an equal right to abject misery if you choose to live in conflict with them. The fifth axiom is covered in its entirety in this chapter.

An example of the fifth axiom in action can be seen in countries such as Ethiopia and Cambodia that have been ravaged by war and famine. In many areas of these countries, men, women, and children are starving and relief workers might have only enough food for half the local population. In these horrible conditions relief workers have been amazed and inspired by what they have observed. The majority of the children who were given food immediately shared what meager amounts they had with the children who were not given food. Workers also observed that this sharing created an atmosphere of happiness and, in many cases, even giddiness and laughter. What is even more telling is the fact that the children who were sharing their food displayed the same joy as those who were receiving it. In this case, to give food is to receive joy.

We know that the desire to feel joy and happiness is the dominant driving force in the human condition, and the more you work to feel it, the more of it you get. But do you really believe this? Western culture is extremely competitive and the benefits of competi-

tion are enormous.

It can foster a high standard of living, a variety of career options, freedom, and liberty, but it can also have negative effects exemplified by such common mottoes as “nice guys finish last” or “you need to look out for number one.” This degree of competition can build insecurity and greed that lessen one’s well being. So how do you live in a competitive society complete with its negative aspects and still maintain an altruistic set of values?

Logically, if you give something away you seem to suffer a loss. Our culture has a tendency to believe this type of sterile logic, suggesting that you need to hold on tightly to what you have. But there is so much to life that is not logical. It takes faith rather than logic to give to others with no strings attached.

The truth is you never find happiness by demanding it, taking it, or manipulating others into giving it to you. You take positive control of your life only when you stop measuring your happiness by what other people can give you (or give back to you) and start building your level of happiness based on what you contribute to others.

For some “to give is to receive” might mean that when one gives to another, he might expect to receive something in return. This expectation actually nullifies any personal positive benefit that may be gained through giving. For the fifth axiom to work, you must have no expectations during or after giving. If you have no expectations, you will most certainly receive

some benefit. That's the irony. If you give expecting to receive, you limit the positive benefits. True altruism requires giving without expectations.

Some relationships, however, come with certain expectations. Marriage, for instance, comes with a set of expectations listed within the vows that are taken, and certainly some of these expectations are necessary to build a happy and successful marriage. But this does not mean that the fifth axiom is false or misleading; it just means it is a bit more complicated.

Expectations within a marriage come naturally from living close to another human being. This does not mean, however, that each participant would not benefit from greater conscious generosity shown to the other. In day-to-day living the fifth axiom can transform relationships, business dealings, and how we interact with the world. A marriage is a contract between two people. The business world has formalized relationships as well. Business contracts itemize the expectations of each party. This is unavoidable as it provides a safeguard for each party to receive the expected benefits from the relationship, but each party can also benefit greatly if both practice giving freely and work diligently to ensure the other is successful. The business that goes the extra mile has a tendency to outperform its competitors. The marriage in which both parties refuse to "keep score" has a much greater chance of going the distance.

The challenge in our expectation-driven lives is how to give freely of ourselves and our resources. Begin with the decision to care for others when we least want to, to spend time with those who are lonely, and to look at those close to us with gratitude. Life is hard enough without adding to its difficulties, so begin to give more and expect less immediately, and you will be happier.

This Is Too Easy!

Participants in this program often try to punch holes in the content. One of the frequent comments is that the program is too basic—"It can't be that easy," they say. However, once our critics actually begin to practice these so called "easy methods" in their private lives, they realize how difficult this change re-

ally is. Letting go of protective self-based habits can feel as if a part of you is being stripped away. As you move forward with the faith that your practice of the axioms will produce more benefits than the way you have been living, initially you may feel insecurity or fear. You may feel a sense of personal loss or sacrifice the first few times you consciously put the fifth axiom into practical action. That might cause deep anxiety and a reluctance to try. If you retain a misguided fear of the possibility of losing what little peace of mind you have gained throughout your life, you might be reluctant to practice the fifth axiom. And working all five axioms may take more faith than you currently are willing to rally.

The five axioms are simple in concept and completely understandable, but as with anything that has immense long-term benefits, "easy" is probably not the best way to describe them. The axioms are relatively simple to understand, but not necessarily easy to execute.

Some people are unaware of how their behavior may adversely affect them and others around them. Some people believe they have already been practicing the five axioms, and yet they openly admit that their lives are characterized by abject misery and loneliness. In such cases they are probably doing the best they can. They have their own perspective on things and are trying to be as happy and fulfilled as they know how to be.

These people are knowingly or unknowingly practicing the truths to the best of their ability but achieving less than stellar results. This is a result of having a limited understanding of how to enjoy life. They may find it difficult to motivate themselves. Little progress can be made by those who see no real reason to try harder. Ignorance is not bliss. To get more effective results from the five axioms, you need to have a thorough understanding of yourself and how you function in the world. This will be accomplished through the autobiographical process in Chapters 10 and 11.

There you will write, in detail, about who you are, which tends to make people much more open to new methods for self-improvement. You may be someone who is skeptical of the axioms and their life-changing effectiveness. We suggest you withhold

your judgments until you have completed the autobiographical process. You may find the results of that exercise quite surprising.

You may believe you are doing a good job in life, but also feel as if something is missing. This can cause you to feel frustration and anger when you study this program for the first time. You might say something like “Nothing here is new. I have known these things all my life. I go to church. I care for my kids. I go to work every day. I don’t need a morality lesson. I need to learn how to stop using heroin (crack, booze, etc.). That’s why I bought this program. I didn’t buy it to learn the golden rule!” Or, you might think, “I have always tried to be the best person I can be. I do not see how practicing these simple five axioms will improve my life? And besides, I’m already doing all this stuff!”

There are two separate issues here that need to be examined. First, this portion of the program has nothing to do with alcohol and/or drug use. In the earlier chapters we explained that alcohol and drug use are choices not necessarily connected to other behaviors. Once you choose to abandon or moderate your use of alcohol and other drugs, it is over, forever. That is a simple direct choice.

The second issue is that “simple” does not mean “easy.” We can’t stress this enough. Learning to care about others when you already feel dead inside, being open to change, forcing yourself to be positive in uncertain or stressful times, and pushing off impulsive behaviors for positive results are not easy to do and may take some time to achieve. You have already begun the process through the earlier charting process, but that was just the tiniest tip of an immense iceberg. You will reach far greater personal heights as you progress through the following lessons.

We agree that the axioms are conceptually simple and that the concepts are not new and certainly not complicated. However, your external life circumstances can be quite complicated and difficult. Life can come at you sometimes with events such as the death of a child, a strained marriage, health issues, a near fatal car accident, etc. These events are emotionally charged and complex.

But people who follow these positive axioms are

successful no matter what the external negative events. They are fortified by internal strength and a thorough understanding of universal laws. A mother who tends to be compassionate will reap benefits from her children. The adolescent who moves towards adulthood through personal change will be happier than the teenager who tries to remain a child. The businessperson who avoids get-rich-quick schemes for a business rooted in direct service to his customers will know personal success.

The first few chapters dealt primarily with gaining greater control over your substance use habits. Addressing that particular set of issues first was important because that particular problem tends to make all other challenges in life more complicated. For example, if your spouse loses her job, getting high has no positive effect on that situation. If your child is in a car accident, showing up drunk at the hospital is not helpful. So this program addresses each section of your life in the order of its importance to the goal of building long-term happiness. Deal with the drug and alcohol use first and then, with a clear mind, begin to examine and change the rest of your choices and habits systematically to increase your happiness.

By the time you have finished this chapter you may have achieved abstinence and/or moderation and you may well have completed the charting process. You might have a semblance of clear-headedness and you might also be ready for further change. A certain portion of you may also begin to acquire a level of comfort and may become overconfident. Try not to form preconceived ideas about how you think this program should work or become concerned that the methods are too simple because you’re a complicated person. Remember there are many chapters left, and the real work is yet to come. In the following chapters and coursework it will become clear why these five axioms are so important for you to understand and how their application will make you a more developed, more mature, and a more effective person. To move successfully through the rest of the program you will need a solid foundation.

Let’s look at a person who is good natured, cares for others, is somewhat fulfilled, but has moments of selfishness, fear, and anxiety. This may be you. You

want more in life, but when you think about the five axioms and using them to improve your life you begin to feel pressure and skepticism. This is normal, but we must be clear; the five axioms are not tools of moral judgment. They should be seen as time-honored guides that benefit people regardless of place, religion, culture, and time in history. Every society has benefited from understanding these five basic concepts. They are not a value system to determine how “good” you are as a person, or if you are “bad.” There is no room in the Freedom Model® for such judgments. You are your own judge and jury.

If you have moderated your actions then return to destructive behaviors, you should be careful not to conclude that you had a slip or relapse. This “not my fault” explanation is inaccurate. The truth is you simply made a conscious decision not to change that aspect of your life. And that decision is going to make changing that much more difficult in the future. If you desire to drink or drug heavily at this point, try to continue with the following process anyway. It will be more difficult in an impaired state, but enough information may sink in that you will be inspired to want more for yourself and those you love.

The first two areas to which you might want to apply the fifth axiom are family and career. (In the case of a homemaker your home and family are your career.) You can start by acknowledging that the people you have hurt the most deserve your best efforts. In a later chapter this will be discussed at a personal level, but for now we will speak in general terms.

Service-oriented people are aware of the needs of others and constantly try to help. They open doors for others, they might pick up litter when they see it, and they are quick to help those in need. They might work overtime without pay to help a co-worker meet an impending deadline. They often have a high level of involvement in community organizations and activities. They look for ways to do their best at whatever they do, and concentrate on the feelings of those close to them: children, spouse, and extended family. Those in our program, on the other hand, have a tendency to neglect or even abuse those closest to them. So this is the place where much progress can be made.

Career may be a priority if your previous choices

have taken a toll on finances. It is likely that your household and children have suffered because of this. For some in our program their monetary situation is satisfactory, but time with the family may have suffered. If you have put in subpar work at the job, now is the time to go back and prove that you are worth the pay you receive. These are all areas for you to examine.

Genuinely happy people give to society in many different ways and there is one trait they all have in common. They give for the sake of giving. They don’t want anything for their efforts. As a direct result of this behavior they’ve already discovered a wonderful feeling that makes life worth living. Many go to work and love their job. The pay is just an added benefit. These folks usually rise quickly within the organizations in which they are involved.

This program is not religious, but there are benefits to be derived from living a spiritual life. Some people find a more solid footing through being an active member of a religion. Many of the axioms discussed here are included in religious texts and the main principle of love is the basis of all positive religions. The more you surround yourself with people who attempt to live moral lives, the more honorable and just you will become. This will increase your daily emotional bank account, thus giving you greater reserves to give to your children, your spouse, your friends, and your employer.

The example of the relief work given at the beginning of this chapter demonstrates the massive power of choice. The most amazing aspect of that example is that we are talking about some of the worst conditions known to mankind, and yet the principles of the axioms triumph and happiness is created wherever people decide to care for one another.

Axiom Rotation

While going through this program you may want to create what we call axiom rotation. Each day you can pick an axiom. For instance, today, you might pick Axiom Number 2, “You are what you think.” Concentrate on that axiom for the day, and ask yourself, are you thinking and acting in positive ways or are your

thoughts and actions negative? You might be quite surprised by what you discover. Do this with each axiom for each subsequent day.

Self-awareness is something that is learned. It is not intuitive. Most people are governed by outside circumstances they do not understand. What we are suggesting is you take back control of your life. Stop being a victim. Then watch your social abilities grow and friendships develop. If happiness and joy are truly the most effective and productive motivator in the human condition, it is now time to identify exactly what will make you most happy.

In Workbook 1, please go to Lesson 7.1 and begin to write a list of everything you enjoy doing, people you enjoy being with, items you cherish, and overall any activity that brings you a deep sense of happiness and pleasure.

Lesson 7.1 Your “Feel Positive” List Examples

Example 1. I love being with my kids.

Example 2. I enjoy going out to dinner with my spouse.

Example 3. I love to laugh.

Example 4. I like sports cars.

Example 5. Being good at my job.

Example 6. Playing tennis.

Example 7. Helping my kids succeed.

Example 8. Jogging.

Example 9. Free of depression.

Example 10. Studying astronomy.

Once you have completed your happiness list, it is now time to build your listing of positive emotions and traits. This is the same process you completed in the previous chapter when we discussed how negative thoughts and emotions become negative character traits. Remember Axiom Number 2, “what you think, you are,” also holds true for all positive thoughts and emotions. Individuals who dwell on positive thoughts become positive people.

Once you have completed Lesson 7.1, write an abbreviated version of each line using your feeling into the Positive Character Description List under Workbook 1, Lesson 7.2.

Rewrite your happiness list but only write the positive emotions that you feel. For example, I love, I love, I like, I enjoy, and so on. When this is complete you will be ready to move onto the next section where you will line up the Positive Character Description list that you just created with the Negative Character Description List you created in Chapter 5.

Study the example versions below, and then complete your own versions in the chart provided under workbook Lesson 7.2.

Lesson 7.2 Example

Positive Character Description List

Example 1. I love

Example 2. I enjoy

Example 3. I love

Example 4. I like

Example 5. Being good

Example 6. Playing

Example 7. Helping

Example 8. Jogging

Example 9. Free

Example 10. Studying

Your workbook charts for lessons 7.1 and 7.2 should resemble the chart on the following page when completed.

Lesson 7.3

Lesson 7.3 is simple. Its goal is to line up the Positive Character Description List created in Lesson 7.2 next to the Negative Character Description List from Lesson 5.2. When complete, your Lesson 7.3 Comparison Chart should be somewhat like the example chart that follows. In this chart you are going to transfer each of the abbreviated items into the proper category.

Look at the example on page 59 and then refer to your workbook and fill in your personal Lesson 7.3 Comparison Chart. Make sure you complete Chart 7.3 in your workbook before you continue on.

"Feel Positive" List	Positive Character Description List
Example 1: I love being with my kids.	I love.
Example 2: I enjoy going out to dinner with my spouse.	I enjoy.
Example 3: I love to laugh.	I love.
Example 4: I like sports cars.	I like.
Example 5: Being good at my job.	Being good.
Example 6: Playing tennis.	Playing.
Example 7: Helping my kids succeed.	Helping.
Example 8: Jogging.	Jogging.
Example 9: Free of depression.	Free.
Example 10: Studying astronomy.	Studying.

Analyze Lesson 7.3

You will see that for each positive character trait and emotion you have listed you may have a corresponding negative one as well. It is revealing to see which list is longer. Generally speaking the shorter the positive list, the unhappier the person. Sometimes an individual will have a long list of positive character traits, but it is counteracted by an equally long list of negative character traits. The question for you to examine is this: why would I want to tear down a life of good quality with choices based on negative thinking? The overall measure of success in your life will be determined by how well you can dismantle the negative character description list through a comprehensive process of self-evaluation, hard work, and faith in your future.

Consider the following: After attending an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, I was stopped by my friend, Jeff. Jeff said, "You shouldn't say that you are a 'recovered alcoholic' in meetings because it might give a newcomer the wrong idea that he can be cured of alcoholism."

I responded, "Well, Jeff, just suppose, for a mo-

ment, that you could be cured of alcoholism. Would you want to be?" Jeff paused for a while and said, "I don't know—I really don't know!"

Despite the fact that there is no such thing as alcoholism or an alcoholic, Jeff's answer is certainly troubling. He could not decide if he wanted to remain in the sanctuary of his perceived disease or walk away a free human being.

Now it's your turn. Imagine that frustration, rage, and depression are no longer a part of your life. Try to imagine how you would feel. Your initial thought is probably, "Wow, that's wonderful, but also scary. I have been living like this for so long that I don't know how to live without these things." This is an example of reactions based on neuroplastic brain training. Of course, you can change. But you have lived for so long devoted to avoiding responsibility and accountability that you have come to believe and feel comfort in that particular state of mind.

Remember, you make your beliefs real. Neuroplasticity, your brain's ability to modify neurons and tissue, can be forced in whatever direction you choose. If you sincerely want to be free of anxiety, you must first be dedicated to believing this can happen. Then

Positive Character Description List	Negative Character Description List
Example 1: I love.	I am tired.
Example 2: I enjoy.	I hate.
Example 3: I love.	I am sick.
Example 4: I like.	I don't believe.
Example 5: Being good.	I am afraid.
Example 6: Playing.	I don't love.
Example 7: Helping.	I am afraid.
Example 8: Jogging.	I hate.
Example 9: Free.	I hate.
Example 10: Studying.	I am alone.

you must attempt new things that would ordinarily make you anxious, and practice believing that you are NOT an anxious person, thus successfully overcoming and controlling your anxiety. People overcome and learn to control such emotions all the time.

For example, consider the rage-filled mother who abuses her children at home but is a model of calm motherhood in public with them. She may say she has no control over her rage and she regrets hurting her children but this is a half truth. She displays choice-based control when it suits her to do so. In the privacy of her home it is her choice to let her rage loose. Even the most troubling behavior is choice-based. Humans have control over depression, anxiety, rage, anger, fear, pain, sadness, guilt, and grief even though they may stubbornly claim they have no control over them whatsoever.

We are not making a value judgment about any of those emotions. They each have their place. However, we are reminding you that you have more control over them than is commonly recognized. A grieving mother who just lost a child to an untimely death will slowly heal as a result of time and she will move on with her life. That same mother may have to support

and care for her other children forcing her to return to a state of emotional and mental stability. This may happen quickly after the death of her child. She may have to regain control over her grief much faster than the mother who has the means to hire a nanny or has family who can take care of her remaining children while she grieves. The mother in either situation will either eventually recover from her loss in a natural amount of time (this varies greatly from person to person) or will hang on to these emotions with great fervor, slowly destroying any chance for happiness or peace as the years pass. The point is that emotions play a very active role in the human condition, but ultimately we do have control over them and get to choose how they affect our lives over the long term.

For more than two decades we have spent thousands of hours helping people overcome substance use issues as well as some fairly complicated personal problems. We have found that the number one hindrance to people finding happiness is their emotional and mental dedication to misery. Those who don't overcome this learned response are making certain they remain victims of the inherent challenges of life.

Manifestations of this attitude can be heard all the

time. “My life is a mess and all I want is a drink.” “My wife left me, and I hate her for it.” “I am a product of downsizing. I cannot believe this happened to me.” Rather than looking at new options that might bring new opportunities and benefits, these people hang onto personal coping methods that were effective during infancy and childhood. As adults, this thinking is horribly flawed. Mature adults do not tolerate this type of immaturity in others. While most people are busy living a life of happiness, the emotionally unstable person waits and complains that they do not have that same quality of life. They feel that those people who are happy are lucky and have gotten all of the breaks. Then while waiting for life to hand them an occasional “fair break,” misery and loneliness become their solace.

Some of the most powerful choices a person can make are based on the fifth axiom. It does not take money or skill or a high IQ to care or to love another person so you may want to start your path to happiness now. Give something to someone else today, but do not tell them why. See how you feel inside. Just because you have lived a certain way until now, does not mean it has to stay like this forever..

This lesson is a black and white reminder that we can choose to live by the positive column if we desire positive change. Decide today on which character traits and emotions you will concentrate.

Working with Others

Many guests enrolled in this program have been exposed to conventional 12-step based treatment, and for those, any talk of the fifth axiom has a tendency to be lumped in with the 12-step propaganda term called “working with others.” If you do not have experience with 12-step programs you certainly can skip this section and resume reading at the beginning of the next chapter. However, if you have had experience with 12-step groups, conventional treatment, or any radical cults, which is somewhat common with the substance-using population, we suggest you take the time to read this section.

When discussing any topic that looks remotely like helping someone, or being kind and unselfish (such

as the fifth axiom), the AA, NA and/or conventional 12-step treatment-exposed reader will tell the instructor that the fifth axiom is comparable to the standard 12-step philosophy of “working with another addict or alcoholic to stay sober,” but nothing could be farther from the truth.

The 12th step of Alcoholics Anonymous directs AA members to “carry this message [meaning AA ideology] to other alcoholics (addicts).” Those who are well versed in AA lingo complain that the fifth axiom is nothing more than the “repackaging” of AA’s 12th step. This assertion is patently wrong. The primary difference is the fifth axiom is completely altruistic; nothing is expected in return. The motive to give is not to feel good, but is simply to give. AA’s 12th step is based on a quid pro quo. AA’s version is “I will help you, so I can stay sober one more day.” One of the co-founders, Bill Wilson, explains the self-centeredness of AA’s 12th step best.

In the book entitled *Alcoholics Anonymous*, Wilson wrote about himself in the third person: “Prior to his journey to Akron, the broker had worked hard with many alcoholics...but he had succeeded only in keeping himself sober... He suddenly realized that in order to save himself he must carry his message to another alcoholic” (p. xvi). This approach, a disingenuous service to others with alcohol and drug problems, is actually counterproductive to both parties. Wilson’s theory has proven to be harmful, although it is the model for current group-help programs like AA and NA and other 12-step-based treatment programs. In essence, what Bill Wilson accomplished was to build a subculture of like-minded people who failed to mature. This is not only detrimental to its participants, but a recipe for overall failure. This is the living embodiment of the “blind leading the blind” right off the cliff.

Please understand one of the fringe benefits for AA’s 12th step is to build AA membership. This was certainly not lost on Bill Wilson, who was a brilliant marketer by trade. In direct contrast, the fifth axiom does not promote any organization, religion, or cause. You get to choose where to give of your time, resources, and energy freely. And further the fifth axiom is not a recipe for staying sober and drug free;

it is an ingredient toward building a fulfilling and happy life.

What about choosing to work with other substance users as a means of giving? The truth is choosing to “work with other addicts/alcoholics” is a decision not to move beyond your current immature state. Changing into a new person can be challenging to those who have avoided it for years. Surrounding yourself with people struggling with the exact same problem is comfortable. Many of our readers will insist and argue for their “need to work with other substance users” but this is actually due to their deep fear of taking responsibility for their own lives, responsibilities that they have refused to address for years.

If after the previous discussion you are still compelled to “help fellow addicts,” the term “fellow addicts” meaning that you still are one, then go to AA or NA and discover for yourself just how unsuccessful the vast majority of members are. You will not have to attend very many meetings to see the inherent problems we have been describing.

When it comes to helping family or friends with substance use problems, believe us when we say that your positive example at a distance will be far more helpful to your former buddies than your “working with them.” Spend your time creating your wonderful new life and separate from your counterproductive past. Give yourself the freedom to set new goals and achieve them without being chained to your past.

Do not invite chaos back into your life without first acknowledging your motive, which may be to avoid your personal responsibility for developing beyond your present self-image. Remember that building new friendships that have nothing to do with drugs or alcohol will be a testament to how hard you are trying to become a changed person. Although, if you are going to spend time with past friends as a means to remain somewhat complacent, have the courage and integrity to say, “Yeah, I want to keep my old friends and the old lifestyle intact. I am not ready to change.”

Sometimes, however, there are close family members who are substance users. What then? First, no one can tell you to avoid or even to reject certain relationships, especially if they are intimate. You will, obviously, want to be a more positive spouse, adult, child, sibling, or friend. This goes without saying. However, if the family member(s) is abusive toward you and your new outlook, then maybe it will be best to separate yourself for a period of time to gain some emotional strength. On the other hand, perhaps you have been so neglectful that you should spend some quality time repairing this relationship, of course, expecting nothing in return.

The reason to spend time rebuilding your family and career rather than “working with other addicts or alcoholics” is really quite simple. Your family, employer, and coworkers deserve you, the better you. They have been waiting patiently (sometimes not so patiently) for your affection, attention, and a stable life. Frankly, you owe them the best of yourself. Working with people who exist in a subculture of failure is a slap in the face to those who have waited for your attention all these years. Spending your time and resources on substance users is as irresponsible and immature as drinking or as any other form of immediate gratification.

In summary, the fifth axiom has nothing to do with AA or its methods. The axiom is simple: care about others without strings attached and selfish hidden motives. If you want to remain in a culture in which personal change is stifled and unpopular, then AA is for you. However, if you are searching for greater happiness and you are willing to challenge yourself, then the fifth axiom can benefit you. For now, having a simple understanding of the axiom is sufficient. When and how it will specifically benefit you will be covered in more detail in subsequent chapters.

Take some time now to review and answer the questions in your workbook for Chapter 7.

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Chapter 8

To Fear or Not to Fear

For the next several chapters, we will present a way for you to understand your past and present in a way that can motivate you to make a positive life transformation. It is vital to understand that the CBESM does not present lessons in the same manner as a therapist might. You alone decide what you will write in your upcoming autobiography and you alone decide how severely negative thinking has affected your life.

We will explore how to learn from the past using examples that would appeal to the widest array of people possible. That means there will be one group who will say that the examples do not address the seriousness of their broken lives and others whose lives are not in a state of despair. In fact, their pasts may be quite satisfying and they are just searching for a new way to move forward in life. So please understand, the examples are generic and middle of the road, but work because they facilitate self-awareness and motivate change.

As you review the charts from the preceding chapter you can identify the challenges you will need to address. You know you have certain thoughts and emotions that bring you pain as well as others that bring happiness. In order to attain a quality of life that is better than the one you have now, a process of replacement must occur.

You have a certain level of negative emotions and thoughts. People's personal limits of negative emotion vary. Before an eventual overload occurs, most can handle a relatively high degree of negative emotions.

You may be someone on the edge of the abyss, staring at the negative column on your chart and feeling overwhelmed. But there is no reason for this, the brain can only cognitively process one thought or concept at a time. So we will constantly encourage you to move in a positive direction, slowly creating a neuroplastic change in your brain. This will be especially obvious as you complete the autobiographical process that deals with learning from your past and move into the Life Movements, Workbook 2 which is devoted completely to building a more positive future.

The autobiographical process will make your desire for change a supported progression away from fear, anxiety, and depression. It will replace those emotions and thoughts with positive problem-solving capability and increased self-confidence. This is not theoretical speculation. Sixty-two percent of our guests who complete our residential educational program remain sober and drug free.

Your Comparison Chart (7.3) from Chapter 7 should provide you with a clear picture of your mind and emotions. The list on the left shows your positive thoughts and emotions that go with the axioms, while the list on the right shows your negative thoughts and emotions which are counter to the universal truths. What is most important to understand when comparing the two categories is that every person has an infinite capacity for positive thought, thoughts that are in accord with the five axioms, but has a limited capacity for those items in the negative column.

For example, you never hear someone complain, “I am just too happy. I certainly hope this happiness doesn’t last very long.” People do complain that, “Life is too hard. I can’t take it anymore!” when they are feeling stress and strife. Misery’s allotment has a limit, but joy has none. When something finite is compared to something infinite, the finite becomes very, very small. When comparing infinite joy to finite human-created misery, misery is tiny in comparison. This is important. When you dedicate yourself to the process of change, any aspect of your life that gives little return on investment can be abandoned and replaced with activities and thoughts that promote joy. It’s your choice.

Physical Pain & Emotional Pain

In the physical realm you have nerve endings that tell you when your physical body is damaged. These promote self-preservation. They tell you to fix what is wrong. Emotions are the nerve endings of the mind. They are a guide to both the conscious and unconscious mind, constantly driving you to a more joyful state. This concept is easy to understand, but those who choose to ignore the benefits of personal change end up missing the happiness that could be theirs.

The system is really quite remarkable. If you feel depressed, change the things that make you that way. If you feel guilty, change the things that make you feel that way. Adolescents are in a constant state of change. They are at an important stage when a child must learn to become an adult. This is why that time in life is filled with strife, extreme happiness, deep depressions, hopes, fears, doubts, dreams, confusion, and, usually, first loves.

For those who fail to listen to their hearts, bodies, and emotions, the path to adulthood can be a twisted road of pain. The responsibility to produce healthy outcomes is abandoned and, as such, people decide they are victims of circumstance. What actually happens is that they fail to listen to the obvious telltale signs of emotional pain and continue down roads constructed of poor choices. Instead of looking for new ways to correct their life problems, they avoid

the subject by using repetitive, self-destructive behaviors. This avoidance only brings about more pain and torment. Responsibility is a frightening word. They live in constant fear and anxiety. The process of replacement mentioned earlier means identifying the negative anchors in your life and replacing them with things from the positive side of the chart you created in the last chapter. Changing your life does not mean you are losing anything. You are simply replacing the negative with the positive.

The human spirit cannot accommodate a void. The only way you can get rid of the negative thoughts and emotions you live with is to replace them with something else. The space in your mind that negativity occupies must be filled with positive thoughts and emotions. To rewire your brain you must make a consistent, motivated decision to change old habits. Most people who live with self-destructive behavior become bored and replace one negative set of thoughts and emotions with a new negative set. The new roots grow and the person repeats his or her past failures. Remember that people always move in the direction of what they believe will bring them the greatest return at each moment of their lives. So even the people who replace one negative choice with another do so because they think it will give them a new benefit.

The wife who goes from one romantic or sexual affair to another sees this choice as positive for her or she would not do it. From the perspective of an outside observer, this set of repetitive choices may seem stupid and hurtful. But this woman perceives multiple affairs as her best opportunity for happiness, so she goes forward with her choice. At any time she can stop, reevaluate, look for alternatives she thinks will provide a greater chance of happiness, and move in another direction. People can and do frequently change their choices.

Your job in this program is to create new options that may at first require a leap of faith and courage, but will result in greater sustainable levels of satisfaction. For example, the woman with multiple damaging relationships probably needed to let go of these relationships for a period of time and concentrate

on a new career. This choice would be a way to create new self-confidence and self-esteem, thus negating the desperate attention-seeking behavior that has left such a negative mark on her self-image. As she gains new confidence in her career choice, she begins to let go of the feeling of worthlessness and nagging loneliness that has haunted her. But first she has to make her decision. Does she exchange the instant gratification she knows she can receive with a new relationship for the deferred gratification of building personal confidence?

This pattern can be seen in people who go from one unfulfilling hobby to another, or one fad diet to another, or one favorite drug to another. Usually the new behaviors they choose are expedient and provide the most relief for the least amount of personal change and effort. Negative patterns continue and they eventually deepen the neuroplastic roots of negativity. These people then feel the desperate need to search for another set of habits to bolster their flagging spirits. Usually these troubled people do not stop to ask themselves if their new plan is any better than the previous one that brought them so much misery.

People who have chosen to analyze the roots that hold them in fear see the absurdity of limiting their lives to such a degrading level. Through acts of faith, love, forgiveness, kindness, positive goal-setting, and hard work they dissolve the old roots and build new ones, the basis of a new and happy future for themselves.

The underlying cause of all negative emotion and thought is the fear of responsibility. Fears cause self-centered behavior that reinforces the need for more negative thinking. This pattern eventually devours the part of the spirit reserved for positive thought and emotion. Fear creates more fear and people live in crisis. Ultimately, positive life changes and the process of maturing are stopped or slowed dramatically by the fear of the hard work needed to produce positive change. People who have lived in a state of stagnation are frightened by the hard work and responsibility they must display to grow and develop into a fully actualized human being.

Time to Analyze, Time to Let Go

If you look at your life, minus the alcohol and drugs, you are no different from everyone else. Your concentration on limited options may have caused you to be unhappy. When someone brings up your self-created tunnel vision, a defensive response is a natural reaction. However, you might want to allow for the possibility that there are many positive aspects to the world that you know little about. Try to keep an open heart and mind. Just because you don't want to look out the window does not mean that a beautiful sunset is not there for you to see.

The primary reason it is important for you to acknowledge that your self-consuming fears are no different from those of the population at large is so you can eliminate your excuse to fail. You no longer have the excuse of a unique, permanent disorder. Everyone on the planet wrestles with fear and selfishness to one degree or another. True, your levels of fear and selfishness may be greater than many, but that does not change the fact that your problems can be solved with courage and a willingness to change.

Those who proclaim that "life sucks and then you die" are justifying their own unhappiness and forecasting their certain future failures. Such negative thinking can only produce negative results. You may want to practice the art of rejecting negative thinking like this so you can start your life over and become more successful. To begin this new life, you will need to accept that life is meant to be fulfilling. Then you might learn how to apply the principle of love into the activities in which you participate. There is a lot of work to do. No one said this would be easy.

Love, as well as a good working knowledge of the axioms we discussed earlier, needs to be thoroughly understood. As you progress you will learn how, by changing your present and building a new lifestyle for your future, you can repair the damage you have caused others in the past.

Without a mind open to change and a new life with new ideas, you will most likely stay rooted in your current lifestyle. Are you trying this program to change old behaviors? Were you experiencing some difficulties that caused you to seek new solutions? If

so, are you willing to be open-minded enough to allow for the possibility that new ideas from new sources could bring about the results you desire? Casually discarding new ideas, for any reason, will ensure everlasting sameness.

Being angry with others because they are not performing according to your expectations is a sure way to create negative experiences in your life. This sort of mind trap is self-created and changeable. Remember that human beings process only one human emotion and accompanying thought at a time. If you are angry why not change the expectation and allow yourself the flexibility to get better results?

You may have questions about religious faith and expectations. There is the point of view that if you don't believe in God, you probably can't experience true happiness. Yet how can that be true when many atheists enjoy happy, productive lives? Paradoxically, theists and atheists are the same. That is they both believe something. Even though both claim to be right, in the end each only believes what he has chosen to believe. The theist (or religious) believer says that being an atheist is a God-given choice—that is, free will allows for his belief system. The atheist must also accept that theism is the exercise of free will as well.

So both have a fundamental belief in choice—thus both are right. The trouble comes when people holding one belief attempt to tell others who do not share that belief that their way of thinking is wrong. Trying to control the thoughts and behaviors of others detracts from peace of mind and happiness. If your beliefs narrow your vision of the universe and its limitless possibilities, this will stop you from becoming a more open, more inclusive human being. We suggest you try to stop forcing your opinions on those around you and practice the art of listening and caring. The most fulfilled people are those who have learned to listen and understand the needs of those around them.

Isn't it time to think faithfully about the future and set new goals? Today is the day to say, "Yes, I am going to change things." Thinking new thoughts will cause your life to take on new direction. This new thinking then becomes a part of your self-image. Although you may have labeled yourself with negative thoughts in the past, you can now let go of all your negativity.

Transform yourself by making the process of change a part of who you are. "I am a limitless being capable of adapting to every challenge, overcoming every adversity and actively solving all of my problems. I have the ability to control my destiny."

You need to remember that people who have converted their lives from misery to happiness have done it by choice and then followed through with action. If they can do it, so can you!

Lesson 8.1

We have said that many people's belief systems are based on certain "thinking traps" they themselves create. In the following description of general traits of the unhappy person you may find some that apply to you and others that do not. It is important not to be offended by the direct language used to describe these character traits. If some of these traits do not apply, keep going.

Lesson 8.1: Highlight the statements below that apply to you.

I typically seek out quick fixes and instant gratification.

I am distrustful and actively search out the defects in the people around me rather than look for the good.

I am a firm believer in satisfying my own needs, often at the expense of others. However, I steadfastly deny this behavior.

On those few occasions when I do accept responsibility for my self-centered motives, I may ignore it and move on; or I may feel superficial remorse and self-serving self pity.

There are many different things that satisfy me temporarily, such as possessions, relationships (positive or negative), hobbies, money, physical or intellectual abilities, negative philosophies, drugs, alcohol, sex, gambling, unhealthy eating and smoking, etc.

While I have been spending my time trying to acquire more possessions, I have not looked at how and why I do this. Nor have I tried to seek out the changes that are necessary if I am to solve my problems.

I pile up chaos like trophies; I maintain a constant level of mayhem to conceal the changes in my life that need to be made. Changing is the one thing I seem to avoid, no matter how empty and difficult my life may seem.

I avoid change simply because it makes me uncomfortable. I have a fundamental belief that known gratification, no matter how fleeting and costly, is more fulfilling than the unknown gratification that may take time to create and nurture. In short, I prefer instant gratification to the benefits of deferred, labor-intensive gratification.

Laziness causes the procrastination that is delaying my happiness. I know that people move on to better things, yet I convince myself that I am different.

To begin the replacement process, let us first look at how selfish and fearful you really are. We touched on this in previous chapters, but now the real work begins.

First, let's review some basic behaviors that illustrate commonly held poor choices so you can take an honest look at yourself.

Lesson 8.2

Please use your highlighter pen to highlight all the items in the following paragraphs that apply to you. This is necessary as you will refer to these highlights in subsequent lessons.

The direct language is used because you will only highlight those aspects that are true for you. For instance, the first line states, "You live your life in conflict with people and situations." If this is true, highlight it. If not, leave it be. In other words, do not think we are encouraging you to believe something about yourself that isn't the case. You can ignore everything that you do not highlight.

You live your life in conflict with people and situations. While you take an active role in these conflicts you blame the others involved and convince yourself that your role in the conflict is righteous. You even convince yourself that your motives are good and honorable. These conflicts combined with your mis-

guided motives make you absolutely miserable because, in the end, you actually believe you are getting the short end of the stick, further reinforcing your victim mentality.

This thought process is, of course, distorted. However, at this point in your life, it is how you view things. You live your life according to your own views. You manipulate others and endlessly force them to see your point of view. Even if you can get them reluctantly to agree to see things your way, they are repulsed by your immature compulsion to be right and slowly (sometimes not so slowly) move away from you. Because you push people to see things your way, those around you eventually become annoyed and resentful. They don't react the way you want them to and they refuse to play your immature games. You get angry and self-pitying when these people begin to move farther and farther away from you. You feel your self-pity and anger are justified and you continue to blame the world for your misery.

You become so entrenched in your own way of thinking that you actually begin to believe that you, alone, are right and that everyone else is either wrong or just doesn't understand. Your world becomes increasingly small and paranoid. Your life is not, and cannot, be fully satisfying if you are constantly expecting things from people and society that they can't, or refuse, to give you. The result of this type of living is total frustration.

Often your actions hurt or repel people. If you are lucky, the people closest to you will stay by your side through thick and thin. But even if they do there are typically so many resentments that relationships are barely surviving. This is true of many families in which one or more of its members fail to mature.

When you speak, isn't it true that it is more important to you that others understand you and your point of view? This is the definition of someone who emotionally takes from others. People, by their nature, can only be around a "taker" for so long. A "taker" will continue to ask for more time and understanding and demand too much from those around them. The results of this behavior are continued frustration and misery.

Once you realize that pushing people around does

not get the results you want, you may switch tactics. You might become exceptionally nice for a change. Younger people are usually very good at using this method, as are those in marriages or any close relationship. You appear to become a “giver,” but this, of course, is just another technique for getting your own way because your motives are, at least partially, self-based.

You are not giving or caring because that is the right way to behave; you are giving or caring as a way to manipulate. You have not matured to the point where you are being good just to be good or kind just to be kind. You are trying to get your way and look good at the same time. You want to make sure everyone likes you by seeing how good you’ve become. You also want to make sure you get exactly what you want from a particular person or situation. People who use this charade to get their way are the same people who

and simply moving on. Forgiveness is the only proactive response to a negative situation that is truly out of your control.

Many childhood traumas obviously are not the fault of the child. However, what benefit is there to bring these problems into your adult life? If you are to find happiness in adulthood you must learn to move on.

People have a tendency to hang on to the pains of childhood as a way to justify misery, copping out on life’s challenges and allowing themselves to live in self-pity and depression. However, there are many people in the world who had absolutely terrible childhoods and grew up to be well adjusted, productive, nice people. They are this way because they have internal faith in the future and a sincere desire to forgive and move on to find success in their life.

Forgiveness is a simple yet perfect solution for situations that were traumatic or unjust or out of our control. Forgiveness allows people to move on with their lives, possibly

Forgiveness allows people to move on with their lives, possibly learning and growing from their previous experiences.

continually complain that life has screwed them over and believe they are victims of circumstances beyond their control.

You seek out a therapist or counselor who will agree with you. If a therapist goes against your “caring” self-image or gives unwanted advice, you will usually change therapists.

The Three Resentment Types

There are three ways in which unhappy people actively create misery in their lives. Let’s look at them.

1. It happens in life. People deliberately hurt you. While you most certainly cannot control this, you have absolute control over your reactions. The way you handle these situations makes the difference between positive and negative results. If you decide, as unhappy people usually do, to make the situation worse by holding on to hostility and behaving poorly, you are only adding to your misery. All that time spent creating more misery could have been spent forgiving

learning and growing from their previous experiences to perhaps help others.

2. Many times an unprovoked attack is actually a delayed response to a previous negative encounter. Many situations in which you believe a person is harming you for no apparent reason can be traced back to a time when you hurt that person. It might have been recently or years ago. People tend to conveniently forget when and how they hurt someone and then decide that they are the victim when that person retaliates.

In this situation you have a few options. You can perpetuate ill feelings and wait for your next chance to retaliate, or you can take responsibility for the attack by thinking, “I must have done something really awful for him to act that way to me.” Often, offering an immediate and sincere apology for a possible past transgression is useful in defusing present or future hostilities. A sincere apology, coupled with the adult approach of forgiving the immediate offense and moving past it, will produce the very best results.

With that said, it is very important to be accurate in your assessment of such cases. For example, people who have a history of being abused, whether it is physically, sexually, or emotionally have a tendency to take the blame for treatment they do not deserve. This is because of their feelings of low self-worth and a desire to be loved. When we say take responsibility, we are not saying you should bear the burden for things that are not your fault. Rather, to make sure you assess accurately whether you have caused this person to hurt you in some way, and then rectify the situation as best you can.

3. You may not have an obvious role in a resentful relationship, yet you could be at fault. Many times people do not actively hurt another person, but they become passively resentful by staying in relationships or social situations that are, by their nature, abusive. It is like placing yourself in harm's way, getting hurt, and then complaining about it.

Usually it is fear that keeps a person in such relationships. Their fear of being hated or their fear of being alone is greater than the pain caused by the other party. Consequently, people continue to be abused, play the self-pity game, and slowly become more and more detached from those around them.

Each of these situations causes misery, but it is now clear you do not have to accept unhappiness as a way of life. There are always better options. In the next few chapters we will explain how writing an autobiography will help you discover your destructive patterns. Your autobiography will serve as the first tangible evidence that you are ready to get rid of your current counterproductive thought processes and victim-centered mentality.

You have a lot of work ahead of you. Your eyes must be opened to the reality of your past poor choices. Progress will be as rapid as the pace you set. There is a balance between making yourself happy and making others happy. You certainly cannot impart happiness on others if you have none in your own life. People cannot give away that which they do not have.

If, at this point, you understand your problems are caused by decisions you have made then you are ready to move forward. The process of building your

new life cannot begin until you are ready to take responsibility for all of your past choices and actions. This empowers you to make your future whatever you choose.

The following segment is offered to help those who have been exposed to 12-step methodologies. If you have no experience with 12-step support groups the following segment can be skipped, and you can continue at the beginning of the next chapter.

12-Step Damage Control

Many of our guests went to 12-step treatment programs that told us: "Take better care of yourself!" "This is a selfish program," and "Learn to love yourself."

"This is a selfish program" gives you the permission to abdicate responsibility and go to self-help meetings every day to remain sober. Therefore, your needs or the needs of your supposed disease, take precedence over the responsibilities of normal living. "Take better care of yourself" and "learn to love yourself" are also ways to put yourself ahead of the needs of those around you. The idea is that if you do not think of your needs first, then you will drink again.

Unfortunately, these ideas are based on the assumption that the substance user is sick. A sick person must be coddled. Obviously these ideas are in direct opposition to this message of personal responsibility. When we say you should "take good care of yourself," it is so you will have more to give to those around you. A father who smokes and is tired of how it makes him feel might consider quitting ("taking care of himself") for his children and to increase his life expectancy. All those depending on him will appreciate and benefit from such a decision.

His care benefits him, which in turn benefits his family. The Freedom Model® philosophy is not a "selfish program." It is built on the premise that if everyone decided to care about others as much as they cared about their own needs and desires, a lot more people would be happy.

Take some time now to review and answer the questions in your workbook for Chapter 8 before proceeding to Chapter 9.

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Chapter 9



Emotions, Mind, and the Soul

Before you can begin writing your autobiography in your notebook, we want to explain the finer points of what constitutes the fabric of life: emotions, the mind, your body, and your spirit. Understanding the components of what makes a human being a thinking, feeling, and creative person can open you up to new information that can help transform your life.

Have you ever wondered why emotions such as anger and hate not only hurt the person who is the object of the anger or hate, but also the person who is harboring these negative emotions? Questions such as these have the potential to be life transforming. Looking just beyond the surface of your normal daily thoughts and learned habits is an empowering process.

An example of this has been documented in death sentence cases in which the murder victim's family is allowed to watch the murderer's execution. After the execution the families report feelings of short-term satisfaction dissolving into the previous feelings of dissatisfaction and emptiness. "To me the death penalty is vengeance, and vengeance doesn't really help anyone in the healing process," said Bud Welch, Board President of Murder Victims Families for Human Rights. His daughter Julie was killed in the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995.

So many people go through life and never ask themselves why their quality of life is not what they want it to be and reluctantly accept their circumstances. They ignore the obvious suffering they have cho-

sen to endure and quietly accept the lack of joy as the years pass. We have spent time with so many people who were tired, frustrated, and angry, but who were only too willing to defend their ways of dealing with life circumstances in self-defeating ways. They were unwilling to even try to think differently. We have explained to hundreds of people how their frustration, stress, and anger were slowly killing them, only to be rebuked and told we did not understand their plight. While it is true we may not have understood fully, change is better than staying in a quagmire of hatefulness, unhappiness, and ill will. Most emotional pain can be averted or changed with an adjustment in lifestyle and a commitment to future positive thoughts. That's what this entire message is illustrating. With that said, there are certain circumstances where people are thrust into negative situations over which they have little or no control and they genuinely suffer.

Suffering

Some suffering is inevitable. And if it is extreme, it can bring people to a state of genuine hopelessness. This program opens new doors, but there are times when one's options become temporarily (sometimes permanently) limited. And that may cause great pain and suffering. It is at these moments when people are forced to think in a manner that they may never have before.

For example, a loved one meets an untimely death.

There is nothing that can be done to undo or change the event. More often than not, those close to the deceased are devastated. First they feel shock, then anger, then sadness, and ultimately, if emotions are left unchecked, a sense of hopelessness. This is suffering at its worst. While some who were close to the deceased may rebound following a period of mourning, others may be consumed by their grief. They may see no way out of it. So the question becomes how can a person accept the permanence of the loss, accept the grief, and still move on with life?

As overwhelming as grief can be, it is nonetheless a manifestation of the mind. Deciding how to face and live with suffering can make the suffering far less painful. Thinking optimistically about suffering can, paradoxically, create a sense of personal happiness and renewed strength. Optimism about the future can relieve the current burden of sorrow. It offers comfort with the thought that “everything is going to be all right.”

So how do you deal productively with suffering that is caused by circumstances beyond your control? First, you must not feel singled-out by your suffering. It is a part of the human experience. Feeling alone just extends the period of grief and pain, keeping it in forefront of your mind. In a state of shock and deep sorrow, a person may sit and wonder how and why this could have happened. A person may be angry, may feel a deep loneliness, may feel like a failure, or may feel abandoned and lost and/or disconnected from others. While in a stressful, deeply painful experience, it is normal to experience irrationality and a dulled sense of your surroundings.

But through each phase from shock to acceptance, people can decide to be strong. They may have moments of near hopelessness, but still find the strength to survive another day. Thoughts are within the mind and cannot be created by outside circumstances, unless, of course, a person so chooses. Happiness can exist in seemingly hopeless landscapes. But it is relative happiness, certainly not the type you experience when things are going great. Sometimes happiness is as simple as finding the inner strength to go on living. Time does heal. Happiness is relative to moments in time and circumstances.

If hopelessness builds momentum, people may begin to contemplate the meaning of their life. This, too, can grow into depressive and suicidal thoughts. The circumstances themselves seem to scream that the “meaning” of life is suffering. This leads to the mental “snowball effect.” It is our perceptions, i.e. how we decide to think about the circumstances, that make the hillside steep and make the rolling snowball grow larger and larger, gaining negative momentum and speed until it eventually tumbles off the cliff of depression. But that’s not the whole story; we can change the way we think about our snowball.

The suffering cycle begins to reverse itself once a person accepts it and lets go of the loneliness associated with feeling so sad. We would not be human if we did not feel the pangs of suffering. Once you accept you are in pain, the natural question becomes, “What’s next?” For those in circumstances beyond their control, a shift in perception is needed. Sometimes, deciding to accept suffering with dignity and grace is the only option for achieving a relative sense of happiness.

As Viktor E. Frankl, the noted Austrian psychiatrist, stated in his book, *Man’s Search for Meaning*, “We must never forget that we may also find meaning in life even when confronted with a hopeless situation, when facing a fate that cannot be changed. For what then matters is to bear witness to the uniquely human potential at its best, which is to transform a personal tragedy into a triumph, to turn one’s predicament into a human achievement. When we are no longer able to change a situation—just think of an incurable disease such as inoperable cancer—we are challenged to change ourselves.”

Dr. Frankl also describes what he means by changing ourselves in unchangeable circumstances remembering a day in the Dachau death camp. “What was really needed was a fundamental change in our attitude about life. We had to learn ourselves and, furthermore, we had to teach the despairing men, that it did not matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life, daily and hourly. Our answer must consist, not in

talk and meditation, but in right action and in right conduct. Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets forth for each individual.”

For those in unchangeable circumstances, bearing their suffering with dignity and with as much humor as possible may be their only control, and therefore the only happiness they can find during such demanding moments. Situations, circumstances, and the body may fail, but attitudes and thoughts are each person’s responsibility and cannot be hurt or destroyed or even influenced without their express consent. No outside factors, no matter how dark and sinister, can affect people unless they accept them into their thoughts and emotions.

In the final analysis even seemingly hopeless situations are not so hopeless after all. Most times people must weather the initial storm to reach brighter days ahead. When things are darkest, people have the power of personal responsibility from within to make hopeless situations, hopeful. While you may not get to decide what suffering you must bear, you do get to decide how you will bear it. Will you do it with courage, with dignity, and with humor, or will you choose to let fate run you into the ground? It is up to each person to choose for themselves.

Interconnectedness

Many of our guests tend to be prone to negative thinking and negative emotions. As a group, they have less experience with the more positive sides of life. Negative emotions can illustrate people’s natural interconnectedness the same way positive emotions can. While it is true that people are striving for positive emotions such as happiness, fulfillment, and joy, all the negative emotions are governed by the same rules. If we hurt each other, we feel it together. On the other hand, when we love each other, we feel that together.

Humans are naturally social creatures. Everyone has neurons within the brain called mirror neurons that break down the barriers between people. The evidence suggests that these mirror neurons help an

individual develop compassion and a learned ability to “put yourself into another’s shoes.” For instance, if you see a person being beaten, there are immediate signals fired through the mirror neurons, as well as other parts of the brain, creating an effect in your body of being beaten. Your brain’s mirror neurons do not know the difference between you and the person actually being hurt. Your pulse increases, you become nervous, and you are immediately empathetic toward the victim. Our emotions have this built-in capacity for understanding our fellow humans because it is in our best interest to care about each other. We cannot truly care for others without empathy. Empathy can grow into compassion and then, with enough energy, develop into love. With love comes joy and a bond that is life changing. All of this is based on the effect your emotions have on you.

Consider: How many people do you personally know who are in an unsatisfactory marriage. In the United States about half of all new marriages fail, often with tragic consequences for all involved.

We know a couple who were living in just such a failing relationship. They had three small children and were near financial ruin. They argued daily. The husband said, “She just doesn’t listen! I get so pissed!” And a week before, his wife had said the exact same thing about him. Each was trying to be heard, each was screaming at the other. The only thing happening was that they both were protecting their own feelings and expressing their frustration at not being heard. The irony is neither was talking about the real problems. The original disputes were long since forgotten. Now they spent their days trying to prove the other wrong. “You never listen to me!” was the overall theme, but this was far from the real problem.

In fact, they were both listening—but what they were hearing was the other’s anger, not the actual issues that had caused the “snowball effect.” The topics about which they were fighting were far removed from their initial complaints. They had both become too defensive, anxiety ridden, and angry to make any progress towards resolution. Neither one seemed to have the courage to say: “Wait a minute. This is way out of hand. I don’t even remember what we were angry about in the first place. I’m going for a walk.

When I get back maybe we can try to be honest with each other about what is really going on. I will let you talk first and I promise that I will listen.”

Eventually this couple figured things out. They felt their relationship was worth the effort. They learned how to talk to each other. Each decided that the other’s motivation was not anger, but rather frustration, and that frustration was understandable. With this understanding came honesty and they began a dialogue about the issues that truly bothered them.

So what saved this marriage? Several things! It was the natural ability of humans to understand the needs of others. It was an assessment of what was important to each party. It was the ability to be honest and think outside of one’s comfort zone. It was making the marriage more important than each individual’s independent fearful needs. It was the ability to forgive. It ultimately was the willingness both showed to mature and adapt to changes in their respective lives. When people live together for any length of time some character flaws and habits can intrude into the other’s life. It is unavoidable. Then, the relationship changes, and a certain maturing process occurs—namely, the act of caring becomes more important than self-gratification.

When people say things with a loving intention, the mirror neurons (as well as their entire endocrine and nervous systems) react. Tempers cool and productive interconnectedness can occur. But people can also be interconnected by negative habits as the two people in this marriage were when they began the process of reconciliation. Unfortunately, too many people spend their entire lives being angry and feeling unheard.

These negative habits are learned responses that can be altered and even eliminated, but it takes courage and an honest look into one’s motivations and life history. Remember, we are all connected, both positively and negatively. How your relationships are interconnected is a choice you must make. How are you going to interact with others in the retreat house and when you return home?

In the next chapter you will begin the process of writing your autobiography and identifying bad habits and negative values. Once these undesirable habits and negative thoughts have been recognized, you can

begin replacing them with new more productive habits and positive thinking. Through this process you may find renewal for relationships that are on shaky ground, or you may realize that you want to let some relationships go. Either way, your autobiographical self-assessment will shed light on what is positive and what is negative in your life.

There are very few human beings who are so delusional that they are completely disconnected from the feelings of others, so you need not worry that this process will be too difficult for you. All of the raw material for building lasting relationships with others is already inside your mind. Of course, there are some rare exceptions such as those with serious mental disabilities and severe mental illnesses. The rest of us, however, have a sense of others’ feelings through empathy and compassion.

Emotions

What is an emotion? What is a thought? Neither has substance, yet they exist. What is a conscience? The answers to these questions have baffled humanity for centuries, and, there have been countless religious and cultural explanations offered. Today, we have some scientific answers. During the last century, massive information-gathering and scientific advancements such as quantum physics have led us to a much better understanding of how humans are built and how they develop through a lifetime.

Every human being has a brain that processes a variety of emotions. You know that people “feel” things differently. Some feelings may be based on a predisposition. However, many more feelings are learned responses. A boy growing up in the sugarcane fields of Haiti does not feel a day’s worth of physical labor the same way an American boy does his first day on a newspaper route. The difference in feeling is based on upbringing, cultural norms, and personal expectations. Both boys may be the same age, with the same basic physical stature, but emotionally and intellectually they will experience their respective labors quite differently. The 12-year-old chucking newspapers at 5 a.m. may find it a real struggle, while the Haitian boy might find that getting up at

5 a.m. to throw newspapers is a joy compared to his daily regimen of 15 hours in the hot sun bent over cutting sugarcane. Emotional responses are, for the most part, learned.

Because we can change how we feel about things, we can see the value of making decisions to have a better quality of life regardless of external circumstances. We can avoid pain by knowing our limits, knowing our values, knowing our desires, and knowing our abilities. Once you list these in black and white, you can use this knowledge for goal setting, and begin to guide this ship called life into safer waters.

Some people are quite volatile and highly emotional while others are subdued. Some are sullen and cranky, while others find joy in the smallest of details.

How much of this is learned and how much is written in our DNA is still being debated. However, the vast majority of scientists agree that most emotional development is a learned behavior.

This means our emotions remain changeable and adaptable, no matter what. Individuals can decide to feel different. A person who grows up in violent surroundings may have a tendency to be violent or inappropriately anxious, but this does not mean he has to remain that way. Many who grow up in these conditions decide to break the cycle and become stellar parents and well-adjusted members of their community. They become a force for change everywhere they go.

Often when people have been severely neglected or abused, they tend to view the world negatively. This view is, of course, learned, and these internal scripts can be rewritten and even reversed with enough love and desire for personal change.

There are, of course, some cases in which a person suffers an emotional split from the norm that is so great that a return is almost impossible. Society locks these people away for the public's safety. The good news is that this is but the tiniest percentage of the

population. Nearly everyone has the ability to change, and so do you.

Know Your Emotions

It is important to know why you react the way you do to adversity, negative circumstances, and what you generally "feel inside." John was a construction worker with a wife and four children. When he got home his wife consistently complained bitterly about his showing little attention or care towards her and the kids. He drank quite a lot, loved his wife and kids, but simply refused to give in to their needs. He admitted he ought to be more attentive, but he simply refused.

Our emotions remain changeable and adaptable, no matter what.

He avoided family functions and sometimes felt guilty about it. He knew drinking was not the answer and sometimes thought about quitting. Still, he felt his drinking was the only relief he could get when he was home. He was quick to anger and felt justified about it. When asked why he was so unhappy, he would reply, "I'm not really unhappy; I just don't know how to care. I'm not good at that."

This was not entirely true. When he made the effort he was able to play with his kids and bring a smile to his wife's face. When he let his guard down, he felt relieved. But his good moments became less frequent as the months and years passed. His job seemed harder, his health was deteriorating, he felt exhausted, and had periods of depression and self-pity. Worst of all, he was unsure of what to do. Then John found this program.

When John completed the charting process he began to see he was angry, not very practiced in the art of caring, needed relief, and felt guilty but justified in his drinking. He also found he was loving, he had the capacity for overcoming adversity, and was, in general, a decent man. For most of his life drinking was his perceived answer to life's struggles. It had gotten him to

where he was at that moment, but unfortunately dissatisfaction, panic attacks, and a failing marriage were disrupting his life. What had worked in his teenage years and early 20s was failing in adulthood. He began to feel terrible. The charts did not lie and he was scared. He became motivated to change.

Emotions are complicated. Like thoughts, they are created and can be controlled, but at other times they can seem to be out of our control. We can will ourselves to tears, as an actor does for a role, or we can stifle our grief with total control should circumstances dictate. We can feel a certain way, and then just as quickly, decide to create a completely different mood for ourselves. Our emotions can also catch us off guard as our eyes unexpectedly fill with tears or we burst into uncontrollable laughter. Our emotions are the nerve endings of human experience.

In John's case his emotions were pleading "Help!" He went through the charting process, then the autobiography, analyzed his past and present, and then built a future mission based on his new self-image, his new values, and a sincere desire for lasting happiness. The program explained neuroplasticity and the physical components of the brain changes he was about to create for himself and he charged forward. He succeeded in building a new life for himself, his wife and his children. He has a new career, he is financially stable, and he "feels" happy for the first time in over a decade. He has changed his viewpoint, his goals, his external life, and his internal thought-driven choices.

He is different.

He has changed.

He has developed.

He has matured.

And he has felt the joy of living.

Morality

Morality is the barometer to tell us what is right and wrong within a certain cultural norm. It is not the same everywhere because differing cultures as well as individual beliefs are involved. Moral behavior is usually learned through a process of maturing and experiencing life in a particular culture. For instance, someone living in abject poverty and follow-

ing a life of crime in order to survive views morality quite differently from those who see crime as wrong. In religion we see the same disparities. Some religious people live by "an eye for an eye" while others cope with incessant conflict by "turning the other cheek." Which one is right? The overall concept of right and wrong are culture-specific and even further complicated by each individual's ideas. This program is not a religious program and is not culture-specific. Therefore, the program does not include moral teachings or moral judgments. These topics are reserved for your private beliefs.

Around the world there are so many different rules and individual viewpoints regarding morality and personal happiness, that we decided to look for a common thread throughout humanity. With hundreds of cultures and billions of people, we as a species continue to thrive. What keeps us moving forward? Where does one find positive commonality among all cultures? Is there commonality or are we looking for something that does not exist? Setting aside our emotions, thoughts, and our physical existence, what is the common quality or attribute that keeps humans glued together and avoiding self-destruction? The answer is love.

Love, with a capital 'L'

Every positively based religion, culture, or global human movement is based on three basic concepts: love, freedom, and responsibility. We have discussed freedom and responsibility in the earlier chapters, so our concentration here will be on love. Every culture has words associated with the concept of love, although the general meaning and expressions of love differ from place to place and people to people.

Within the concept of love are two classifications; the first being love with a lower case "l." This human love is the love we feel for a mate, the love we feel for our children, and the love we feel for things of value and ideas we embrace, such as freedom. It is an emotion, a noun, but can also be a verb: "to love." This force has kept humanity secure throughout human history. It promotes care, reproduction, happiness, good health, and is beneficial to anyone who embraces it, receives it, and gives it.

Transcendent Love

Love with a capital “L” is entirely different. This Love crosses the scientific boundaries and enters the realm of the spiritual and religious belief. The term “Transcendent” is added to differentiate it from all other forms of love. The Soul or Spirit is the place where Transcendent Love exists.

The terms Soul, Spirit, and Transcendent Love are not specific to any one religion or belief system. For instance, if you are Buddhist you could match the term Soul with the Buddhist term “Divine Self.” If you are Christian, Soul or Spirit can mean “Holy Spirit,” “Holy Ghost,” “Spirit,” or “Soul.” It is understood you will take what we are saying and translate it into your personal belief system. That said, please understand that Transcendent Love describes the foundation of all that is good—that’s it, nothing more. For those who are atheists, the terms Transcendent Love, Soul, Spirit can all be interchanged with conscience, or you may want to skip this section altogether and move on to the next chapter.

This topic has a tendency to cause some uneasiness for both the devoutly religious and the passionate atheist. But it also has initiated productive conversations with our guests that served to help them identify and clarify their own personal belief system. Please remember that we have no interest in promoting either a religious or non-religious point of view.

The book *Quantum Change* quotes an individual who had an experience that is consistent with the idea of the Soul and Transcendent Love. He wrote: “The whole thing came together for me, where I realized that there is a universal whole and through it I’m tied to you and to everything in the universe. I saw that there’s something much greater than this physical world we live in, and I started asking, ‘What is real, what is the meaning of life, what should I strive for?’ I realized that what was in my mind had been distorted, that as a kid I was formed into something that my natural self wasn’t. It hit me that I was tied together with all these people I had crunched and bulldozed along the way, and that being kind to them was super important.”

This clearly demonstrates the difference between the human experience: our thoughts, perceptions,

emotions, and human love, and the level he describes that lies beyond, that is Transcendent Love. It clarifies that our collective Transcendent Love exists within our Soul, where we are all interconnected. Stories like his have been documented since earliest human history.

Transcendent Love and the Soul have been described by many throughout history in fiction, religious texts, science journals, and thousands of personal accounts. We do not understand why these breakthroughs to Transcendence occur for some people but not others, nor can we tell you how to create such an experience.

When looking at research on the topic, one thing stands out: There is a random quality about these experiences and even those who have them usually do not understand how they occurred. What is important is not how to experience Transcendence, because Transcendence cannot be forced, but rather that Transcendence happens. It exists and the vast majority of people who experience it describe a greater desire to care for the rest of humanity after it occurs.

For the purposes of this program, we will concentrate on human love and the path to greater emotional and mental well-being because these are the aspects of the human experience that can change. Should this bring you to a place where you personally experience the next level, Transcendent Love, and a conscious connection with your Soul, then I would say that this is an added gift you should cherish.

What about God?

In conversations with our students the topic of God’s will for us inevitably comes up. Two of the most common questions people ask are: What is God’s will? And are Transcendent Love and the Soul a part or a component of God? This implies that a human’s ability to experience Transcendent Love and/or the Soul not only makes us able to experience God, but that we are, in a sense, a part of Him and thus a part of each other. The existence of God is neither provable nor disprovable. Therefore, any conversation on the topic is founded in belief. However, we are happy to share some thoughts that might be useful. The rest of this chapter is our attempt to answer those fundamental

questions from religious and theological perspectives that are commonly held by the world's five major positive world religious views.

If God exists and He wills anything at all, it is for us to be happy, to find joy in our life, and to endure our human challenges with a smile and care for others. God gets the opportunity to experience all of this with and through us. If you are atheist and reading this, the axioms and caring for others will give you positive results regardless of your beliefs. Remember that the Freedom Model® philosophy and the CBESM option presentation teaching methods do not impose any opinions on anyone and makes no judgments or claims about anyone's path to happiness.

Now to address the question: Are Transcendent Love and the Soul a part or a component of God? We do not know the answer. There is no concrete evidence one way or the other. The existence of God is a belief rather than a fact. Scientifically we attain interconnectedness through our brain structures, chemical makeup, thoughts, emotions, and physical actions and attractions. This view is supported by the science of neurology that describes mirror neurons and many other brain and body systems that connect us to other humans and give us the ability to "feel" with empathy, intellect, human love, and compassion. Positive emotions and thoughts connect us, as do the more negative emotions such as hate and ill will. Science generally accepts thought, emotion, and the physical realm as legitimate aspects of the human condition.

Religious authorities and theologians, however, describe certain experiences that bring the scientific view farther along the metaphysical and mystical road. The spiritual view introduces a force in the universe that includes a higher love, Transcendent Love, and a higher personal existence, the Soul or Spirit. This is an entirely different level and one that many religious people throughout history have tried to experience, with varying degrees of success. Religion expands the belief of Transcendent Love and the Soul that houses it to include the presence of God. We are, in a sense, a part of Him; hence, we are a part of each other. But, remember that this expanded spiritual viewpoint is based on faith and not on empirical evidence.

According to centuries of religious writings and

personal experiences, the purpose of the Soul is to record the joy and love found and created in the human condition. Therefore, the Soul constantly reminds us to strive for human love and happiness. If the Soul can be thought of as the presence of God within each and every one of us, then we cannot be disconnected from Him or from other humans. According to this spiritually-based premise, God is within and all three: God, Soul, and Transcendent Love are one in the same. These are not new ideas. Millions of people throughout history have discussed them and written about them.

According to the great faiths of the world, the Soul, always immersed in Transcendent Love, is totally beyond the physical. It is the voice inside of us that sees us through horrifying tragedy and painful times. War veterans often talk of moments of clarity in unimaginable chaos as a clear voice inside that calms them during extreme stress. Men and women throughout history have spoken or written of breaking through to a deep sense of transcendence and peace that surpass human experience. These moments are described as being beyond human emotion and thought. The Soul's voice is the reason people are able to pick up the pieces of a broken heart and love again. It explains people's dedication when trying to attain difficult or almost impossible goals. It is why prisoners of war and those living in abject poverty persist. It is the reason we are.

In most positive religions and spiritual belief systems there is agreement that we all have a Soul. Negative learned behavior can make human love and ultimate Love almost imperceptible, but this does not mean that love has disappeared or lessened. We can corrupt our understanding of Transcendent Love with our dim view of the world. But a view is just that, temporary and changeable. A Soul and its power of transcendence are forever, but sometimes hidden behind the masks of hate and depression. Some people choose negative options so consistently that negative concepts become their norm. This does not mean that the Soul has diminished; it just means the person has mastered ignoring the Soul or has never learned about it.

Every human being also has an internal physical

processor, the brain. This processor converts all of the metaphysical components, such as thought, emotion, conscience, and the needs of the Soul into physical action and form. In other words, the Soul has a drive for greater human joy and lets us know what is needed by way of our conscience. If people are behaving counter to the axioms set up for their benefit, emotions such as a feeling of emptiness, a discontented heart, or simple dissatisfaction will notify the Soul. Once the brain processes these needs and the person “feels” them, he or she can decide how to fix these things and regain power and control of their lives. For the religious or spiritual person, this back and forth conversation can be likened to a continual conversation with God.

Because God is one, this automatically makes all people a part of the one. It is inescapable. Catholics call it the Church (capitalized) or the Community of Christ; Native Americans call it the Spirit That Runs Through All Things, and Buddhists call it the Divine Self. All people are the personification of the same Being. This is why people who degrade other human beings degrade themselves with the same act. And according to common religious views, this is why people who commit random acts of selfless kindness, receive joy. This is one of the most important concepts: to create more joy in the universe, thus fulfilling the metaphysical needs of Transcendent Love.

Practical Application

Your happiness is your responsibility! Your new dreams of serving those around you will, in fact, serve you. How do you like to be treated by others? Most people want to be treated with kindness, understanding, dignity, and respect. Well, when you treat others with kindness, understanding, dignity, and respect, you are doing it to yourself. That’s the beauty of it; you have full control over your happiness and your sadness. Love others and you, in turn, are loved. You have control! With this in mind, let us begin the process of cleaning up your past so you can then create your future!

In the following chapters you will come to understand how you have gotten yourself into your current

life position. Most substance users are intelligent people, who can understand these concepts quickly, but then fear creeps in and they begin to overcomplicate things. They tell themselves that all of this is “too good to be true” and come up with reasons to avoid changing their lives.

Change is uncomfortable and scares many people. It takes real work and energy. Our fear of change and having to work for happiness often blocks us from fully applying these concepts into our lives. Many people who go through this program fall into that very trap, but there is a way out. As much as you may or may not intellectually grasp these concepts, they are meaningless until you experience some results. You have turned to alcohol and drugs so many times that you have deeply ingrained them as the solution to all of life’s problems. This can be changed. It will take positive action and a new pattern to erase your negative thoughts forever. At some point we need to experience concepts to truly understand them. If you have gotten hung up on overcomplicating things, keep in mind the saying: “Move the body and the mind will follow.” In other words, move forward assuming the best and you will get better results than if you simply stay frozen in fear.

How do you treat the people who are around you right now; your fellow guests, your instructor, and the retreat house staff? Are you considerate of your family, friends, and co-workers? Are you kind, considerate and a positive power of example? Remember this is a social/educational experience, not just a book. This means that your success will be determined not only by how well you understand the lessons, but by how much effort you put into practicing the lessons right now. Many people learn how to have meaningful relationships with others for the first time in their lives while going through the program. Are you using your time to practice being a friend when it’s difficult to be one, becoming more social, challenging yourself by trying to attain new personal dreams? Or are you spending all of your time being a passive victim and generally keeping to yourself, while quietly judging others?

There are a few daily habits we have found to be indispensable. Selfishness is one of the main causes

of unhappiness, so try this: Be good for nothing! That is, be good for absolutely no reason whatsoever. Nothing will help you to understand the rewards of a positive lifestyle better than selfless action. Be kind and considerate to everyone in your life, starting with your spouse and/or your family, and start right now. Do nice things for others without expecting anything in return. Get out of your comfort zone and spend time doing what someone else needs or wants, rather than following your own desires. It will probably be uncomfortable, and no one will give you a medal for

doing it, but eventually you will feel good about who you are and begin to feel a sense of real happiness. Remember that if you want friends you need to be a friend. In the next chapter you will begin the work of understanding how you have alienated yourself from the rest of the world. Then you will clearly understand how to stop hurting yourself and those around you. Let's get started!

Take some time now to review and answer the questions in your workbook for Chapter 9.

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Chapter 10

*Y*our Autobiography

In order to build your new life you will need a starting point from which to gauge your progress and success. You will find that evidence of success will provide additional motivation to make even more changes in your thinking, emotions, and behaviors.

To get an accurate assessment of your current unsatisfying condition, you need to figure out how your life got into its current state. This is called your baseline. This baseline, or current state, when understood clearly, can provide the knowledge to help you restructure your life. You will need to examine your past in detail, so you can change the negative aspects of your life into new positive values and positive habits. Without a solid understanding of where you went wrong in your past, you will most likely repeat these patterns, and negate any progress that could have been made.

So far, the first nine chapters have required little effort on your part. We have discussed concepts and new ideas. Below is a listing of what you have learned so far:

- You understand that there are five natural axioms that govern the universe and the human condition.
- You understand that adhering to these axioms will benefit your life and help you find happiness.
- You understand that neuroplastic changes in the

brain are created through thought and action in both negative and positive directions, and that you have full control over which direction these changes occur.

- You understand that, if you have knowledge of where you went wrong, you have the ability and option of changing anything or everything in your life.
- You understand that freedom and the pursuit of happiness are the positive driving forces of life.

Now begin to make these concepts a working part of your life. You will be writing your autobiography in Workbook 1 or a separate notebook (whichever you prefer) to create the baseline; showing events, emotions and general negative habits that have gotten you to this point in your life. The workbook is structured with examples and clear instructions making it easier to create an organized autobiography. In this chapter and the next you will learn exactly how to write your autobiography.

Chapter 12 will be a self-analysis of your written autobiography to help you learn methods for changing your negative and counterproductive habits, as well as your ineffective coping methods. What you are learning is really quite simple, yet dramatically effective; you are problem-solving your past so you can avoid the same or similar problems in your future.

In the Chapter 12 analysis you will find solutions for feelings of guilt, boredom, self-hatred, ill will, anger, fear, etc. This will lead you to letting go of your

past. So, please, as you work through this self-analysis in the next chapters, think of it as a way to avoid ever having to repeat your futile patterns. You can get through this. Thousands have written their autobiographies and the rewards have been life-changing.

Remember that neuroplasticity can work in negative ways just as easily as positive ones. If you sit and wallow in this autobiographical process, procrastinating for months on end, you are actually reinforcing your own depression and feelings of self-loathing. Nevertheless, be thorough. But be careful not to saturate your mind with self-pity and guilt, which would stand in the way of any attempt to mature and move beyond counterproductive habits. We are teaching you to look your dragons in the eye, once and for all, and to slay them. Then move on.

Keep in mind that simply writing an autobiography of negative events and habits does not mean you will have a complete solution to your problems. Rehashing the past can actually have a negative neuroplastic effect, thus reinforcing your poor habits. This can be a danger with the autobiography as well. So, to alleviate this potential problem, the goal is to get through Chapters 10, 11, and 12 as quickly but as thoroughly as possible. Our intention is to teach you how to understand your past habits, your self-created problems, and past traumas. This information will then be used to convert those negative habits and events into a new positive perspective with new purpose driven habits. No matter how appalling your past might be, changing those patterns is achievable. Millions do it every day and so can you. However, learning from the past to build a brighter future is no small task.

Writing a comprehensive baseline of lifetime events requires several activities.

Lesson 10.1

You highlighted certain passages in Chapter 8. These highlighted passages represent certain problem areas of your life, so they can also serve as a guide as you write your autobiography. Remember, you will only get out of this program what you put into it, so if you did not highlight applicable areas in Chapter

8, we suggest you go back to that chapter and highlight all the sentences that apply to your life. Then copy those passages into your workbook in the space provided.

Once you are sure you have highlighted all the applicable material you can then go to Workbook 1, Lesson 10.1 and complete that lesson. Finish Lesson 10.1 before you go any further.

Understand the Chapter 8 Highlights

Next, reread the Chapter 8 passages you wrote into your workbook one more time and think about why you highlighted them. Ask yourself how they manifest themselves in your daily life. We recommend that you take some time to write in your notebook a comprehensive overview of your life beginning with your earliest memories in childhood. During the next few chapters we will go into detail regarding this process for your entire life.

This process of reflection may be depressing or perhaps even painful. It may remind you of some of the items you wrote earlier in the Negative Thought and Emotion Lists. It might spur thoughts of bad relationships, childhood traumas, or adult humiliations. These life patterns come from years of fears, selfish habits, adolescent coping methods, inadequate social skills, and a devotion to activities that have a high personal cost for little return. That is the price for short-term gratification. Unrestrained adolescent behaviors and a lack of perceived options can become more deeply rooted in the adult years. Our mission is to reverse this process and force a neuroplastic brain change in the positive direction. People are not born negative, fear-ridden, selfish, and unhappy. These are learned behaviors, and learned behaviors can be changed.

Your autobiography should not just be about drinking or drugging. If done correctly most of what you write about will be the negative behavior patterns that were discussed in the previous chapters. This process will not be completed in one day. Your autobiography should include all your acts of selfishness, your resentments, fears, relationship troubles, as well as

your sexual life (which we will discuss in detail in the next chapter).

Go to Workbook 1, Lesson 10.2 and follow the instructions given. Complete Lesson 10.2 before you continue on.

The main goal of this exercise is to show clearly where you may have caused unhappiness in other people's lives as well as your own. This will not be fun, but no one fixes problems that they either don't know exist or choose to ignore.

This autobiography should not include the positive aspects of your life. In later chapters and throughout the lessons outlined in your Life Movements, Workbook 2, you will explore your many positive attributes and the excitement surrounding your future. However, this chapter, along with Chapters 11 and 12 are a means to helping you end a life of misery. They were written to help you build the courage and motivation to abandon all of your negative behaviors and choices. Once these are out of the way, your new found self-awareness will prepare you for additional growth through the lessons and text contained in the last several chapters.

After your autobiography is complete and you come to terms with your past, we will delve into the replacement process in earnest, and you will replace all your negative character traits and behaviors with new positive ones. In those Life Movements, Workbook 2 chapters a major self-empowered transformation will occur, however your results will depend on how much you desire personal change and on how much effort you put into assessing and then modifying your emotions, thoughts, and habits.

Your willingness to mature can begin today. If you work hard at this process, you will be able to change all the choices that have been hurting you and hurting those around you. If you skim through this and do not put forth your best effort, you might want to think about why you would knowingly shortchange yourself. Ultimately, when the people in your life become sick and tired of your current negative antics, the only one left will be you. Are you willing to take the easy road now only to feel intense loneliness later because you were unwilling to work hard at changing?

While many unhappy memories can be difficult to write about, it is entirely up to you whether or not to include them. No one is going to read your autobiography and there will be no test when you are finished. You will know what needs to change. The issue is whether you have the courage to look at yourself objectively and then actually change.

This autobiography is not a confession. Confession is based on the ideas of sin, guilt, religious dogma, and the belief that someone must intercede to absolve guilt. We will teach you how you can regulate or even eliminate your past guilt. This autobiography draws a line and says, "After these narratives are complete and I understand my negative patterns, I will begin anew. I start over now. I am committed to leaving that world behind and building a new existence for my family and myself." Keep in mind that you get to create the script, you enable your own progress, and you self-analyze. There is no need for anyone else to intercede on your behalf.

What to Include, What to Leave Out

Many of the people we have helped through the years begin the writing process with great reluctance. This is normal. No one likes to go over bad memories. Within this reluctance there seems to be a familiar theme: people often sheepishly admit they are afraid to change. Their fears are understandable.

If there is a past event that was extremely painful, but you feel it has since been rectified, there is no real need to include it in your autobiography. That is the beauty of the Freedom Model® and CBESM; you get to decide what is important to you and what you want to change. The program provides the method and you get to choose which aspects apply to you.

We strongly recommend you follow the lessons carefully using your emotions as your guide. If an event from the past is still bothering you, even though most might think it trivial, then by all means listen to your heart, include it and then analyze it in the following chapters. We are all different so your autobiography will not be like anyone else's. The point is to be thorough and honest and try not to skip life events, relationships, and circumstances that have shaped the negative side

of your life. If you do an inadequate job at this crucial juncture, you create a self-limiting situation. So we recommend you do your best to avoid that.

Waiting for the Other Shoe to Drop

Many of our guests say they live with constant worry. They are always waiting for something bad to happen, yet they feel they must hide this insecurity. They report a general feeling of internal doom and gloom. They wonder if anyone else can see the panic within them. They are constantly waiting for the other shoe to drop. This generalized fear often becomes all-encompassing, causing panic attacks, sleepless nights, lost productivity at work, and other problems. It can become a self-fulfilling prophecy that leads to bad things happening. Because of their fears people drink or drug, causing more problems, leading to more drinking and drugging, and a continuing downward spiral.

There are many causes for this type of anxiety. In our experience most generalized anxiety is caused by people lacking a mission in life. Deep boredom, coupled with unrelenting and repetitive negative thoughts and emotions, cause the brain to fixate in negative directions and on negative themes. A slow, sometimes not so slow, negative neuroplastic change occurs. Some in the mental health field would call this a variation of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. We avoid such labels, because a label implies disease or personal powerlessness. Neuroplasticity is choice-driven and through the methods presented in this program can be used to reverse generalized panic, anxiety, and obsessive negative thinking.

No topic is taboo when writing your autobiography. It is important to make sure that you keep your autobiography private as the information you will be writing will be extremely personal and probably should remain that way. If you avoid writing the troublesome, difficult topics, you have written an autobiography that probably won't afford you many of the important benefits that await you.

Begin with the Chapter 8 Highlighted Portions

This is a great place to start your autobiography.

First, go back over all the material in Lessons 10.1 and 10.2 one more time. You initially highlighted these particular passages from Chapter 8 for a reason. Use these quotes to jar memories from the past. It gets the emotions stirred up and you will immediately see the aspects of your past and present life that still bother and/or affect you in negative ways. Once you feel totally satisfied that you have completed copying the appropriate passages into your workbook, you can begin writing about your childhood years.

You will write your autobiography in four age-defined sections. These sections are built in Workbook 1. They are:

1. Childhood Years, starting from your first memories through year 12,
2. Adolescent Years (ages 13 through 20),
3. Adult Years (ages 21 through 60), and
4. Senior Years (ages 61 and up).

The remainder of this chapter teaches the fundamentals of writing the childhood section of your autobiography. In this writing process, try not to worry about things you may have forgotten or being chronologically perfectly. That kind of pressure just adds unneeded stress to an already difficult process. What you can't remember about your past cannot hurt you. Because the following lessons are for your eyes only, there is no need to worry about neatness or grammar or the order in which events and circumstances are written.

Childhood Years (Ages First Memories – 12 Yrs. Old)

Let's begin with the childhood years. Try to remember how you felt as a child. There are probably certain events that occurred that shaped your current negative thoughts and actions. Many children feel inadequate, depressed, and scared. Sometimes during these years there were serious events where those close to you hurt you.

It is common that someone may write about a trau-

matic event that occurred at 5 years old, and then be reminded about something else that happened at 10, and so on. Sometimes you will be reminded of events that occurred in a different age category altogether. This is normal. Again, do not worry about chronological perfection.

So what do you write about? During those early crucial years you may have learned to resent some of those around you or even feel serious hatred towards them. When writing about your childhood you will invariably end up writing about certain events that affected you negatively. Sometimes these events could have been quite traumatic and totally out of your control.

If you have not yet learned how to deal with these events in a constructive way, you may be continuing to reinforce the pain and anger in your present thoughts and actions. This is a common and horribly destructive reinforcing neuroplastic behavior. Childhood resentments, including those stemming from trauma, whether physical, mental, or sexual are often carried into adolescence and adulthood.

Even though you are remembering many negative events as you write them, please understand that this process is a means to an end. You will write them thoroughly as described, and then we will guide you to building a plan to convert them into action and move your life past the pain; pain that may still be affecting you today. Remember, the goal is to build new neuronal circuits by replacing negative memory with new positive actions creating new sets of positive brain pathways. You will create a physical network of paths to guide yourself out of your past and into a bright future filled with new promise. Reliving memories, thoughts, and emotions can keep us trapped in our past. Hence, your goal is to be thorough so you can systematically let go of past negative behaviors.

The truth is that our lives are guided by the events of the past, but only to the exact extent that we decide to make it so. This is not to say that letting go of a painful past is easy. This program does not trivial-

ize the pain a person can experience and endure. However, it is important not to underestimate the immense power of choice and the unlimited power of forgiveness.

Usually during the childhood years a person feels like a victim. Unfortunately, many people carry that childhood perspective into their teen and then into their adult or senior years where it is destructive and ill placed. Try to identify situations in which you created problems. As children we have less control over ourselves, others, and society than we do later in life, but we aren't all innocent angels. In some childhood situations we probably were victims, in others, not so much. However, if we carry childhood hurts

Our lives are guided by the events of the past, but only to the exact extent that we decide to make it so.

into our adolescence or adulthood, that is a choice and ultimately within our adolescent or adult power to change. While some childhood experiences, such as being molested, raped, or abused in some fashion can be devastating, such events only have relevance in adulthood to the extent that the adult chooses to use the childhood event as an excuse for his adult failure or as a reason not to forgive everyone involved.

However, child abuse is not always as clear-cut as physical or sexual abuse. Emotional abuse can be devastating to a child. Children growing up with little or no emotional closeness to parents and/or siblings often experience loneliness that plagues them through adolescence and into adulthood. Then, of course, there is financial abuse, the most common abuse which children must endure and over which they have no control. Children raised in poverty know they are poor. And as they enter school and look around at their peers, it seems to them that nearly everybody is better off financially than they are. Even worse is the school culture that "puts down" children who don't wear the right kinds of sneakers or designer jeans, or whose parents' only vehicle is a beat-up, 18-year-old jalopy.

And many adolescents take a bad situation and either knowingly or unknowingly, decide early on to make their lives much worse. Because of a lack of perceived options and a poor self-image, bitterness, resentment, drugs, alcohol, eating disorders, self-cutting, deception, and manipulation can become conscious tools of self-destruction. But there are always options.

Our guests range in age from adolescent to senior, when personal responsibility is the rule. If that describes you, it is important to look at how you have used traumatic events in childhood to justify poor behavior later, either consciously or unconsciously.

For instance, abused children may abuse everything and everyone around them to punish the world. In the end, the world moves on and the child remains bitter well into adulthood. This bitterness leads to loneliness, which then follows wherever the previously abused child may go. But no matter how corrupted by childhood experiences you may be, your autobiography is the beginning of the process of letting go of those traumatic events through self-forgiveness and forgiveness of others, so you can move on to mature adulthood.

While writing your autobiography, it is important to write events and feelings as they happened with as much honesty as possible. People sometimes tend to put a positive spin on horrible events, particularly if they were at fault. Sometimes they feel overwhelming remorse when they revisit old hurts in their minds. Consequently, what they write is a soft version of the event instead of the truth. For the purposes of this narrative, you should steer clear of this approach. Write events for what they were, not for what you think others would want to hear.

At this point you are trying to reconstruct, in words, what took place in your life and the feelings and thoughts associated with each event. You will learn the process of how to come to terms with the dark episodes of your past later in the program. So go ahead and begin writing. Explore every aspect you think makes you who you are today. The autobiography lessons will take some time to write. Follow the lessons in order

and you will end up with a very thorough self-analysis. What is important is that you write everything down. Include all of the things you have done to hurt others along with all of the things that have hurt you. You are searching for where it all began.

Begin your written childhood section of the autobiography by focusing on the three types of resentful/negative relationships as they were listed in Chapter 8. Use these three categories of relationship conflicts as a guide to get started. We list them here as a guide.

1. People deliberately hurt you.
2. An unprovoked attack was actually a delayed response to a previous negative encounter.
3. You may not have an obvious role in a resentful relationship, yet you could be at fault.

Please go to Workbook 1, Lesson 10.3 and follow the instructions given. Once this is complete, continue on with Lessons 10.4 through 10.6 and complete the chapter review questions. Then go on to the following summary.

As you go through your memories of your childhood focus on these three statements and begin writing. Write as much as you can remember to cognitively create a good sketch of your childhood which will prepare you for the adolescent years discussed in the next chapter.

Summary

When you have completed the Childhood Years of your autobiography, continue with the next chapter to complete the Adolescent, Adult, and Senior sections. They are all completed in the same format, so you should find the later sections easier. Writing an autobiography is not easy. Many people are fearful that they may be doing it wrong. If you need help or direction with your autobiography, please feel free to speak with your instructor or a director as they have literally helped hundreds through this very process. As always your discussions with the St. Jude Retreat staff are kept completely confidential.

Chapter 11

Your Autobiography

Part 2

Adolescent Years

As you write your autobiography, you will notice a shift in thinking that occurs from the childhood years, 0-12, to your adolescent years, 13-20. This shift is the natural maturing process that results in blaming others less for our own wrong doings and poor choices and not casting ourselves as victims. Your autobiography should reflect this natural maturation trend. Remember that as a child you may have had little control over your circumstances. Once we enter adolescence we begin to gain a tremendous amount of choice with respect to our behaviors. These are the years in which people learn and choose the way they perceive their world.

Whereas some people have a difficult childhood and/or adolescence and overcome this negative life for one much better, others with equal hardships will use the experience of suffering as a basis for failure. They do not see the world as a place of opportunity, but rather a place to be feared. They consciously or unconsciously lower their standards and narrow their perceptions and options in an effort to protect themselves and their feelings. The question is why? In a word, choice.

Our choices form who we are and what we get out of life. It is during the adolescent years that many hurtful, negative personal habits can begin to take hold. It is with this in mind that you should write the

events of this time period in as much detail as possible. Ask yourself how and why you view the world the way you do. Where did your self-limiting fears originate? What people in your life influenced the way you perceive the world around you? How did you learn to be unhappy? Were your parents fearful or unhappy people? Who were the people you admired and what was their perception of the world? Write the answers to these questions in your workbook as you did in the childhood section.

The events you will write about in your workbook should include those over which you had little control and those over which you had full control. This age category is a transitional period in life, from being driven by circumstance to being driven by the ability to direct your own life. But many people never made the transition. Instant gratification, short term solutions for long-term problems and challenges, and fits of temper typify the adolescent years. The goal now is to let these counterproductive habits go. Unfortunately for many, these underdeveloped coping strategies and choices were brought into adulthood, making for a turbulent and negative middle age.

While writing this section of your autobiography, concentrate on a few things. How did you learn coping strategies such as negativity or controlling others? Begin to think how you could have changed these emotions and behaviors. If there were situations that were totally out of your control, it now is the time to forgive those involved and let it go.

If there were situations that were not entirely your fault, then you may want to begin to look at your behavior rather than the other people's behavior. It is in these gray areas where most of life is lived. Relationships are not always smooth. Happy, purpose-driven people are able to forgive others and at the same time see their own faults. Happy people are also able to apologize when they hurt others or are wrong.

Unhappy people tend to obsess about the faults of others. And, more often than not, they actually create many of their own problems. They may even know they are at fault, yet they justify it or completely ignore it. They concentrate on how others have failed them. Should any of this apply to you, be sure to include it in your autobiography.

Try to focus on your faults and where you harmed people, rather than on lengthy explanations of how people wronged you. You will see this trend develop in the workbook examples. This is especially important when you get to the adult and senior sections of your autobiography. As an adult your reactions are completely chosen by you.

During the next chapter you will analyze your autobiography. More emphasis will be placed on figuring out how to overcome your past unwanted behaviors. Please concentrate for now on being thorough and skipping nothing. The goal should be that if a total stranger were to read this autobiography he would have a clear picture of you, your life, and all of the people you have had in your immediate sphere of influence.

Lessons 11.1 – 11.5

Please refer to your workbook. Lessons 11.1-11.5 will have directions on how to write your adolescent years section of the autobiography. Complete these lessons before continuing.

Adult Years

Most of our guests fall into the adult years age category: older than 21 but younger than 60 years of age. This is a period in people's lives during which the learned behaviors from childhood and adolescence

are already well established. Being a purpose-driven, happy adult means letting go of childish things and becoming the person you truly want to become. This is the key to this exercise having a permanent effect.

Look at situations in which you are either partly to blame or totally at fault. In either situation what causes misery is when you conclude that others are wholly wrong. The eventual goal of the autobiography is to help you grow from being a blaming, selfish, delusional person into a forgiving, responsible, purpose-driven adult. When you examine the three relationship conflict profiles discussed earlier you may begin to remember old resentments and grudges, and you may even discover current remorse and hate that still burden you. Every substance user is laden with resentment and negativity. You believe that you are the perpetual victim of this cruel, spiteful world so, of course, you feel angry!

When you think honestly about why you are angry, you will find that most of the time you were the cause of the problem. The world doesn't do what you want it to and that makes you crazy with rage or quietly judgmental or even condescending with the people around you. At other times you hold that rage in and make yourself sick with hatred and loneliness.

Study your adulthood. You must continue to be thorough and honest. You should write, not only about your drinking and drugging, but about your adult life in general. Your patterns of avoiding responsibility and the selfishness that you learned during your younger years should become apparent at this point. Instead of leaving these immature habits in the past where they belong, you brought them into your adulthood. As an adult they create dissatisfaction and limit positive personal options. It takes tremendous stamina to remain unhappy and dissatisfied most of the time. You begin to believe that life is supposed to be like this, and with that belief, it becomes true. Remember Axiom Number 2: You are what you think.

It is not unusual that on the first attempt at writing an autobiography, people realize they wrote pages and pages blaming the world for their unhappiness. It starts with their childhood and just keeps going. This is common and is the primary reason the process of self-analysis is needed. Although most people don't

think so, you do have the ability to change your reaction to situations that are truly out of your control. Try to figure out what you contributed to every unpleasant situation and begin to realize that forgiveness may solve some of the problems listed in your autobiography.

This is critical: concentrate on what your part was in each disagreement. This is the beginning of positive neuroplastic changes in the brain. By switching your mind from a blame-based thought system to an “I am responsible for my actions” thought system you can begin to change the thought pathways in your brain. When you come across a disagreement in which you were not at fault, then it is your responsibility to write about it with forgiveness as your goal.

It is obvious that a life guided by resentment can only bring unhappiness; it stifles the mind. It is very difficult to be “small minded” (negative and petty) and have a positive purpose that is larger than yourself at the same time. These two personal value systems cannot coexist. You cannot have positive aspirations and also give in to hateful habits, and then expect that your positive aspirations will be realized.

In disagreements that are partly your fault and partly the other person’s, which is a very common situation, concentrate on your own behavior. Do not spend your time writing about how wrong the world is and how right you are. You are at fault about many things or you would not be so unhappy. The purpose of this autobiography is to move your thinking back to reality, not to confirm your twisted ideas of the way you think things work. It is time to grow up, forgive, and move on.

The patterns of fear, hate, remorse, guilt, and laziness probably existed long before you ever picked up a drink or drug. There are, of course, some people who have led a relatively responsible life, but simply enjoyed their alcohol and drugs a little too much. For them the amount of generally negative content will be less than for others. The point is to be honest and not feel that you must write a lot if, in fact, you are generally satisfied with your life. However, do not use the previous statement to avoid doing the work necessary to complete a thorough autobiography. If you are looking for an easy way out, please remember you are

not only hurting yourself, but you are hurting those close to you who want you to share in some happiness. You owe them more than one of the quick fixes that got you here.

You may want to check your motives when writing. In order for any good to come of this exercise you have to be willing to change the way you think and act. You have to learn how to look at the patterns of your life and see that your ways of thinking are not bringing you happiness. They may give you brief moments of pleasure but those are surrounded by much longer periods of emptiness. In your autobiography you are examining the selfish behaviors that prevent those around you from knowing the real you. Remember, the world is set up for your happiness, if you are willing to set goals and attempt to achieve them. Learn this and believe it, and it will come true.

The following chapters will help you convert your motto from “good guys finish last” to “to give is to receive.” Your belief system fosters selfishness and a narrow point of view. You hoard things and attention and then find yourself obsessing about what you don’t have. You never see the cup half full but always as half empty. You never feel you are safe or you have enough financial security, relationship security, or any of the other security needs you think will make you whole.

Your relationships probably reflect this thought process. People around you are hurt by your inability to see beyond your own needs. Those that are hurt badly enough often complain and some may leave you—forever. This then, causes more fear and more needy behavior. It never occurs to you that the problem might actually be you. By examining this autobiography you can interrupt the cycle that is hurting you and those you love.

You may want to take some time now to begin writing about your adult years.

Adult Age Autobiography

Please refer to your workbook. Lessons 11.6-11.10 will have directions on how to write your adult years section of the autobiography. Complete these lessons before continuing.

The Senior Years

Everything written about the adult years applies to this era as well. The only significant difference is that as we get older it can become more difficult to change. People with drinking or drug problems in their later years, often suffer depression and find it difficult to get motivated and find a deeper purpose so late in life. Sometimes they get to their senior years and seem to lose the drive that used to get them out of bed in the morning. Negative habits have so thoroughly permeated their thoughts and emotions that change has become a frightening prospect. To make things more difficult is the fact that neuroplastic brain changes take more effort to jump start as age increases.

*What a great opportunity you have,
to leave a legacy of truth and happiness,
a legacy of the person you truly are.*

However, older people begin counting their years because they feel their time is running out. Because of a sense of urgency, some older people do muster up the courage to make a life change and face their fears head on. In the autumn of life people have a natural tendency to look back over their lives and ask, "What regrets do I have? What could I have done differently?" If there has been intense substance use, feelings of remorse and guilt can become overwhelming, often resulting in even greater substance use. With so much regret, it takes tremendous courage to move forward. A full autobiography is incredibly helpful.

For older people with serious health problems their story can be a blueprint for how to leave this world free and at peace. The final stage of the autobiography calls for recognizing one's past problem behaviors to make a more positive and productive future.

Seniors with limited time left, have a unique point of view. At this stage in life they have no illusions about who they are or how they have lived their life. Outwardly they may still keep up an image, but in

their heart they know exactly who and what they are. What your mind may ignore your heart agonizes over. At this age people are able to understand the damage they have caused and know a deep remorse.

If you are a senior, this may be your last opportunity to set the record straight. Tell yourself it's not too late; I can do it now, and once again stand tall with honor, dignity, and humor. What a great opportunity you have, to leave a legacy of truth and happiness, a legacy of the person you truly are.

Sometime ago we were honored to hear an autobiography of a fellow who was dying. He wanted to tell us his story. His liver was failing and, because of his years of heavy drinking, he had no chance at all of recovering physically. He knew he was dying yet he completed his autobiography and forged on with integrity and optimism.

Notably, he made no demands on his children from whom he had been estranged for many years. One of his children, hearing of his father's new life, stopped to see for himself. He could not believe his eyes. His father really had stopped drinking. Soon the other children came around and the family was reunited. There was no mention of his imminent demise, and he described this time with his family as "the best time of my life." He had finally matured, and he was measuring his life by what he had, not by what he didn't have. His last few months were happy and he truly made the most of them.

This is not only an example of the human will, it is also an example of how to take what normally would be viewed as a negative and make it into something positive. Anything can be viewed in a positive light.

This era can be disheartening in other respects. The reality is that getting old inevitably involves loss. A newly sober senior realizes some of the physical activities he used to be able to do are no longer possible. Sometimes family and friends have given up on them and the loneliness is devastating. For others, the reality that they must depend on those younger than them for their physical and emotional needs erodes

their self-image. This, like adolescence, is a serious transitional period. It is the final stage of maturation. It is the final stage of life.

If you are a senior your self-image as a healthy and strong individual may need to be changed to coincide with the reality of your age and deteriorating physical condition. Although the aging process is not entirely understood, we do know that everyone ages at their own pace. Some may feel physical or mental deterioration beginning in their 60s, while others may remain robust well into their 70s, 80s, and beyond. Your self-image may need to be transformed into one characterized by deeper patience, deeper love, wisdom, and an acceptance of your physical limitations. This can be incredibly difficult, but the last chapters will demonstrate how to accomplish this. Some of the most useful and exciting years can be in the future if you choose to let them be.

If you are a senior, take some time now to write about the most recent years of your life. This completes the age categories of your autobiography. The rest of this chapter is devoted to fears and the intimate areas of life. When completed, these last two sections bring your autobiography to completion.

Please refer to your workbook. Lessons 11.11-11.15 will have directions on how to write your senior years section of the autobiography. Complete these lessons prior to continuing.

Let's Talk about Fears

Now let's look at fear. Believe it or not, you might be frightened of many things. Here's a brief list of possibilities: you are afraid of being alone (without intimate, lasting relationships), of being a failure, of having success, of physical illness, of going to jail, of being financially broke, of being ridiculed, of not being accepted, and so on. It is likely you lack experience with the positive axioms and consequently, run your life based on an inadequate belief system. Bad things have, to one degree or another, happened as a result. This causes more fear and depression. We attract that which we think about the most.

In your workbook write a list of your fears and then list examples of how these fears are an active part of

your life. If you have a fear of being alone, the next logical portion of your autobiography should include written examples illustrating that fear. For example, "I stayed in an abusive relationship for three years because I was more afraid of leaving and being alone than I was of taking the abuse." Then explain the situation in detail and how that specific situation could have been changed and what other options existed.

Up to this point you have written the childhood, adolescent, adult, and senior years' sections. What you are doing now is extracting a list of those fears from what you have already written. The fears portion of the narrative should be a completely separate section that pulls out the fears that dominated your motives throughout your life. Make sure all of your fears are written down on the paper. Do not skip any because they embarrass you or for any other reason. Fear can cripple people emotionally and can cause almost unbearable pain. It limits your perspective and the options that could bring deeper life satisfaction.

People often ask themselves in frustration "Why do I keep doing this to myself?" or "Why do I keep repeating this over and over?" These questions could be about any number of topics that cause problems. Shortly after having these thoughts the person usually realizes the answer, but ignores it. This begins the process of settling. The person stops analyzing her behavior and goes on to repeat it again and again. She then assumes that the current state of affairs is "just the way it is," and does not stop herself long enough to come up with a solution that would eliminate the problems forever. Remember, people limit themselves. Circumstances cannot limit you without your mental and emotional consent.

Most people do not even question why they do the things they do or feel the way they feel. They assume that the present, past, and future are always going to be the same. Your narrative is designed to interrupt this pattern and enable you to face and analyze exactly how counterproductive your current belief system is.

Historically much of your mind has been devoted to avoiding the work necessary to achieve a dramatically changed lifestyle. Now you might want to think confidently about your future, try to assume the best and act as if that best will come true. This is faithful

thinking. Courage and faith are sometimes hard to come by and every time you obsess about your past, the result will be more fear. The only way you are going to begin positive change is through courage and faithful thinking.

If you have the courage to force yourself to face your fears and change the behaviors that created them, you will truly begin to outgrow your fears. You may want to pray or reflect to remind yourself about the inner voice that tells you that you have the ability to make better choices. You were created to be a force for joy, not despair. This new attitude has to be better than what you have created in the past. You are now beginning to grow-up, to mature. Remember that maturity is the willingness to adapt productively to life's challenges, challenges that force internal change and development.

This process of changing your outlook and goals is what most well adjusted adults did during their transition from adolescence to adulthood. Believe it or not, most people in the world are generally happy. When statistically surveyed 83% of American citizens report they are happy (Seligman, 2002). The relatively few people who are truly unhappy are so because they have held on to a world view they formed in childhood or because they believe they have no control over their circumstances. Their views, although appropriate for children, do not work well for adults. Frustration that the world will not behave for you is really no different than a 5 year old throwing a temper tantrum when not given what he or she wants. Remember, reality will not change, so your current views and perceptions must. You can change them now.

Please follow the workbook directions for the Lesson 11.16 on fears.

Your Intimate or Sexual History

Your autobiography should include your intimate or your sexual history. This may contain some of the most self-centered and hurtful aspects of your personal behavior and may be one section of your autobiography where you are tempted to omit material. Some of your intimate and sexual history may cause

you anxiety when you think about it and write about it. This is to be expected.

The fear surrounding sexuality and intimacy can be overwhelming. Sexual experimentation as a means of learning and working out an individual's sexual orientation and preferences is normal. Yet because of cultural bias and even bigotry, these topics are often held deep inside a person causing pain, guilt, and grief.

Once people write about them, these normal impulses are put into context. This may be the first time many people realize their sexuality is not wrong or shameful. Simply articulating the truth is usually enough to help a person feel less shameful. It makes accepting who we are much easier.

Remember it is important not to leave anything significant out of your autobiography. The contents of your autobiography are completely secret. Also, keep in mind that humans have been on the planet for millions of years and have been involved in sexual activities since the beginning. There is no way that you have been involved in any sexual activity that many other people haven't done many times before you. These common behaviors are often the source of unnecessary feelings of guilt.

This discussion is certainly not all-inclusive on the subject of sexual behaviors. It is simply to emphasize that sexual behavior need not be a source of guilt. Sexuality in all its forms is like all other activities in life. It is up to individuals to make their own choices about their perceptions and feelings about it. Definitions of sex and deviance vary from culture to culture. It is not our intention to make judgments, moral, or otherwise.

In general, we are trying to make sure you are happy with your sexuality and that your sexual lifestyle does not hurt others. This would be a valid starting point. Review your sexual relationships over your entire past. Write down the motives behind your sexual activities. Write how you may have manipulated your partners and the results of that manipulation. Write about how sex may have been used as a tool to get attention, affection, or love.

It is quite common to use sex for ulterior purposes and that can cause extreme emotional pain when expectations are not fulfilled. Many people, maybe you, use it in this way hoping it will be a source of happi-

ness. Sex with such motives becomes no different from alcohol and drugs. That is, it provides temporary pleasure followed by still more remorse and guilt. Some people use it as a personal diversionary tactic to avoid some of life's challenges. Once this behavior pattern is well-established, you may become angry and indignant when your partner or partners do not agree to your requests for sex. Your partner may then become resentful and hurt by your constant pressure.

Alternately, you might feel incapable of saying no to sexual advances made upon you. Your own lack of self-worth and assertiveness may make you dislike the other party, but you end up hating yourself more for not being able to say no. This is quite common for those with sexual abuse in their past because such people often feel that much of their self-worth is wrapped up in sexual performance.

Write about any feelings of remorse or guilt you might suffer because of sexual situations. This will help you change these habits as we progress in the following chapters, replacing these habits with new found courage and positive sexual goals. Remember, the goal of the autobiography is not to reinforce negative behavior, but rather to identify your problems in writing and then to change them forever. The goal is change, not to wallow!

In some cases, you may have made yourself vulnerable and were hurt. Write about any sexual activities that cause guilt and embarrassment. If you have been selfish, dishonest, inconsiderate, or mean, write about it. Also write about the people you used or misused in your sexual escapades.

If there has been rape or sexual assault or abuse, you may want to get help from a psychologist or psychiatrist who offers cognitive behavioral therapy, which is similar to this program and will augment your efforts. We recommend finding a licensed therapist who specializes in sexual assaults and trauma. Forgiving yourself and the other party is less difficult when you have a trusted professional to help you. Most psychiatrists who use cognitive behavioral therapy will find this program helpful to you.

If you are a religious or spiritual person, prayer can be useful to bolster your faith in yourself and in your tomorrows. Set a goal to think about sex as it was in-

tended to be: intimate, unselfish, and satisfying for both parties. Remember, sex is inherently a wonderful part of the human experience and you should feel its benefits without shame, guilt, or fear.

It is fairly easy to know how you have used sex; simply look at the results. It is important not to use sex to compensate for a bad relationship or for low self-esteem. Sex, like anything else, has a proper time, place, and purpose. When sex is used for what it is intended (e.g. procreation, pleasure and intimacies, for the expression of love, closeness, fun, and excitement), then it is no source of guilt, hurt feelings, or low self-worth. Are you happy with the results of your sexual life? If not, change it. Begin right now by listing the poor results it has brought, with the intention of building future goals that include a new sex life that will bring happiness.

You want to cover anything in your sexual life that brings on or creates negative feelings or hurts others. Sex should not be hurtful to you or others. Nor should there be any unintended negative results from sexual encounters. When sexual encounters are entered into with the other person's happiness and pleasure in mind, this seems to produce the best outcome for both.

Please follow the workbook directions for the Lesson 11.17, which covers the topic of sexuality.

This chapter has covered a tremendous amount of ground. It should take at least a full week of writing to finish your autobiography, so take your time and do it right. This should not be something you rush, but on the other hand, do not start it and then procrastinate. This exercise will force many negative emotions to surface, so try to get through it as thoroughly and efficiently as possible. Then you can move forward with replacing that old life with a new series of realized dreams and fulfilling relationships.

Note: If you need clarification or guidance with the autobiography please sit down privately with your instructor or another staff member that you trust. Please don't be afraid to ask questions. We are here for you and care deeply that you find the peace and freedom you seek.

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Chapter 12



Self-Analysis

You should not expect that your problems will go away just because you have written about them in your workbook. To achieve the best possible personal growth you will need to analyze what you have written and then build a thorough plan to move past it. If you do not complete this you will once again end up concentrating on negative aspects of your life which will, in turn, create even more damage.

By now your autobiography should be a solid historical account of those aspects of your thoughts and emotions that caused you a certain level of dissatisfaction in your life. This chapter will help you identify and condense the information you have written in your notebook into fundamental behaviors that need to be changed if you are to attain successful living.

The following analytical discussion and the accompanying workbook lessons will explain how to discard blame-oriented thinking and convert negative experiences into a learning opportunity for the future. Many people who write their autobiography are coming from a somewhat immature perspective. If people live with the same perspectives they did years ago it not only causes unhappiness but also limits the way they adapt to change. Fully developed people do not use the same coping strategies that children do. Our goal is to help you expand your coping methods so you are not stuck making the same poor choices over and over when natural or self-created challenges occur.

Relationships

Relationships are the fabric that holds life together. The fact that people need each other and that we are all inherently connected is a fundamental truth that many people seem not to know or sometimes forget. Many times our limited self-centered perspectives combined with substance use pull us farther and farther from our families and friends, and eventually even from ourselves. Even if you are still around people, you can be so closed off emotionally that it is impossible for others to know you.

“Try building your own fishhook sometime.”

Earl Nightingale, *Lead the Field*

Everything you do is influenced, indirectly or directly, by others. From the smallest items you might use for recreation, like a fishhook on a fishing trip, to the home in which you live, to the roads you use. Without our fellow humans’ participation, directly or indirectly, our world would be a lonely place and nothing would get done.

Fortunately, all people and societies are connected through commerce, governments, good will, religions, and of course, love. Even people in the simplest cultures work together as teams. Generally, the happiest people are those who voluntarily decide to

spend their time participating and creating good for the benefit of others in their society through purpose-driven free will and desire for progress. They are active in their communities, their careers, their families, and with their friends.

The question is: What sets these people apart from those who seem to be doing the same things but are unhappy? The answer is that those who have genuine happiness do good acts without regard for reward or personal gain. They go to work, which they genuinely enjoy. Getting paid is just an added benefit. Many simply enjoy the good feeling of being a part of things and seeing what they can contribute. Whether it is family functions, parties, community events, all are purpose-driven. This is the ultimate meaning behind the pursuit of happiness. You cannot create internal happiness. The emotion and feeling of happiness is the by-product of purpose and actualized goals. For example, if you are personally driven to work on a project of building low-income housing, happiness is created as a result of your hard work and mission. Find a worthy goal and achieve it and joy will be yours.

“It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.”

President Harry S. Truman

Substance users, as well as anyone unwilling to adapt to life’s natural challenges, often have self-centered goals. They slowly drop out of the social scene and become islands of despair. They work with no regard for society’s rules and the five axioms that govern love and happiness. The most extreme cases subject themselves, not only to an unloving and unhappy life, but a life in which they no longer can function in society. Just consider the fact that 72% of all prisoners within American prisons have a history of serious substance use problems. Substance users have a tendency to avoid following the human and spiritual axioms that bring maturity, thereby creating patterns of self-abuse, fear, and unhappiness. On the surface, they may still be involved in other people’s lives, but internally their fears gnaw at them and they tell themselves they do not fit or that people don’t like them or even, that they don’t like people.

The world is a complex interpersonal network. Fading out of it brings loneliness and grief. There are thousands of excuses for this behavior, all of which emanate from sometimes subtle, sometimes not so subtle, negative habits, and a perception that what they are doing is their only option. All of these negative habits were identified in your first autobiography. Analyzing your autobiography is your first humble step towards bridging the gap between yourself and a world of people who would love to know who you are. You have been a spectator in your life when you should have been a participant.

By writing your autobiography, you have put down on paper your entire life history, perhaps for the first time. Maybe you had an affair, were sexually abused, are heterosexual but were involved in homosexual experiences, or vice versa. You may have broken the law, stolen from the very people you love, or perhaps you physically hurt or killed someone. It would be wrong to conclude that any of these events, struggles, or behaviors are the cause of your drinking and drug problems. The decision you made to use drugs and alcohol is separate from the problems themselves. Remember, substance use is merely a choice and is not inherently connected to other behaviors unless, of course, you decide to make that connection.

Your self-image and self-destructive behaviors may keep you from being close to others. Analyzing one event or one relationship at a time will start the process of changing these patterns. Our goal for the rest of this program is to help you focus on life-making choices that lead to successful relationships. If you are avoiding meaningful relationships because of past pain, this will only make you more detached and in need of something to fill the emotional void.

Where do you begin?

Have you ever sat back and wondered how and why happy people seem to have charmed lives? Why can’t you live in this blessed manner? The truth is you can too. Study your autobiography carefully. If your autobiography has been done correctly, it will show you that your life has not been predominantly one of loving and unselfish service to others. If it is not an account detail-

ing some self-centered, selfish, and immature behaviors then you probably wrote a biography of the person you hoped people saw, rather than detailing the darker side of your life. This, of course, is not to say that anyone who writes an autobiography in this program is a “bad” person. The Freedom Model® does not make such judgments. However, your autobiography should be an accurate account of those aspects of your life that you would like to change. For some, there is a lot of work, for others, less so. Everyone has a good side that does not need changing. However, the purpose of this exercise is to get rid of the habits that bring emotional pain, and this cannot be done if we paint rosy pictures of ourselves. Be truthful and it becomes much easier to change for the better. Everyone can benefit from self-evaluation, no matter how good they are.

A Critical Time

For you this is a critical time. You may have been writing extensively, and a self-portrait that is somewhat unpleasant might have emerged. It is at this stage that the more frightened and arrogant will look for reasons to stop this process or find fault with it. We urge you to remember why you started. Have faith in the process and in your future and forge ahead. Remember, we are here to help and we have been working with people just like you for decades. You are on the verge of letting go of a troubled past and building a pathway to greater success. Don't quit now. In order to break through your barriers of immaturity and selfishness, and so as not to give yourself the excuses to fail, you must establish the positive attitude that you can create new options in your life. You are among a world of people who have felt anxiety just the way you have. All people, no matter where they are or what they are doing, struggled at one time or another. Those who are successful move forward with courage, regardless. This phase of the program is just one such challenge.

We know how hard this can be. You may be accustomed to running away or finding holes in society's rules, and then using those holes as your excuse for failure. If ever there was a time to let go of these attitudes, it is now. You are on the verge of building a

plan that will get you out of the mess you have created, once and for all.

To Look Ahead

It makes sense that if you behave in the same way happy people do, you too will achieve the same quality of life that they have. You began your journey toward happiness by making the decision to commit to change. Don't stop now, you are halfway there! Your decision was an acknowledgement that the life you had fashioned for yourself did not provide the happiness and fulfillment you thought it would. Writing the autobiography should have committed you to making serious life changes.

The next step is to see your narrative in a new light. This will enable you to build a new life where wonderful relationships and interpersonal social skills can be enjoyed. You will also learn how to face your past with your head held high, wiser for it, and watch the past failures and negative patterns fade into obscurity. However, if you are unwilling to move on, your self-created untrusting ways will win out, and you will probably return to your previous chaotic life. While that would be a waste of a great opportunity for lasting success and happiness, it is still your choice to make.

Each part of the process is built upon completion of the previous part. Skip one part and all those parts dependent on it will not work as well as they could. Skip the autobiography and you will most likely remain in a state of poor decision-making and fear. If you work on your autobiography with minimal effort, expect only minimal results. That's life, you get out of it what you put into it.

An Autobiographical Accounting

Now that you have completed the autobiography, it is time to process this information in a way that will benefit your future. In your workbook, look for the truth about your past.

As we mentioned earlier, the autobiography may have a tendency to describe your life from a self-centered point of view. It is only natural to try to put a good spin on even the worst of circumstances when it

is about your own behavior and past choices. Consider for a moment that the mere act of drinking alcohol or using drugs excessively is utterly self-centered, as the user is the only one who enjoys any part of substance use. For everyone else your substance use is a negative experience. The unfortunate part is that most people, maybe even you, still do not see just how selfish this behavior is.

Consequences

Undeveloped people make a habit of avoiding thoughts of consequences and responsibility. By concentrating on conducting their lives in the same manner every day, their life perspective gets more and more myopic until they feel totally at the mercy of life circumstance. Ultimately consequences cannot be avoided, and the price for remaining fixed in your thinking can be severe.

Reality can and does include emotional pain that should correct faulty logic. Pain exists as a guide to tell you to think and/or behave differently. Certainly some people, maybe even you, have a high tolerance for this type of self-abuse. Usually the consequences are also felt by loved ones and others, thus causing guilt and more pain, until the intensity becomes so great it brings about a sincere desire to change.

The majority of events or relationships you have written about, when examined individually, have had a relatively unimportant effect on your life. But when these relationships and events are analyzed in the context of your whole life's negative history, then that analysis illustrates a truth that is hard to ignore. That is why we encourage you to finish the autobiography and immediately analyze all of it following the lessons in this chapter. In these lessons we recommend that you examine each relationship and negative choice and the consequences that those choices and relationships have created throughout your lifetime. Your autobiographical analysis becomes quite an enlightening document.

The following chapters are devoted to helping you grow past these self-destructive habits. But the last pieces of the puzzle have to be put in place first. You must look at what the consequences of your lifestyle

have been, and how you could have changed those behaviors from the past for a more positive outcome. Once you analyze these two aspects, the next logical progression will be maturing past your self-limiting lifestyle. Positive personal change becomes self-motivating, and you will desire better for yourself and those you love.

Please go to 12.1 in the workbook and follow the directions before you continue on.

Once that is completed it is time to decide whether or not you are truly ready to get on with a more fulfilling life? Are you ready for life that has purpose and self-created joy and positive drive? If so, then let's complete the last portion of analyzing your autobiography.

In Lesson 12.2 you will read every negative relationship, every one of your resentments, along with every negative habit, relationship, and fear you have lived with, scrutinize them, and then develop a solution for each. This process will teach you a number of things that will transform your thought process. Although you began moving toward self-awareness during the early chapters through the different charting processes, your past guilt and continuing negative choices may still be holding you hostage. Now, you can learn from the past to make changes in your life so you can finally let your negative past fade into obscurity.

When we make the decision to change, the actual decision means little until it is backed up with repetitive positive action. This is another important component of positive neuroplastic brain change: creating new beneficial habits while simultaneously destroying old negative behaviors. Your new actions enable these valuable habits to form and major positive neuroplastic alterations are made. Once repeated physical implementation of your new thoughts and emotions makes this new lifestyle the norm, the old lifestyle and its accompanying misery will truly become nothing more than bad memories. Given enough time and patience, even the memories fade away. Those neuronal pathways supporting your negative habits that were once the brain's infrastructure will slowly wither as the new pathways are generated and used with regularity.

Now, please go to Lesson 12.2 and follow the directions given to begin the process of personal change. Do not continue on until Lesson 12.2 is complete.

Some Pointers

The Saint Jude Program® process of analyzing the past has a very different goal from that of free association where you might lie on the classic psychiatric couch spilling out your misery over and over. The goal of the Saint Jude Program® is to help you to let go of negative thinking and negative behavior once

and for all and learn to strive for a positive future. If you find that your motive while writing is to dwell in your misery, then stop and ask yourself whether you really want to change. If you are not ready to change now, then at least you have begun to do so and you can make the choice to continue at any point in the future.

If, however, you are still willing to go for the gold, then continue forging ahead. The fun part of the program begins now. That is, building your future on the basis of the five axioms. It is time to move forward in the process of building a new future full of promise and purpose!

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SJP

Chapter 13



Self-Image — The Beginning

There is no stopping you now! From this chapter on, you are going to focus your efforts on the future. Any workbook lessons from this chapter forward will be completed in Life Movements, Workbook 2. The past is over. You are now going to learn how to move beyond the patterns of the past. There is a distinct line drawn at this point. Your old life will now be dealt the final blow and a new life plan will begin to grow where the old one was left behind.

First, you constructed your autobiography, then you analyzed your thought and behavior patterns in the last chapter. If you are still confused about the habits and activities that got you here, please sit down in private with your instructor or one of the directors. They are there to help you through this process. The worst thing to do is try to move forward if you are less than confident in your self-awareness.

From here on we will assume you have had a dramatic change in your thoughts with regard to yourself and your past habits. You know exactly where you went wrong, whom you hurt, and ultimately why you have been so unhappy. Are you now ready to build your future and leave your negative life choices behind? Let us get started on the next phase of life reconstruction.

Taking Responsibility

Unlike 12-step programs which advocate you go back to the people you have hurt and make “direct amends” to them, the SJP® advocates true amends. Making “direct amends” means you must make a list of people you harmed and go to them, and say, “I’m sorry.” However, most people you have hurt with your poor behaviors and choices do not want “direct amends” from you, no matter how contrite and sincere you may be. This only serves to remind these people of the pain you have caused them. Even when the people you have offended are not upset by direct amends, you still risk reminding them of a painful past event thereby creating more harm. This risk alone is enough reason to avoid this possibly hurtful process.

When you do direct amends you are not only bringing up painful memories, but you are doing so claiming that it is for the other person’s benefit. Such behavior is not amends at all. It is selfish and self-serving, specifically designed to make you feel better, not the other person.

So, how do you move on? You know that you have to correct past errors, but how exactly do you accomplish this without saying “I’m sorry?” To make amends properly, you must first examine your own feelings of

guilt. Guilt and deep regret are the primary reasons so many people in the program want to go back to people they have hurt and make direct amends.

The true goal or intent of direct amends is to alleviate your own feelings of guilt rather than right a wrong. This is why so many direct amends yield poor results. But if we can't use this direct amends process, then how do we proceed? Must we carry this guilt with us forever as punishment? The answer is absolutely not!

Dealing with Guilt Productively

Guilt goes away only when one makes the choice to let it go. Guilt, if left unchecked, can grow to crippling proportions. It is an unnecessary feeling and actually, like everything else in life, is a choice. This is not to say that you should go around hurting people then ignoring those actions.

No, this program advocates a process that begins with identifying the root cause of your problems through the autobiographical process. Guilt and pain are natural results.

To make true amends, you must commit to never repeating the offending behavior. Rather than meeting and dredging up painful experiences with the people you have hurt, make a promise to yourself, and only to yourself, to change your offending behavior in the present and future. This must be a solid pact with you and you alone. Leave no gray area that gives you a way out of or a way around your commitment to change. You must be committed to change your attitude and actions for this method to work.

Even when you have committed to this new life you may still feel guilt because your autobiographical accounts brought back many negative events, the majority of which were your fault. In addition, we are now saying you should not try to absolve your guilt by saying "I'm sorry" regardless of how sincere you might be. Instead, and as a maturing adult, you must be willing to carry the burden of this guilt on your shoulders, at least, temporarily.

Learning to deal with guilt productively is a natural human process. Those who have an immature outlook, use guilt for self-pity and as an excuse to fail. People who immerse themselves in self-pity over their

past misbehaviors find it easy to regress. It goes something like this: "Damn, I feel so bad about that! Screw it, I'm going to go get high." This is a very convenient way to remain tied to instant gratification and avoid the real issue of changing the behaviors that created the guilt.

Most therapy, especially therapy conducted by addiction professionals, suggests that if you feel guilt you will automatically drink and drug abusively. This is nonsense, unless of course, you want to make it become true. Guilt is normal and, depending on what you do with it, it can be a catalyst for productive change or, if left to fester, it can lead a person to become consumed by self-pity.

So here you are, guilty about a wretched past, and so far, no way to get rid of it. You cannot just fess up to those you hurt and go on your merry way. On the other hand, you cannot let it irritate and drag you down, emotionally. Between these two options there seems to be no solution. But there is...

We mentioned that the first phase of taking responsibility for our past indiscretions and getting over guilt is to commit to never repeat the behaviors. If you are unable to commit absolutely to not repeating the offending behavior, then you have made the decision not to change the behavior. You have identified the offending behavior and decided that it is acceptable to you, that, if the same set of circumstances were present today, you would handle it exactly the same way. This means you are also prepared to accept the same outcome and the resulting consequences. As with everything, this is up to you.

However, if you make the decision not to repeat your past negative behavior, we can show you how to replace those habits with those that are in line with the five natural axioms. This process of replacement will be discussed fully later in this book.

Next, if you are able to deal with guilt productively, it is time to make yourself available and be willing to humbly apologize on the other party's terms. This is not to be confused with making direct amends, which is simply a way of exonerating oneself at the expense of the person or persons we hurt.

True Humility and Trust

The guilt you may be feeling will lessen as you move on with a life that does not include the behaviors that originally created it. The people you hurt in the past will see your changed attitudes and behaviors in time. You are no longer lying, cheating, being difficult, hurtful, and impatient, and as a result of these dramatic changes, a natural trust in the new you will grow.

Once that trust is built, the results of your patience and humility are guaranteed. Past incidents in which you may have hurt these people will come up from time to time in the natural course of conversation. As the people around you see how you've changed and gain confidence in your new persona, they will feel more comfortable mentioning past problems. At that point you will have the opportunity to say you're truly sorry and ask how you can make things right. You will be standing on firm emotional ground and your commitment to rectifying past indiscretions will be sincere. That is the major difference between 12-step based direct amends and true amends.

The key is to allow the other party to bring up the subject of your past hurtful behaviors. He or she may want to know the details as to why you were such a jerk and may want an apology. At this point you will be able to provide it.

In summary, change your behaviors, be committed to those positive changes, and wait for the opportunity to make things right. It really is that simple. Not only is your contrition honest and meaningful to the hurt party, but you are arriving at this point without selfish motives. Remember, the guilt of today will eventually fade away on its own with time, and with a firm commitment to adhere to your new lifestyle.

Self-Image

As we have stated, our goal is to help you adapt and change according with your life circumstances. We want to empower you to grow past the counterproductive patterns of your past. Remember, changing your life is the most important of all the amends you can make. In order to make this occur, it is crucial to have a clear idea of the future person you want to become.

Your new self-image may be that of a person who is kind and handles situations productively. You will learn to be patient, stable, loving, forgiving, and productive. However, if your self-image remains as it has been, you will probably remain unproductive. There has to be a starting point for your new existence. You must begin to dream and change. Imagine the person you want to be. All the successful people around you have done this and continue to grow each day. Isn't it time for you to join humanity on a mature level and let go of self-hatred and depression?

It will be very difficult to make true amends, which is really a way of describing a complete life change, if you do not have a vision of yourself handling situations differently from the way you have in the past. Don't you want to change the person you documented so thoroughly in your autobiographical accounts? True amends are the expression of your new self-image.

Occasionally our guests have a tendency to put the cart before the horse. It is almost impossible to make true amends to the people we have hurt if we have not made the commitment to stop behaving in immature ways. Building trust is the only way a person we have hurt in our past will come forward and ask for a reconciliation discussion. That is why it is necessary for you to create a new or at least a modified self-image.

To do this you must have a clear vision of the new person you want to be. As an example, it is hard to say "I will no longer have affairs" if you do not have a self-image that is fully committed to marriage. A self-image is a personal mission statement. It states what kind of person you want to be and how you will behave today, tomorrow, and the day after that. It is what enables you to gain trust and thus have productive discussions with those you have harmed in your past. We have discussed maturity and our need for it if happiness and joy are to be a consistent part of our lives. We defined maturity as an individual's ability to adapt and change according to life's circumstances which are always in a state of flux.

Transforming your self-image is pivotal to your progression to happiness. It is a personal choice that you will handle situations in accordance with the five axioms. One of the best examples of a naturally occurring shift in self-image is the drastic changes that oc-

cur in an average person between the ages of 5 and 15. Those changes are radical and happen quite naturally. A 5 year old may carry around a security blanket for comfort, sit on Mom's lap, and play with stuffed animals, while a 15 year old plays baseball, has a part-time job, plays video games, and hangs out with friends at the skateboard park.

Between the ages of 5 and 15, a child matures and changes quite naturally. But as a child grows older changing requires more and more input in the form of conscious choices. Around age 20, maturation occurs through willingness to change and hard work. It is not by natural processes like the changes of early life.

Why should progressing through adulthood be any different? Do 40 year olds handle problems the same way 15 year olds, 20 year olds or even 30 year olds do? Many unhappy adults are shocked by the maturity stagnation that is revealed in their autobiography. They finally see just how their unwillingness to live a purpose-based existence has diminished their quality of life. To stop this pattern, they have to decide who they want to be in the future and how they will accomplish this personal conversion. The question then becomes: Who is the person you want to be?

The Beginning

This is the beginning of your new life. Will you jump in with both feet? Are you willing to let go of childish instant gratification for things that are ultimately much more satisfying? Are you willing to live a purpose-based life? Are you willing to set goals that pull you forward with enthusiasm and regenerative power?

Self-image is characterized by several components. There is your external physical self-image, your internal self-image, and the goals that you set as a way to make your new ideals happen.

Let us begin with the external self-image. An external self-image is fairly straightforward. We present ourselves to the outside world in a certain way. For instance, adolescents tend to be quite preoccupied with their external self-image, more so than later in life when an internal self-image seems to become more important. An adolescent external self-image that is anti-authority for instance can make the statement

that the individual is desperately asserting new-found independence. It may also indicate a fear of being emotionally close to others and a desire to be given space or even to be left alone completely.

Some may project a self-image that is intentionally offensive to others or very pleasing to others. We tend to illustrate with our hair, our hygiene, our clothes, our makeup, etc., certain qualities we want others to see. If our external self-image accurately reflects the way we want to be seen that is, our internal self-image, we then tend to be quite pleased.

Sometimes a person's internal vision of himself is in conflict with his external image. For instance, if a person is obviously obese and wants to be thinner, this conflict in self-images can be unsettling and cause great grief. Sometimes a birth defect or severe medical trauma can create an exterior that cannot be altered or changed to the degree that would satisfy that person's desires. One's internal self-image can help in such physically unchangeable circumstances.

For example, when veterans come home from war disfigured they may find peace by accepting that their physical condition occurred on the battlefield and knowing they sacrificed certain physical attributes for a much greater cause. Veterans can adapt and make their internal self-image match the external one with "I am a war veteran and I am proud of what I have done, despite my disfigurement." And, so they should be.

We have control over our external self-image. Unlike the wounded veteran, most people can modify external self-images and make them match the way they want to present themselves to the world in specific personally satisfying ways. Not only can we change our minds and control our emotions, we get to choose how we look as well.

It is important for you to know what your external self-image is telling the people around you. Sometimes we become so self-involved that we lose sight of the effect we have on others. If our external self-image screams to others that we want to be left alone, but at the same time our internal self-image desires companionship, it is important to know that our external self-image is actually pushing others away. Only when we accurately understand both our internal and external self-images can we change them to better

our lives. Again, you cannot change that which you don't know to change. Are you presenting yourself in a way that says "stay away" or "notice me" or "I hate myself—but please love me" or "I am quite happy, I am open to people and enjoy others?"

Socrates, the great philosopher, is quoted in Plato's *Republic* saying "The unexamined life is not worth living." This entire program is based on self-knowledge and freedom of thought, responsibility, and accountability. The easiest way to change our external self-image for the better and build a bridge between ourselves and the lives of others is to know what is in our hearts.

What motivates you? Are you still focused on instant gratification? If so, your internal self-image as a self-centered person will show through to your external self-image and slowly push others away. If, however, you desire change and have an internal vision of yourself as being inclusive, charitable, and having an active social and career life, then your external self-image should reflect that as well.

Usually your internal self-image directs your external self-image. If you desire to be an active substance abuser (your internal self-image), then your physical image may reflect that in various ways. You may be unkempt and wear dark clothing that states "I am someone who is 'dark' and 'complicated.'" On the other hand, you may be ashamed of your substance use and your external image might be used to hide this fact by being compulsively neat or overly and outwardly proper. Any conflict between your internal and external self-image certainly creates problems. If the disparity between your two self-images is great enough, it can keep you from becoming a happy, stable, relaxed adult. Eventually the facade breaks down and your true selfish internal image comes into full view. How many heavy substance users do you know who seemed to have it all together until they suddenly had a drunken episode that ended with public arrest, an embarrassing family situation, a highly publicized

drunken marital affair, a lost career, or some other terrible problem? These happen when an external self-image catches up with the individual's true more selfish instant gratification-based internal self-image.

Your goals for this chapter are the following:

1. Assess your current external and internal self-images—in other words who are you really? The autobiography analysis should have prompted many thoughts on this subject. Do your internal and external self-images match and are they satisfying to you? Do they produce the life and values you truly desire?
2. Decide if your current self-images are the set of self-images you want as you move forward.
3. If not, develop new self-images based on the values you want to follow in your new life.

Only when we accurately understand both our internal and external self-images can we change them to better our lives.

Another aspect of our external and internal self-images is that both tend to attract like-minded people. Those with antisocial external self-images can still attract others like themselves. Even the punk rock, anti-establishment anarchy movements of the '70s created bonds between those involved. They were desperately flaunting their rugged independence, but the irony is they did it together.

It is nearly impossible to be a true hermit or recluse. Even the most diehard individualists need other people to function. Substance users group together at bars, shooting galleries, and crack houses to keep loneliness at bay. People are often surprised by their own desire for attention and affection when they begin to examine their current self-images. But they are equally surprised at the relative ineffectiveness of the methods they have chosen to get it. That is why people are so open to changing their self-images once they examine them in detail.

So what is your external self-image? Remember, you are what you think about. The questions you must now ask yourself are: “Is my current self-image what I want to take with me into my future? Does it make me happy? When I look at myself in the mirror, do I like what I see? What, if anything, should I change?”

In previous chapters you have learned some things about yourself. You also know about the five axioms, and how your mind and decisions got you to this point. You have written quite a bit about your past behaviors, habits, and problems. You have written about your ability to create a good day and how through the power of choice you can create unhappy ones. You have been shown how maturity and a willingness to change will affect your level of joy. You are beginning to see yourself in a new and very different, yet sometimes, difficult light. You now feel hope for the future.

For many of you, this hope may be the first glimmer in many years of frightful living and multiple failed treatments. Above all else, we hope we have given you the tools for self-awareness and self-examination. The ultimate goal of this program is to show you that you, and only you, have full control and the ability to change and rework any part or even all of your life.

We also want to teach you how to live successfully, leaving no doubt in your mind that the answers for your life are within you. We hope you are learning that at any point you can change direction and move yourself toward greater accomplishment and a better life. At this point you are beginning to realize you are a beautiful person and the key to your happiness lies in finding what you really desire for the long term.

This brings us back to self-image. If you are going to see yourself as a new person, who and what will that new person be? Do you desire to be a professional? Do you want to be an artist? Do you want to be so much more than a publicly-labeled drug addict or drunk? Deep inside, who is it you want to be?

There are so many different aspects to self-image that it would be impossible to explore the subject in its entirety here. You can learn about self-image through knowing how others worked through their transition from low self-esteem to a bright new self-image.

Here is the experience of one of the program’s founders:

This is how I reworked my life through choice and action and gained renewed self-respect.

To begin, I must describe my old internal self-image. I was fiercely independent. I feared conflict, but invited it to prove to the world that I was strong. I was arrogant to cover the fact that I was embarrassed that I had little experience with life. I was lonely and wished for valuable relationships, but had none. I was a master at temporary relationships that were on my terms, only to burn out all those around me. I was uncomfortable with love and loving, as both came with risks that scared me. Most of all, I felt the world was a predominantly cruel place from which I needed to protect myself.

My self-image also carried with it a good work ethic and that, coupled with my independence, kept me functioning on a superficial level. Yet, I never felt as though I gave my abilities a real test and always felt as though I could do so much more with my life. This carried a high price of nearly always feeling like I was a fraud. I was sad and wondered why I was uncomfortable so much of the time.

As for my physical self-image, I was run of the mill. I kept a low profile and was clean cut and well kempt. I presented myself as well as I could under the circumstances and communicated with general competency. I was physically healthy and my external self-image stated rather loudly “I am someone that is reserved and I am not that interested in you, so leave me alone.” Some people would call this snobbish or aloof.

On other occasions my physical self-image might morph into “I am interested in you.” But this self-image was presented typically when I felt quite secure with the person or social situation and believed the risk of rejection to be minimal. Between my reserved nature, lack of self-confidence, and general aggressiveness that I used as a coping strategy, my external self-image left me intensely lonely. Even those people who did come around usually got the message that I was more interested in myself than I was in them.

In summation, my external self-image did not place me in the minority. In other words, I did not

look radically different from the majority of people my age. I could easily get lost in a crowd. I took the safest route, the middle ground of mediocrity. I knew inside that my social and professional abilities could have been much more and that I had settled for mediocrity at best. This thought left me depressed a good deal of the time.

My internal self-image was accurate. I was unhappy and I believed that that was my lot in life. As that is what I believed, that was my reality and that is what I presented to the outside world.

I never knew anything different until I went through this process over 20 years ago. That is when I decided to change. I was given the inspiration through my instructor that everything and anything is possible. This was the beginning of my new self-image. I could do anything I chose to do. This thought began to define me. I am what I think, I would tell myself, and it made sense. I cut my hair, took up jogging, and decided to play the very sports that I used to ridicule. I challenged myself at academics and graduated with highest honors. These choices began to outwardly define me. I decided to see myself as a respectful person, and by fulfilling that self-image with hard work, I became an outwardly confident person. These were all choices followed by actions.

But how did this transformation begin?

I thought of people I admired and a few values and virtues stood out. Everyone I wanted to emulate worked hard and was extremely committed to those around them. There were people from history I wanted to be like. Abraham Lincoln inspired me, as did Theodore Roosevelt. I studied sports figures, famous writers, and other world political figures such as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. I decided to add their values to my roster.

I read the major religious texts and philosophical works from different eras and cultures. Most of all I watched and learned from my father, my aunt, my mom, my two business mentors, and my brothers, all of whom exhibited honest positive lives. I made a list of these people and the values and virtues they adhered to. I cannot say enough about learning from the positive example of others. It can be the starting point for a new life development and also creates a

contrast to one's current possibly negative self-images. I decided who I wanted to be and I work every day to the present to be that person.

My self-image changed from an image of embarrassment and underachievement to one of self-confidence and achievement. I gave respect to others and thus received respect. What I presented to the world reflected back onto me many times over. Most of all, my defining characteristic of loneliness vanished as I learned to truly care for others. This one aspect of my self-image, genuinely caring for others, was so important to me that I made it my top priority. Predictably, I received the benefits of a whole new world. The world had not changed, but I had.

The First Goal

Your first goal is to create your new self-image. Who do you want to become? How would you like to view yourself and how would you like others to see you? This new self-image comes at a price. The price is change. The change required is to mature and become responsible for your past, your present and your future. How will your new internal and external self-images finally converge to set right your past and build self-confidence for your future?

You actually have done some of the work already. You began it with the thought and emotion lists in the earlier chapters. You learned that your perspective and thoughts about life dictate who you are. You then went on to learn about how your thoughts and actions for your entire life created who you are. Now we are suggesting that you use that power of choice to create a new you for the present and future.

Here is a brief example of a new self-image (yours can be as detailed as you want):

- I want to have a stable life with no more chaotic drama.
- I need to change the way I look. Every time I look in the mirror I want to be reminded of my new goals through my updated appearance. I want others to see me differently as well.
- I absolutely do not want to be seen as a "drug addict." I want to be a non-substance user.

- I want to be a person who is productive and looks the part. I want to be an employee that any employer would be proud to hire.
- I want to be a more patient and kind father/mother/spouse/child.
- I want to be honest.
- I want to feel joy.
- I do not want to let my intellectual image stop me from experiencing good relationships. I want to be more approachable, more loving, and much more tolerant.

Based on this example and your autobiographical accounts, you probably have a reasonably good idea of what self-image you might want to build for the future. Spend some time on Lesson 13.1 writing in your notebook all the things that would characterize the person you want to be. Spend enough time to do this thoroughly. The only person you can change is you. If you choose to create a new start for yourself, you will begin a process that can continue for the rest of your life.

This is good news! Part of becoming a fully developed person is the knowledge that you can continue to change and improve according to the circumstances you create and the choices you make. Your new life is yours to create now.

Now, please go to Lesson 13.1 in Life Movements, Workbook 2 and follow the directions there. Do not continue on until you complete Lesson 13.1.

The next few chapters will teach you exactly how to get from this point, which is writing down the person you want to become, to actually becoming that new person. The journey between these two points can be unbelievably exciting and life transforming.

This change is what we have been preparing you for during all the previous chapters. This is the physical and emotional embodiment of making true reparations to ourselves and those we love, and of living the life we had secretly been dreaming about, but believed could never happen. Not only will you achieve your dreams, but you will learn that your initial dreams were just the beginning. So much more awaits you!

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Chapter 14

R

eplacement

Now that you have completed the first 13 chapters and the exercises for each chapter, you should have a general idea of the person you want to become. In this chapter we will help you formulate details of your new image and give you a clear cut path to develop into that new person.

It is now time to build a Thought Process Chart. The Thought Process Chart is made up of three simple columns. In the first column is a listing of negative thoughts, the second column contains neutral thoughts, and the third column is made up of

positive thoughts.

The two outside columns illustrate the two extremes of an individual's thinking. On the left side are the negative, unforgiving, limiting, myopic, selfish, fearful thoughts, and on the right are forgiving, selfless, option-filled thought processes. You may have some additional positive thoughts you want to incorporate into your new life. You should add them to the list in your workbook. The middle list contains average thoughts which are neither positive or negative.

Negative Thoughts	Neutral Thoughts	Positive Thoughts
Unforgiving	Stable	Joyous
Resentful	Apathetic	Giving
Negative	Calm	Honest
Desperate	Mediocre	Loving
Unfulfilled	Semi-content	Tolerant
Fearful	Semi-happy	Content
Unhappy		Happy
Depressed		Courageous
Suicidal		Faithful
Selfish		Fearless
Dishonest		Energetic
Listless		Positive
Unloving		Forgiving

During the process of building a new self-image, keep this chart in mind. If you are trying to improve your life, your new self-image will likely have positive attributes. Although we will be going into great detail on how to create this new life for your future, you can begin to practice these positive thoughts now. It is going to require a tremendous amount of practice to make these thought processes a natural part of your life, so why not start practicing thinking differently right away? This creates the positive neuroplastic changes in the brain that can then fulfill your new self images.

Begin to change your thought patterns so they exhibit the qualities listed in the right hand column of the chart. This column holds extreme honesty, extreme faith, extreme love, and extreme positive thought. In fact, living life according to the values in the right hand column is not all that extreme. It might seem that way to you because you have lived counter to some or maybe all of these values for many years. The truth is the vast majority of people who lead happy and successful lives exhibit positive qualities, regardless of their personal circumstances. They learned early on the benefits of living according to the five axioms, and they received the positive results.

This chapter encourages you to try all of the thoughts set forth in the right-hand column. For example, practicing the principle of kindness to the extreme should be a daily exercise for you now so that kindness can become your neuroplastic norm. This is the point in the process where those who are truly successful and those who remain unsuccessful part ways. This is where people searching for the true meaning of life rise above those stuck in mediocrity and immaturity. This is the point in the program where you can put forth a tangible effort to change and feel immediate results.

Up to now all the lessons have been about you. This includes the autobiographies, positive thought exercises, reflecting on past events, etc. Now you know from the events you wrote in your autobiography and your new self images, what you want to change.

Application

Your goal is to build a more developed, mature

self-image which includes kindness, forgiveness, and a genuine interest in others. Without a dedicated effort to change, everything you have written down and spent time contemplating becomes just another exercise in self-pity designed to keep you wedged right where you are. Remember, your autobiographical accounts are a means to an end: it is removing your past patterns to make room for the new. They served only to identify what to change. Writing, in and of itself, does not change anything. Change requires that you actually do something different.

This is the point in the program when some readers struggle. It is not uncommon for some people to become fairly negative after a few days or weeks of intense self-evaluation. This negativity can lead to personal frustration and anger which may be projected towards the family or others. It is at this point when you may even try to find fault with the program and the CBESM methods. You may become intolerant of others and find that you are irritable. And often this negativity is directed inward as self-hatred or depression. These are common problems and all of this can be resolved if you follow some simple guidelines.

It is essential that you put the negative conversations, the manipulating, and the immature behavior behind you. The goal of this chapter is to help you, no matter how emotionally stable or unstable you may be, to attempt a mature lifestyle on a daily basis. If you are not willing to practice this now, then chances are you will continue to procrastinate and struggle needlessly when you return home. This would be a huge waste of the time and effort you have spent here.

Success

Success with the SJP[®] is achieving your new self-image whatever you have decided that will be. It is practicing the virtues on the right side of the chart because ultimately that is what brings people happiness and success. If you want the most out of life you must work at forgiving all those who have hurt you and practice the principles proposed in the chart.

In spite of everyone's desire for the best, there is one nagging thought: "Why must I live the extreme right of the chart if everyone else who lives a normal,

more mediocre life lives at the center of the chart? I want success, but, I do not want to be held to such high standards.”

First of all, the standards represented in the far right of the chart are not unrealistic or uncommon in society. Just because there are people who dwell at the far left for their entire lives that is no reason for you settle for less than the best. Some of our readers, perhaps many, believe that most people in the world are dishonest and generally out for their own gain, but this is not reality. The truth is most people live relatively mature, stable, and happy lives.

These skewed perceptions come from a limited personal perspective and the law of attraction. The law of attraction states that people move their lives in the direction of their “current most dominant thoughts.” So you attract people and situations that mirror your personal thoughts, attracting the negative when you are negative and the positive when you are positive. It is not surprising that most unhappy people attract those in the same boat. Just go to a bar at 2 a.m. if you want to see the law of attraction at work.

People have a tendency to believe the rest of the world thinks and does as they do. For example, if you hide the truth or are outright dishonest, you believe that others are as well. This is especially true with substance users. That lifestyle attracts like-minded, negative people.

We hope at this point in this process you have opened your mind and broadened your perspective, and decided to strive for something better. It is time to walk out of the shadows into a much bigger and brighter place. Options exist! Attract positivity, first in your mind and then in your actions.

If a self-centered person is going to change and live life at the opposite end of the spectrum, he must work incredibly hard. He must constantly strive to consider the needs of others first and work at this for a significant period of time for positive neuroplastic changes to be built into his brain’s structure. That might mean that he applies the thought processes on the right side of the chart to the extreme until that neuroplastic network is built and readily supports his new thoughts and behaviors.

The period of time this mental training will take is

determined by how quickly you are willing to change and adapt to your new life. For some people this may take a few weeks of practice, while for others may take a few months or a few years. Everyone is different. Some are much more motivated to mature than others. Our hope is that you are willing to change now, so your amended lifestyle is a work in progress. Below is an analogy to help you to better understand the daily training that is required for you to change.

When a top contender in championship boxing is training for a fight, he usually prepares for three to eight months, and sometimes even longer. He will prepare his body and mind for the 12 rounds. The actual fight time is 36 minutes of fierce physical action. The average fighter will throw 65 punches per round, totaling 780 punches.

Over a four-month training period, the fighter trains six to eight hours a day. He will go through massive physical exertion, restricted diets, weight lifting, running, mitt work, sparring, heavy bag work, speed bag work, medicine ball training, and double-end bag work as part of his regimen.

It all adds up to tens of thousands of punches, hundreds of rounds of sparring, and a total lifestyle change. His livelihood and his life depend upon his preparation. When the bell rings for round one, his actions are so ingrained in him, they are automatic; the neuronal pathways are burned in place. His mental capacity has been so well trained that his action is based on instinct and no longer requires conscience thought.

The boxer prepares by over-preparing. His body movements have been honed to their most efficient state because they have to be for him to succeed. His adversary has trained equally hard and for every bout the boxer must be prepared for the fight of his life. To be mediocre in a boxing ring is career-ending and quite possibly, life threatening. Is your situation really any different?

Achieving full adult development and achieving joy in a mature life is no different from training for a boxing match. Living and practicing positive thoughts and actions every single day will support whatever new self-image you have chosen. The key is to be over-prepared to deal with life in a way that you have never

dealt with life before. A boxer does not enter the ring unfamiliar with the basics of training and technique. A person who wants to lead a happy life must learn the extremes of positive thought, forgiveness, action, service, and love, because all of these are the basic ingredients that produce joy.

Like a boxer, who hones his skills to the point of instinct, a person desiring a successful life must display the same dedication. As a selfless lifestyle begins to become intuitive, you will be amending yourself rapidly, instinctively. Remember, you are trying to rebuild trust with those you hurt and become someone new. Your main goal is to achieve consistent joy, and these daily practices are a way to achieve this.

Unfortunately, some of our guests tend to be impatient perfectionists who want the benefits of a successful, joy-filled life without having to do the work. This is immaturity at its worst. If the process isn't easy and instantly satisfying, these people move on to the next most convenient option, i.e. whatever is easiest. That is why some of you may still be attracted to other instantly gratifying activities such as gambling, selfish relationships, drug seeking behavior, affairs, gossip, and attention seeking, to name just a few. Those negative habits and activities divert the mind from the hard work of growing up. We hope you work through this self-based avoidance and have the determination to force yourself into a more positive state of mind. Concentrate on your new self-image every time you feel yourself going for the "quick fix." We can assure you, it is well worth your efforts to complete this process.

Occasionally, one of our readers will come out of the fog, write an autobiography, become shocked and frightened by what they've written and revert back to their quick fix mentality as a means to put off the changes that are necessary for success. Their past seems too troubling, so their habits of living life using the negative side of the chart continue to be an acceptable, although self-limiting, option.

At this point in the process, another all too common occurrence is for the reader who is struggling to engage in negative conversations criticizing family and friends. She convinces herself that her few weeks of sobriety have provided her with insights well beyond those of others who have been, for many years,

successfully living their lives. Some decide that this program is just too fundamental for their superior intellect. They may use this as their excuse to quit, claiming they've got it.

While these people readily agree that others might benefit from the message contained in this program, they are quick to point out that given their advanced intellect, they really don't need the level of detail it provides. Those that do continue may turn their energies to debating the methods herein, justifying their negative attitude as "just playing the devil's advocate." They may also spend hours trying to convert their family and friends to their way of thinking. If you find yourself going down any of these pathways, keep this in mind: true intelligence shows in the results.

The following illustrations depict why your life has been so difficult and why living at the positive side of the chart can build a life of joy.

Stage One

Stage One is your old life, filled with strife, lost resources, tiresome negative habits, and a tremendous effort to force the world and its inhabitants to behave the way you want to fulfill your own selfish ends. The effort required to maintain this is enormous and completely counterproductive. Some examples include lying to get your way, avoiding responsibility, playing the victim, using people to get what you need or want, manipulating others, and trying to force them to change to suit you.

All of these efforts are put forth so you can avoid changing yourself. It's as if you are pushing on a spring that is pushing harder and harder back at you. Holding back the spring of life and its powerful forces is a constant struggle that wears down the body, the mind and the spirit. This stage defines the actively self-centered.

Stage Two A

Stage Two is equally difficult, but productive rather than counterproductive. The spring of life is designed to move in a positive, "axiom-centered" direction. In the initial stages of personal progress, such as writing

your autobiography and creating a new self-image, the spring pushes you away from your negative life in a much more positive direction. Positive options, new thoughts, and possibilities begin to appear. When you are working with the spring's power rather than against it, your progress is rapid. This typically happens during the first few weeks. Many guests say they experience an almost euphoric relief and sense of hope.

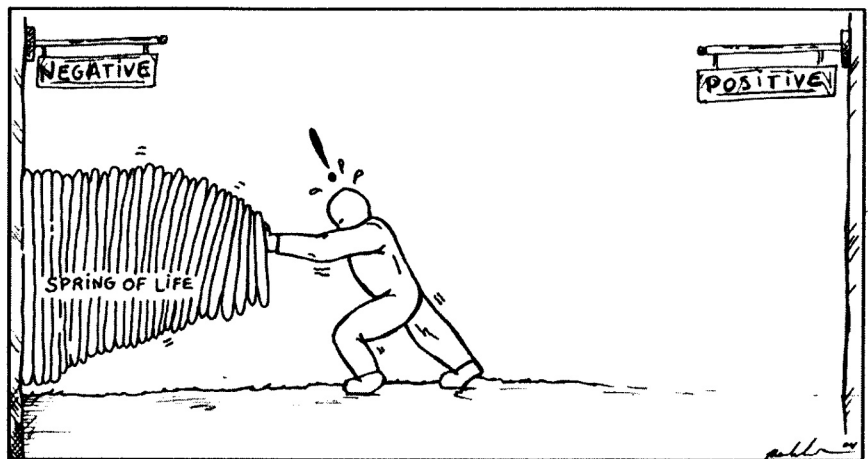
Then the spring's pushing power lessens and progress may slow a bit. You have finished your autobiographical accounts and are beginning the processes of building a plan for your future and attempting to redirect yourself by achieving your first set of goals. As the dramatic maturing process continues, you are now pulling the spring of life trying to achieve difficult goals, to create new family and career options, and overcome personal troubles and challenges.

You have begun to live with the natural axioms and the right hand column of the values chart. It takes responsibility and hard work to make this an instinctive way of life but when you do it will bring immense joy. You are growing in emotional and physical well being and creating the resultant neuroplastic brain changes that will help support your new behaviors.

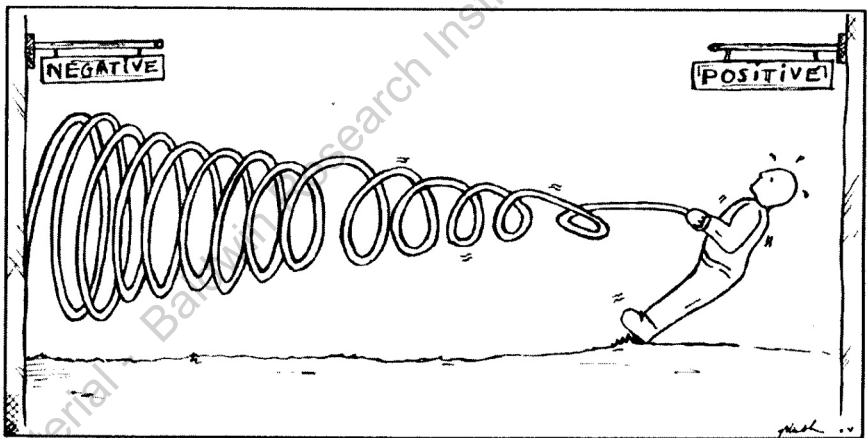
This is your purpose in life, to make choices and act on those choices with free will. Life should be molded into the images of a person's aspirations and goals. When you pull life in a selfless direction, the spring stretches and its resistance lessens with time.

Stage Two B

But if you once again use your efforts to push on the spring, as sometimes happens when you begin to feel



Stage One



Stage Two A

uncomfortable or frightened, you will feel increased resistance because you will be pushing counter to the axioms. Here is an example of this counterproductive process. If you made a strong start in the SJP®, you have written your autobiography and have begun to amend your life through the goal-setting process and are making true reparations to your family, friends, and co-workers. Then after all of this work, you make the decision, as you have so many times before in your life, to get involved in a selfish relationship supporting your instant gratification habit. Because others close to you are familiar with this pattern, you may lie to them, and you begin to feel that sense of emptiness that always results from your self-limiting choices.

Once you go down a path of maturity, development, and happiness, it becomes increasingly difficult and uncomfortable to push back the spring of

life and return to your previous selfish ways. Wonderful feelings come with success. The farther you stretch the spring to the right, the more difficult it is to push it back in the other direction. Maturity, option-based living, once learned and firmly established, is impossible to forget and very difficult to abandon. This is especially true once you have created the supportive neuronal networks in the brain.

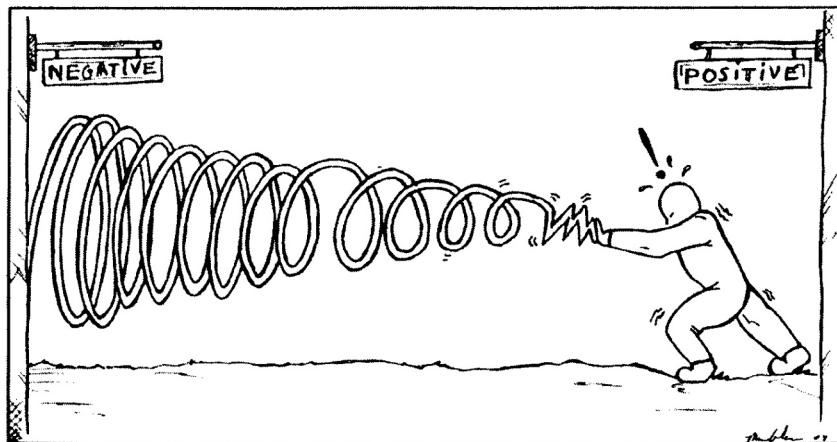
Choice and free will allow you to choose to live the same way you did before starting this program. We hope you do not go down that path. It is much more satisfying to sit down to dinner with the rest of humanity, than to take the shortcuts and survive on the scraps of brief happiness.

When you amend yourself, you gain strength and move closer and closer to happiness and prosperity. At the end of this chapter there are lessons that can enable you to begin stretching the spring.

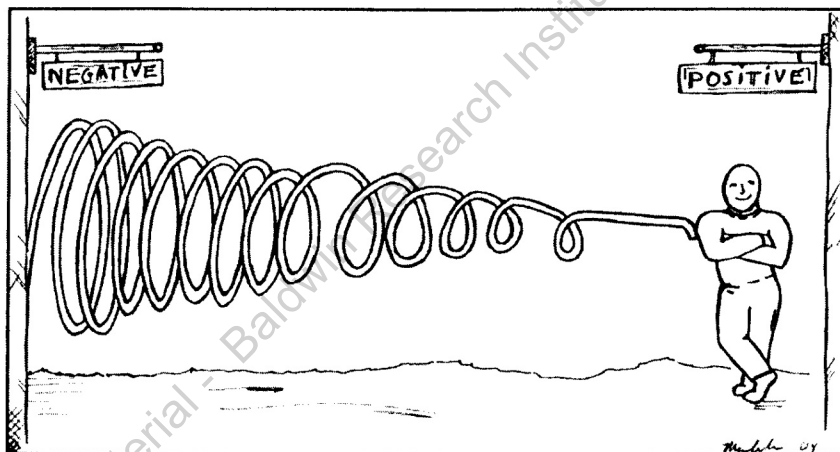
Stage Three

Stage Three is the best stage of all. This is the stage in which your hard work, learning, and training in positive values and actions pays off. This stage usually occurs after you have completed your first round of personal goals and reunited yourself with humanity when you return home.

This chapter is about building positive daily habits. The remaining chapters deal with long-term planning and defining your daily goals. With enough practice you will be able to handle difficult situations with ease. Happiness will be a daily companion. You will intuitively know how to get the best out of every day. This brings even more happiness. You realize the world is there for your pleasure and positive pur-



Stage Two B



Stage Three

pose, and that giving to others directly benefits you.

If you want the spring of life to be stretched to the point where it can actually support you, you must begin practicing the right column of the Thought Process Chart today. If you are ready to begin the actual maturing process we encourage you to follow the directions below.

A Lesson for Life

Complete Lesson 14.1 in Life Movements, Workbook 2 before moving on in the program.

You will gain tremendous strength by practicing Lesson 14.1. When you practice selflessness, forgiveness, honesty, good motives, and love, you construct your new spirit. Make these principles habit and they

will never be lost to you. Once neuroplastic changes have occurred, then with added repetitive practice, the old neuronal pathways die from being idle. This is the science of personal change!

Research

All humans, no matter how frightened or angry, want the same things. From 1999 through 2005, Baldwin Research Institute conducted a small unofficial survey at our residential retreat houses. During a seminar, the seminar leader asked each of the attendees to write down any complaint they might have about the program, others guests in the program, the staff, etc. Each guest was given a few moments to write down their complaints and hand them in anonymously. Once collected, the seminar leader openly read the contents of the anonymous complaints.

What we found was quite illuminating. Nearly every complaint was on the exact same theme. The common quotes were: “I just want people to respect me,” “I want my roommates to be more considerate of bedtimes and my space,” “I want the loneliness to go away,” “I want more to do,” I want, I want, I want...

No one wrote “I wish I had more opportunities to give respect” or “I wish I had more opportunities to be a more considerate friend to my roommates” or “I wish I could give every guest a feeling of greater value and respect” or “I wish I knew how to help my roommate who is going through a tough time.”

Nearly everyone wrote about not getting something he wanted for himself. Because everyone was actively looking to take, no one was getting what he or she wanted or needed. Each and every guest was taking and wishing for more. This survey was conducted 18 separate times throughout the year with the exact same results.

What if every person who wanted more respect, consideration, or space actually gave it to others? Of course, everyone would receive more respect and consideration! Does this mean that it's possible that everyone can be happy and live in harmony all of the time? Actually, it does. If you find yourself struggling as you are trying to change your life, take a step back and ask yourself, “Am I ready to give respect as a way

to gain it?” This may take blind faith at first, which means that you are going to have to give without expecting anything back. Initially you may not get the respect you are hoping for back, but you will gain self-respect through the process.

Chart Your Days

In order to move forward you must assess your current thought patterns. Some people do a poor job on their autobiographies and then kid themselves into believing they deserve the best results possible. This next exercise is a test to see how thorough you have been. This is to ensure the necessary neuroplastic conversion will occur.

In Lesson 14.1 you were asked to practice the values of the positive column of your Thought Process Chart. Think of this process as the day you separated your past from your present and future. If you work hard at being more positive, you will discover just how negative you have been. It will become clear where you have been a “taker,” when you contrast with your current efforts to be a positive “contributor.” Remember, to give is to receive. It is important to judge yourself by the standard of observing time spent thinking of others and moving towards positive goals. Assess how much of your day is spent applying the principles from the far right column of the chart.

Lesson 14.2

In Lesson 14.2, you will rate how successful you have been at following the values listed in the right hand column of the Thought Process Chart. We recommend that you do this at the end of each day for a period of 14 days.

Go to Lesson 14.2 in your workbook now and follow the directions. After you have completed Lesson 14.2 you can continue with the text, you do not have to wait the 14 days to continue. This particular lesson is based on reviewing daily performance, and can be done at the end of each day before bedtime.

After the entire day is rated, review and meditate on your personal performance. Ask yourself if your day re-

flected your definition of a successful life. Are you satisfied that you are a changed person? Remember, you are what you think. What were you thinking today?

If your answer does not match your new self-image, resolve to make a better attempt the next day. If you find that your thoughts are as self-centered as when you began, start over the following day. Do not be discouraged. Never forget that those fail are those who stop trying altogether. To the contrary those who keep trying always succeed, and anyone can succeed as long as he is willing to keep trying. Things that come easy usually don't have much value. Lasting happiness has infinite value but, takes hard work to attain.

Examine the right column of the Thought Process Chart, apply those values and thoughts in your life, look to be a force for goodness and to do service for the people around you, and rate your thoughts and actions each day. Then, each night think about how your new thoughts and actions match, or do not match, your new internal and external self-images. Spend each day matching your new thoughts and actions to your desired self-image. Make your desired self-image a reality. Now it is time to begin creating more detailed long-term goals.

Take some time now to review and answer the questions in your workbook for Chapter 14.

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Chapter 15

Life Movements, Happiness Lists

What Makes You Happy?

You've been encouraged to begin the process of amending yourself through concentrating on your choices and behaviors, thus building new positive daily habits. However, there is much more that needs to be done. Your new habits are just the beginning.

These new thought processes will be difficult to sustain unless you force yourself to think and act outside of your emotional, physical, and spiritual comfort zones. That is why we will be spending the next four chapters teaching you how to think differently, and how to build a new set of positive, very specific life goals. These goals will pertain to all areas of your life.

Thinking differently, as the positive column of the Thought Process Chart describes, will support all the new goals you will be setting in the subsequent chapters. To set new goals without developing a new and much more positive attitude would be a waste of time. That is why it is crucial for you to begin the process of building positive thoughts and actions now.

It's not enough to change your present daily thoughts and actions, you must also build a plan for the long term. A positive long-term plan is essential for supporting your new amended self-images. Below are three sets of objectives for sustained happiness and mature prosperous living:

Objective 1: Continue living daily according to the positive side of the Thought Process Chart. This

should become a habit for the remainder of your life as it will support all the other goals you create.

Objective 2: Build a series of other very specific daily goals and long-term goals. These should deal with career, family, spiritual, physical, sexual, and emotional areas of your life.

Objective 3: Build positive, mature relationships. Combining Objectives 1 and 2 will create the trust that may be currently missing in your relationships. The idea is to become mature, stable, and happy. These positive changes will be noticed by the people around you, and true amends will occur quite naturally. People will see you really are a different person and over time will become less concerned about you continuing your hurtful behavior. The risks of a reconciliation discussion will be perceived to be minimal, giving them a desire to patch things up. Fixing your past poor behaviors can only occur if objectives 1 and 2 are completed with commitment, integrity, empathy, and positively driven motives.

Your Future

We are here to tell you that your future is created by you. So, by all means, plan for the best and expect the best. The future is in your heart, your conscience, and your mind. No matter what you may have thought in the past, now you have the strength and courage

to master your fears. This mastery will bring radiance to your darkened world. You now know that you are supposed to love and be loved. You were created as a beautiful person, so whatever habits you learned that hid that beauty can now be reversed. People who learn racism can learn to be humanitarians, those who were abused are not doomed to abuse. Those who live in fear can learn to live with confidence and those who are tired and frustrated can learn to live with enthusiasm and optimism. You were, and are, meant to be free and happy. Peace is inside of you. It may be hidden behind temporary self-limiting thoughts and fears, but this can all change!

From this point forward, it is essential you rate your days and measure your changes in attitudes. We hope you are seriously driven to succeed and to feel joy and inspiration through commitment, hard work, and accomplishment.

If you feel stuck in depression and apathy has become a serious problem, we encourage you to go through the motions and follow the instructions as written in the last few chapters. You may be one of those people who must act before feeling a sense of change. Rest assured that with persistence the positive feelings will follow. It is like the soldier who is terrified to move forward on the battlefield, but knows he must or will be killed. He is scared, but the alternative is far more frightening.

Sometimes you must blindly, faithfully, courageously shake yourself loose and move forward even though your old emotional being is telling you to stay frozen in fear. Somewhere in this process you will have an epiphany, a moment of clarity, and the fear of responsibility will fade. Your new insight will give inspiration to pull yourself out of your depression. The key is to just keep trying no matter what!

Let's Get Started and Build the Future Together!

"Man is a goal seeking animal. His life only has meaning if he is reaching out and striving for his goals."

Aristotle

"You control your future, your destiny. What you think about comes about. By recording your dreams and goals on paper, you set in motion the process of becoming the person you most want to be."

Mark Victor Hansen, Chicken Soup for the Soul

What Makes You Happy?

In order to change and mature effectively a person must first know what makes him happy. For the purposes of this program, this may initially be difficult to determine. Most drug and/or alcohol users do not have any idea what would, or could, really make them happy in the long term. Perhaps you have spent most of your time doing things that are expedient, that produce short-term relief or pleasure. These habits became your perceived happiness.

But pleasure, by its very nature, is fleeting. While it certainly is a form of happiness, its effects are so temporary that you continuously need more and more of it to sustain any level of long-term satisfaction. Research has shown that the brain is actually designed to shut down pleasure and limit its effects. If you eat a piece of candy, the first bite is the best. By the end of a full bar of chocolate the brain has already limited the pleasurable effects. This is true of all pleasurable activities in life, whether it is sex, food, gambling, heroin, alcohol, etc.

In addition to having a fixation on instant gratification and pleasure, you may have spent much of your life being self-centered and fearful so you have absolutely no idea what could bring long-term happiness. This process is designed to help you discover the activities, goals, events, relationships, and things that will truly bring you sustainable satisfaction and fulfillment.

Purpose and Drive

Living a life of purpose may not be immediately pleasurable, nor is it always easy and comfortable. But having a purpose does guarantee positive personal development and sustainable stability. Purpose is the

foundation of a positive human experience. The Buddhists have a saying, “Life is duty; duty is happiness.” As individuals grow and come to understand that pleasures are fleeting, there is a natural tendency to search for greater personal purpose. This self-examination usually happens during adolescence and early adulthood. However, some people focus on pleasure with all their resources, only to find emptiness and a need for newer more intense pleasures to take the place of the previous faded versions. Pleasure is not the cake of life, it is the frosting on the cake of purpose. Without purpose, people are left with a bottomless bowl of candy to eat, the first piece of which is the only real satisfying one.

As you embark on the next personal exercise, the Happiness Lists, we hope you will look for purpose behind what could make you happy. Please understand, we are not opposed to pleasure, and as a matter of fact, pleasure is one of the intrinsic values of life. But it only goes so far if it isn’t accompanied by a greater sense of spiritual depth and sustainability.

In your workbook you will begin making several different happiness lists. These lists will describe all of the different activities and things that can, and do, make you happy. Each listed category will cover different areas of your life. Building your happiness lists should be exciting and enlightening. Many people feel guilt whenever they allow themselves happiness. We live in a society that sends the message that happiness is for others, the glamorous, the rich, but that average people have to be serious and toil in a life that is perpetually difficult.

Author Mark Schéeren remembers, “As a child, I was taught that life is a struggle. If you endure enough strife, and prove to God that you too are willing to bear the cross of life’s hardships, you will get a ticket to heaven when it’s all over. I now know that, yes, there are natural human challenges and even tragedies in life, but I also learned as I grew older and met successful people that happiness and fulfillment are the driving motivations that endure rather than the fear-based nonsense I grew up with.”

Building a positive quality of life demands work. Those who believe in a passive existence think that theirs is the easy life, in which they have little con-

trol over circumstances. Paradoxically this results in a very difficult life. Nothing is free. You cannot eat without earning the food you need to survive. Even the homeless must work. They need to find shelter and they need to find the soup kitchens to survive. One must ask why not take all that effort and put it into productive living that has a much greater return on investment.

Everyone faces challenges, and is forced to adapt to life’s continuing changing landscape. Sickness and human tragedy exist as part of life, but most people plan and overcome adversity, rather than succumbing to it.

In an international study of 40 countries, citizens were polled regarding their respective levels of life satisfaction. In countries where the gross national income per person was above \$8,000 the happiness level of its citizens did not vary more than two points (on a scale of 1 to 10.) This tells us something about people and what makes them happy. Those who were in less affluent countries such as Brazil and Chile, but still over the \$8,000 per person level, reported results similar to those from more affluent nations, such as the United States, Denmark, and Switzerland. It is clear then that satisfaction is not always dependent on money or even political circumstances, but rather on how people react to economic and political circumstances (Seligman, 2002).

The study also demonstrated that even in countries considered oppressive, the citizens were able to make the best of it and responded to the poll as quite satisfied when compared to more liberated countries. Interestingly, the countries with the lowest financial resources, lower than \$8,000, did not end up lowest on the scale of life satisfaction. One of the poorest nations, Nigeria, was within 1.77 points of the highest ranked, Switzerland, for life satisfaction. Paradoxically, Japan, one of the highest financially ranked countries in the world was .06 points less than Nigeria! Life satisfaction it seems is based on cultural and personal belief systems, not on circumstances many of which may be out of your direct control. With this said, it is important to look at how you react to the world around you and also why you think the way you do.

Influencing a child’s mind with guilt and a belief

that happiness can only be achieved through pain is likely to produce an adult who will attach anything positive to something equally emotionally painful, e.g. marriages filled with bright moments, but equally shot through with painful arguments or careers with promising beginnings stifled by self-sabotaging poor performance.

How many people in the world believe they should live in emotional pain because that's what they were taught? Why do people accept pain as normal? It is because they believe in it. They believe that is what they deserve. If you struggle with this belief, it is time to put these self-images to rest and demand more from life. Do not be one who believes unhappiness is the norm. Become someone who believes in your power to create happiness in your life and in the lives of others.

Mark Scheeren states, "After I was told that life is a struggle, I spent the next six years hating God, hating religion, and needlessly trying to buck the system by proving that living by instant gratification had to be better than any crosses I was supposed to bear. As I grew older and wiser I met enough good people in my small world that I learned that living as a bitter lonesome kid with a chip on my shoulder was painful.

"So I chose a better path. I saw that I did not have to live with guilt, nor did I have to be a slave to instant gratification. I could choose to be responsible for my own happiness and I could choose to work hard for my happiness. And, I discovered that merely the act of working for happiness, created it. I accepted these values and like billions across the planet, found satisfaction in my daily routines. I had accepted that 'Life is duty, and duty is happiness.' This one statement brought my life out of the cellar. I was encouraged by the idea that I get to pick the duty."

By allowing yourself to let go of guilt and to dream, you can decide to be happy. If you struggle with guilt because of a traditional religious upbringing or if your faith is important to you but you still struggle with guilt, think about this: God created you so He could experience happiness through you. If you are not a believer in God, simply believe in happiness over misery. Dedicate yourself to finding happiness in your life by bringing it to others. Isn't it much more pleasant to feel good than to feel bad? Isn't that what

you want for yourself and your family?

People have emotional gauges within them. Your happiness gauge measures how close you are to recognizing the personal strength within you and how well you are using your natural talents. Each person has certain mental and physical attributes. These should be used to build the person you would like to become. Use these talents to pursue your purpose in life, to create, in whatever form you see fit, anything that betters you and those around you. Aren't you worth giving yourself the best? By giving yourself this gift, you can share that benefit, making others feel just as valuable and loved.

Some people believe in a grand plan or destiny and at times they find comfort in this, but other times the concept can be crippling. The truth is there is no grand plan, you get to write the script. You are the author and director of your own life. Whether you believe your abilities are from God or just happened, it is completely up to you to use them as you see fit. That is the beauty of free will.

Dreams: A Starting Point

Dreaming of a better mousetrap, better relationships, a more lucrative and satisfying career, or a better tomorrow is the basis of all human progress. You can think, imagine, and fantasize that which was never thought before. This is why you are alive, to co-create the universe. What power! What an exciting prospect.

Becoming happy and prosperous involves allowing yourself to dream. Life without dreams is empty. It is dreaming that allows the Spirit from within to talk to you. The key is to imagine your life in better and more exciting circumstances. Without a vision, you cannot create the actions necessary to change your current state of affairs. It is not by accident that people's minds, emotions, and bodies get stronger the more they use them productively. The more often you summon your dreams, the stronger your drive to attain your goals will become, and the more exciting your life will be.

Dreams have no boundaries. Each dream is uniquely yours and can be whatever you choose. Imagine hav-

ing your life just the way you want it. Imagine your life filled with what makes you happy. Then imagine and visualize in your dreams that you are achieving success after success. Pay close attention to these dreams. Visualize how happy your successes have made you. By dreaming, you have begun to set in motion the law of attraction. The simple truth is that you bring about what you think about most.

Of course there are risks associated with dreaming. After all, what if you dream and then fail? You may find that your talents are not in the areas necessary to make your dream come true. You might take the risk of loving others and get hurt by their actions. You may be let down.

Consider this: Don't people experience more emotional pain if they do not allow themselves to dream? Without dreams you have no vision of the future; no real reason to exist. Your life drifts by in an endless succession of meaningless days until finally you wonder where your life has gone and what it meant. Don't let this happen! Everyone in the world lives under the same set of axioms, so no one is exempt from opportunities. The world is designed for your talents to be exercised! Dream in the unlimited.

When you begin to write your happiness lists in Lesson 15.1 you will do so imagining what would make you happy if you had unlimited money, unlimited time, and unlimited resources. This unlimited view is important. It helps you begin to dismantle your preconceived negative view that you cannot obtain what you want in life. Once again, you will be encouraged to work a somewhat extreme form of the exercise first. Thinking about your potential happiness, you want to begin by imagining what you could have in life if you had no limitations. This extreme viewpoint goes against the old belief that you are not worth happiness and fulfillment and will begin to blow apart your preconceived negative attitudes that life is a gloomy, fate-driven existence. If you allow yourself this unlimited view, an internal creative force is jump started.

Enjoy the Process

You have spent a lot of time in this program analyz-

ing the past in great detail. We assured you this was a means to an end. Now it is time to have some fun. We live in a culture that views substance use and poor choices as irreversible life sentences. We have told you this view is completely wrong. Now allow yourself to grow and truly experience what life was meant to be! Do not listen to anyone who says you must limit yourself. It is time to get started on your new life!

For Exercise 15.1 in Life Movements, Workbook 2 you will dream with limitless boundaries and think about what would truly makes you most happy in life. What would you like to gain or achieve if you had no limitations?

This exercise is split into the following categories: spiritual, emotional, physical, sexual/relationship, material, financial, family, social, career, and miscellaneous. Under each of these categories ask yourself what you feel needs to change to bring you a happier future. Do not limit the things you desire. Write them all. Have fun and be self-indulgent. This is one of the rare times in this program where self-indulgence is encouraged, so go for it!

A person can easily convince himself or herself of many things that are not true. When you look over your lists, make sure you are allowing yourself to dream. Do not write things you think you should be writing down or that you think others want to hear. Remember, only you are reading this. During this exercise do not be embarrassed to write what you really want. This honesty is necessary if any improvements are to be made. If you do not have the courage to admit what it is you really want out of life, how can you begin to work toward it?

If you find the idea of this exercise difficult because you are unsure of what makes you happy or what might make you happy in the future, you can begin by writing what you think will make you happy. Actually, most people start in this indirect way. The process of attaining goals and finding your talents and inner purpose is usually a process of elimination. Set goals based on what you think will make you happy, and then attempt to attain them. You may find that as many as eight out of ten are things that really don't contribute to your happiness. This is completely normal.

This process of elimination will be worked out

over a period of months and sometimes years after you complete your first version of your lists. Nevertheless, you will be living your new lifestyle. That is why it is so important to have a clear understanding about setting goals. You will be revising the happiness and goals lists constantly as you discover more about your likes and dislikes. This is like a story about Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb.

Once during an interview, Mr. Edison was asked, “You have tried to make hundreds of metals glow in this thing called the light bulb, and none have worked. Are you getting discouraged by these failures?”

Mr. Edison replied, “Failures? I have not failed at anything. I have succeeded in finding more than 6000 metals that do not work, bringing me that much closer to the one that will.”

This is exactly how goals and personal purpose work. Finding your way through life is just a series of attempts at goals. The majority will not satisfy you, but those that do are like the light created by Mr. Edison,

they change the future forever.

That is the difference between failures and successes: one group quit trying before they found the things in life that do satisfy and bring them joy while the others who do not quit eventually discover it. Do not be discouraged as you make your way through this process. Allow yourself to dream. Simply write down the first ideas that come to your mind, even if they seem ridiculous. Get excited and have fun. This is the beginning of building a happy future.

Now, go to Lesson 15.1 and follow the directions. Do not continue on until you have completed Lesson 15.1.

You should have found the examples helpful. Your primary objective is to write courageously about what it is you love, and what you might change to make yourself happier. In the next chapter you will learn how to reorganize these random lists into two classifications: daily goals and long-term goals. Your plan for a new life is beginning!

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Chapter 16



Goals: This one word generates all sorts of ideas and emotions, some of them negative. For those who have struggled with achieving goals in the past, this term may be associated with anxiety, self-pity, and self-loathing. Those who have struggled with goals should explore this term to ease their natural anxiety.

Many of our guests have tried a variety of self-help and inspirational methods to turn their lives around. Unfortunately, many found little relief or success with such attempts. Because of this pattern of failure, they may have become skeptical or cynical about goals and goal-setting. Some of you may have felt you were at fault, others may feel that the programs failed them. Either way, goal-setting is the best way to find purpose in one's life. The method outlined here is quite direct and if you follow it point by point, you will have a life plan that will bring about a joyful existence.

What is Joy?

Joy is different from happiness. Happiness is a feeling that life is good. It's the idea that whatever activity you are doing is working for you. Joy is much deeper. It is a profound sense of goodness, a sense that all is well, and that there is an intrinsic goodness in the world. It is the ultimate human emotional experience. Joy is the next level of happiness that brings people closer to Transcendent Love and peace, which is the highest spiritual level.

Joy can be described as the feeling one has wit-

nessing their child being born or watching that child sleeping peacefully. It is that natural excitement you feel when you fall deeply in love. It is what we feel watching a loved one gain victory after a long battle with cancer or finally receiving a Ph.D. after years of hard work. It is the sensation that engulfs a person who is doing something he truly loves to do. It is as close to Transcendent Love as the human condition can produce.

Joy is a feeling, yes, but it also carries with it a quality much larger and more beautiful than those you normally experience. True joy is indescribable. Joy is living in co-created harmony with the universe.

Bridging the Gap

The question is how to go from being a lost soul filled with a deep sense of failure and disillusionment to a person who lives in joy?

Joy-filled lives are not the result of good fortune or luck; they are the end result of a choice to be happy. It is now time to take responsibility for your happiness; it is time to grow up. Waiting for others to change to fit into your views has never worked in the past, so why not look for a better way? This change will take effort, and for some, maybe a considerable amount.

The main goal in your new life will be to serve your fellow human in some capacity every day. The famous motivational speaker, Earl Nightingale, said, "Treat every person you meet as if they are the most impor-

tant person in the world and see what happens.” Without this attitude, all the work in this program will be useless and your discontent will remain. It may seem contradictory to you now, but it is crucial that you begin to understand that your happiness will depend on this idea: my first priority must be to the people I will be helping today and in the future. With this as your foundation for happiness, the rest of your goals will be attained. It is crucial to understand there is goodness inside every person you meet, and that you must treat each person as the most important person in the world.

This is a variation on the values presented in the positive column of the Thought Process Chart. Notice how often this is mentioned. They are constant reminders to keep you moving in this new positive direction.

We all know of people who have done amazing things with their lives. There are countless stories of people beating the odds: poor kids who become hard-working millionaires, handicapped or sick people who overcome their afflictions and achieve their dreams. The immense successes of Dr. Stephen Hawking or Helen Keller are testaments to these ideas. Any hardships or handicaps you may have to overcome pale in comparison. It is time now to discard all your excuses for failure and begin living your dreams.

Goals

Goals can truly change your life, which in turn can change the world. Goals give people the drive that propels them through hard times. When a person has a goal he is passionate about, an internal fire powers that person through whatever life throws at him. Nothing in the physical world can stop a person’s spirit, especially if he is driven to succeed. A goal is the endpoint of a personal vision. With this in sight, the process becomes extremely efficient and focused. Your internal compass will guide you through the rough terrain that will exist along the way. The world’s future lies in the dreams of those who have the courage and tenacity to make their dreams come true.

Imagine you are on a ship with a clear destination. You know the course to follow, you know there will be

safety and prosperity in the harbor, but storms, tides, and powerful currents are going to be a factor during your trip. You have been at sea for many months, and you are looking forward to receiving payment for your cargo. Your instruments, provisions, and preparations all make it possible for you to get to the harbor a thousand miles away. You have a precise goal, the harbor, and you have a detailed plan that will take you there.

While out at sea a storm hits, but you are prepared; you keep your rudder pointed in the right direction, and your course remains true. You are now 800 miles from safe harbor. You know this portion of the trip is fraught with dangerous currents, but your detailed plan and goal helps you to stay on course. Next you encounter calm seas and pleasant weather. Only 300 miles left. This good fortune lasts for just 100 miles then without warning your rudder fails to respond. Now, without the rudder your ship is blown about aimlessly, but once again you are prepared. As all good captains do, you foresaw the potential danger of equipment failure and stocked the ship prior to leaving port with all the necessary tools and parts to make repairs. Thanks to your careful planning and dedication the ship is fixed and once again you are back under way.

Your last 200 miles go by flawlessly and you finally reach your destination. You were able to overcome each day’s trials because you were able to see beyond them. Faith in your goal was the force behind your success. Not only did you get to your destination, but you got through each challenge with confidence and poise. Your vision remained clear, although the path was not.

Many times the long road to a worthy goal is not properly lit and bumps in the road can be hidden and troublesome. That is why the endpoint in the road must remain lit in your mind. You must envision the end as if it were right in front of you. This will create the light that is vital. Often your resources can be stretched to the limit, but what force can stop you?

Poor circumstances, misfortune, and temporary setbacks cannot stop a human spirit driven by commitment and fueled by passion. As an old priest used to say, “Pray and move your feet! God isn’t going to do it for you. He is waiting for you to do it for Him!”

Notice, in the boat example, that the destination was never compromised. The captain's thoughts never wavered. He knew where he was going and how he planned to get there. Without a clearly defined destination there would have been no reason to keep the rudder steady. Had the rudder wavered, the ship would not have stayed the course. People's lives are no different. With no destination, no new self-images to focus on, there is no direction. This is precisely why people avoid writing down goals or a new set of self-images, because then they become responsible for the work necessary to achieve them. Guests who choose not to write clearly defined goals will continue to be tossed around by life's circumstances. He or she will remain a victim of life's inherent randomness and apparent cruelty.

Without written goals each passing day can be purposeless. Those existing in a life with no destination or goals, usually end up in places they do not want to be. They are perpetual victims. You will hear people in this position often lamenting about their misfortune, and how badly they are treated by the world and the people in it. These are the people who continue to compound one poor decision with another, and move from one unhappy relationship to another, one unfulfilling job to another, or one serious health problem to another. Often their reactions to their apparent hard luck become just as chaotic as the situations in which they find themselves, making matters even worse. It is important to remember that bad things consistently happen to people who refuse to plan for good things. Take advantage of the time you have here, so you can feel confident as you return home.

Case in point: many heavy substance users complain that life has treated them poorly; yet, most have brought that negativity into their lives through their own choices and actions. When life is left to random chance and expectations are set to the negative there is a very high probability that bad things will happen. Without a well defined plan for the future, people cannot know where they are going. They have no plan beyond getting their next high or drink. Because they do not believe in the future, their future seems out of their control. In fact what they are truly doing is avoiding the maturing process. They are not taking

responsibility for their lives which would require making a decision to stop destructive behaviors. They fail to draw a line, to take control of their lives, to analyze the outcome of poor choices and actions, and to write down new and better options. Once an option is written it begins to have power.

Goals empower people to be exactly who and what they want to become. This is why you spent the time writing down and analyzing who you want to become in your new self-images. A goal worked at with persistence and commitment will always be achieved. It is the nature of human beings to achieve goals.

There will be many supporting goals that will transform you from your current counterproductive self-images to the new productive ones. Here is the rub: you need to know whether or not you have a personal passion to fulfill your goals. In the case of substance users, their passion is alcohol and/or drugs. This wasteful passion must be converted into a new worthy, passion-driven set of goals. Alcohol and drugs are not the only past goals substance users worked toward. Any activity that had a quick payoff with minimal effort always attracts the immature. We hope you are now willing to look beyond your immediate circumstances and dream toward the future. Whatever goals you list, each must be examined thoroughly by you to determine if it is worthy.

A worthy goal is one that harms no one and helps bring about happiness or positive emotion to anyone touched by the goal or touched by the process of attaining the goal. It must also be motivated by passion, not only for the goal itself, but for the activities required to achieve the goal. Without passion for your goals, the tumultuous seas of life may overcome you, and your fears will stop you from reaching your destination. To determine what is a worthy goal does not take a tremendous amount of thought or time. It would be tragic to get this far in the process only to create goals that are contrary to the axioms. The first exercise in the next chapter will provide all the guidance you will need to proceed.

Please go to Life Movements, Workbook 2 and answer the questions listed for Chapter 16 prior to continuing with the program.

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Chapter 17

Life Movements, Talent Assessments

The information presented in this chapter is designed to begin the process of converting the raw material of the happiness list items into an actual plan that will change who you are as a person. In order to convert your random lists into a set of short- and long-term goals, you can start by examining your natural talents. Your finished goals lists will be your plan for achieving success and purpose-driven change. For this to happen, you must first use the raw material in your new happiness lists. Let us now take the time to help you to find the talents that can support the items you wrote in the happiness lists. You will then complete your life plan in through the remaining chapters and exercises in *Life Movements, Workbook 2*.

Once you write down and reflect on your happiness lists, a natural internal dialogue begins. You have written what you believe will make you happy as well as the things you need to change to improve your life. When the lists are complete, it is not unusual to feel a bit overwhelmed and somewhat confused. For some people the overwhelming feeling is created by the sheer number of things that need changing. As uncomfortable as the feeling may be for you, the feeling itself can be an important motivator.

Most of what you have written, prior to the happiness lists, in your autobiographical accounts consists of the activities, behaviors, and habits you will need to leave behind to achieve the greater purpose you seek. But often our readers find that items that were identified in their autobiography as requiring change also

show up the same way in their happiness list. For example, in their autobiographies drug and alcohol use may have been a problem. Then, in their happiness lists stopping the use of drugs and alcohol may be listed as something that would make them happy. Eliminating counterproductive activities from your life creates happiness, so it is not surprising that changing or eliminating poor habits makes the list. We hope you were also able to dream about new and exciting future activities. Your lists will become the raw material you will use to build your future plan.

Talents and Fears

The happiness lists not only identify what makes you happy, they also help you define who you are. First, the happiness lists begin to point out what innate talents you have. For instance if in your career happiness list you wrote, "I want a job that I love, and that inspires me even through tough times. I want a job that will challenge my enthusiasm, my love for management, and my computer skills." This particular example demonstrates that the individual may have natural skills in personnel management duties and computer related tasks.

The happiness lists also show how fear may have impeded your life. Your fears are exposed in the lists by the way you have been reluctant to enthusiastically write down things that could or would bring you happiness. How many times were you hesitant to write

an item on your list because you felt embarrassed or foolish? Have you avoided writing something on the list because that item would require effort on your part? Have you left items off your list because of your fear of failure? When you put a wish or goal on paper, then you become accountable. And what if you fail to achieve it? Why risk being a failure? Trust us when we say that the happiness you will attain in the end is worth any and every risk!

You may be thinking that writing such outlandish wishes, dreams, and goals is a great waste of your time. It is OK to feel this way as long as your fears and skepticism don't stop you from doing the writing. Just keep writing, if it's not listed, it cannot become a goal for your future. In the end you will lose out on many

a set of rules designed to help you achieve your success. They encourage it. You can see the world differently. Allow yourself to reach for things you thought were beyond you. Your dreams are the reason you are alive.

Finding Your Talents

Talents are present within everyone. Each person has a distinct set of natural abilities. Some would say that God designed this. Others argue that it "just is." Whatever you believe to be the source of your abilities makes no difference. What is important is to identify the talents you have, and then to use your free will and choice to apply these talents in ways that will help you experience life's abundant joy. When you are writing

your happiness lists, don't hesitate to write anything that brings you good feelings. These may be pointing you in the

By leaving things out, you are allowing your fears of today to stand in the way of your possible accomplishments of tomorrow.

things that would significantly contribute to your happiness. By leaving things out, you are allowing your fears of today to stand in the way of your possible accomplishments of tomorrow.

People are willing to ignore the things that bring happiness simply because they either accept their current levels of satisfaction or they have never spent the time to build other possibilities for themselves. Often it is because they are taught certain roles to play in life. People learn to ignore what they want and settle for far less. These limiting positions are handed down from generation to generation and people accept them without question.

What we are saying is simple: question everything! Do you really like what you are doing? Do you enjoy your career? Do you feel satisfied with your relationships? What would you do instead? Keep writing; don't let fear stop you from dreaming of a better future.

You can change! You can mature! You can be happy! These are all choices; your choices! These choices coupled with your natural talents will lead you to new heights with your heart as your guide. The axioms are

direction of your natural talents. Talents are innate, so identifying them and basing goals on them is the most efficient path to a purpose-driven lifestyle and, thus, long-term satisfaction.

Usually a person who enjoys working with engines will have a natural talent for mechanics. It is typical for a natural talent to bring a good feeling to the person. What one person finds fascinating, such as bird watching, cooking, or engine mechanics might be of no interest to someone else. Every person is unique.

Boiling down the random list of happiness items into an organized plan for the future is a fairly straightforward process. You know what makes you happy, you have written it down. Now you must identify your natural talents from your lists, then you will complete the plan and you will become a changed, more developed person.

If you have a passion for bird watching, you might have a talent for keen observation, something not everyone has. This talent may make you a better manager at work, a more effective parent, a better political strategist, etc. Next to the desire to bird watch on the happiness list you might write, "I have always had

a natural talent to see the details and I am very observant.” This would be accurate.

This process of finding talents has a purpose. It will help you accurately assess what and who you are in a positive light. It will create self-awareness that will enable you to change into a person greater than you have been in recent years, maybe greater than you have ever been, and, perhaps, even greater than you ever thought you could be. You are now moving into new creative territory.

Although you will spend time evaluating your talents and basing some goals on this information some of your goals may not have a natural talent that supports them. These non-talent related goals will be discussed later. For now start by discovering your talents because when you match a talent with a goal, it is the most powerful life-changing combination. Below is an example of one of the items on the emotional happiness list from the preceding chapter of Life Movements, Workbook 2. The item says:

“I do not want to be afraid to be assertive when I am upset or hurt, I also do not want to be overbearing and resentful.”

Rather than identifying a talent, it identifies a characteristic that the person wants to change to make himself happier. However earlier this same person wrote in his career happiness list:

“I want to have a job that I love, and that inspires me even through tough times. I want a job that will challenge my enthusiasm, my love for management, and my computer skills.”

This preceding example is different. It points out, something he likes and it supports other happiness list items such as:

“Deep inside (and I have never told anyone this) I have always dreamed of starting my own computer game company. I want to be an entrepreneur again, and have the courage to go out and make it on my own. I have a ton of ideas, and have even started the programming on several games such as...” and “I

want to have a job I love and that inspires me even through tough times. Hopefully this job will use my talents of good driving skills, my love for management techniques, and my abilities on computers.”

In these two excerpts, the natural talents of drive, free thinking, and competitiveness rise to the surface. These are talents, not behaviors or circumstances. Many people do not develop drive and do not possess free-thinking skills and not everyone is competitive.

You can learn much from examining your happiness lists. Talents are everywhere, you just need to be honest and open-minded to see what you are good at naturally and what talents have already been developed through age and experience.

If you cherish time spent doing a particular activity that is usually a good indicator of a talent. In the previous example, his or her talent for business management, competitiveness, and competency with computers are all talents that can support the desire for a career change.

With knowledge of these talents, building a new career in computers does not seem so far-fetched. In this case the individual may have believed that his current job, a construction foreman, was his only option as it was all he had done since high school. The lists pointed out things he never previously had the courage to say or even think about. Not only has he created a new outlook, but also a possible future and career doing something that brings him greater purpose.

Some people may find it very difficult to unearth their talents. Others find it equally difficult to know what makes them happy. This is most likely because they have used substances as shortcuts to temporary happiness. In a substance-use lifestyle people are so dedicated to their habits they look for no other way to gain happiness or joyful living.

Younger people may find this portion of the process challenging. Discovering talents and happiness list items when you have not lived long enough to know what could make you happy can be difficult. But do not be too concerned, everyone's personal experience is unique. Dreams, wishes, goals, and talents build upon themselves as they are realized. Every

young person starts his or her path to happiness by first imagining it.

You might want to look back on your life up to now focusing on the early childhood years. Children quite naturally enjoy all sorts of activities. Younger children experience pure joy without the encumbrances of self-consciousness and fear. Therefore most children are more in touch with their natural talents than are adults. If you have struggled with making a happiness list or discovering your natural talents, just relax and go back in time.

As a child you might have enjoyed playing kickball or maybe you enjoyed drawing, singing, or playing an instrument. There are endless numbers of activities children enjoy doing. Write them all down. These activities can be a starting point that will guide you in a direction as you go on with the process.

You can also look for activities that seemed to come naturally to you. Bear in mind these activities must follow the same rule as all other worthy goals: they cannot hurt anyone else and cannot be harmful or negative to you. It is really quite simple.

To use art as an example, think of people who have become accomplished artists. In childhood, all of them found it easier than other children to draw or paint. Their teachers and parents noticed it was easy for them to express themselves through their drawings, paintings, or sculpture. This talent came naturally to them, and the act of creating art made them happy.

Those people experienced joy as the result of their efforts and they followed their natural talents and became successful by adding beauty to the world around them. Even the process of accomplishing their goals was enjoyable.

Often guests select goals because they intuitively believe they can accomplish them. Intuition is an internal awareness of innate talents. You can visualize the completion of the goal because your natural talents know how to get you there. For some people, however, these natural talents may not stand out. The happiness lists become a good starting point to help focus your search.

Begin today by reviewing your happiness lists one more time. As you review the material ask yourself, in all honesty did I courageously write down all the things

I desire? Will the things I have written bring happiness to those around me? Do I really enjoy the items I have listed, or did I write what I believe others would want me to write? Am I embarrassed to write some items that are now missing from the list? Did I take risks? Did I write some things that I have kept secret for years but that could have provided immense joy in my life had I had the courage to go after them? Ask yourself those questions. Update your lists accordingly.

Be sure you have been thorough when creating your happiness lists. This process is no different from writing your autobiography, without honesty, self-discovery cannot happen and full development (maturity) will not occur.

If you enjoy something, write it down. If you do not enjoy something, even if you have been doing it for years, leave that item off the list or include it in your happiness list as something you want to stop doing. Many people write items that, when they honestly examine them, they realize either they no longer enjoy it or find it never did bring them happiness. The activity made the list only because it was familiar. The lists are a real challenge for some people because writing it is the first time they have allowed themselves to dream without feeling guilty about how they want to live their lives.

Humility

Becoming humble, or gaining humility, is the process of gaining an accurate understanding of oneself and giving an accurate honest presentation of oneself to the outer world. Let's say you are a top-seeded semi-pro tennis player. If someone asks you, "Are you a good tennis player?", and you reply, "I'm OK, I keep it in the white lines." That is not being humble or showing humility, it is condescending and dishonest. While your motive may have been to avoid sounding arrogant, one never shows humility by inaccurately stating what and who he is. There is no reason to avoid presenting your talents in a gracious manner. An appropriate response to this question would be, "Yes, I've been training and playing for many years, and I hope to become even better. I'm still learning. How about you? Do you play?"

On the other hand, arrogance is the process of overstating one's gifts and abilities or demonstrating them with little regard for others' feelings. The people around you who are asking the question deserve an honest answer. The talents one has been given and the talents one develops throughout life should not be hidden or arrogantly overstated. An accurate statement about who you are at any given moment is the humble answer. Humility means truthfully declaring our defining characteristics with dignity and graciousness.

Based on this definition of humility, you can accurately state who you want to become through the new self-images and happiness lists, and how you will get there through the goals process.

In Life Movements, Workbook 2 there is a section in which you will take the time to list of all of your talents. In the workbook examples you will note that some items in the happiness lists may not be associated with a talent. This is as it should be because not everything that makes you happy is the result of your talents. Have you ever been stopped in your tracks by a magnificent sunset? If you have, you know what a rush of happiness this creates. Your talents didn't make the sunset, however you may want to live where there are such sunsets every evening.

Happiness can come from changing your circum-

stances or participating in an activity you enjoy regardless of your talents. For example, a young man wrote in his happiness list, "When I was younger, I loved playing the drums. I loved the sound of drums, the tempo, the music, and the demanding coordination. However, I was never an inherently gifted drummer. Still, it was a passion of mine. To compensate for my lack of natural talent, I took lessons to improve my skills. Why? Because the better I played the more enjoyment I received."

Some of the items listed will identify those things for which you naturally have an affinity.

Once you match a happiness item with a talent, you will concentrate on building the new goals lists around those particular items first. You will also be creating goals for other items that do not have talents associated with them. This is an effective way to organize your goals. If an item makes you happy AND you have a natural talent for it, then it is one of the foundations for your new life.

Now, go to Lesson 17.1 and follow the directions. Do not proceed further until this workbook lesson is complete.

NOTE: If you have not done so already you may want to set up a private meeting with the Career and Academic Advisor to help you identify your talents and goals.

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Chapter 18

Daily Goals

Once the happiness and talents lists are complete, you've already begun to reconstruct your values and habits. The mere thought of changing is a change, but now you have begun to create a plan. It may be a new career, a better marriage, new perspective on your relationships with your children, forgiving someone you have been angry at for years.

Courageously writing down the things you love, the person you want to become, and then accurately assessing your talents is now propelling you down the path towards your new self-images.

We hope you can now see that you have the ability to take control of your life. You, like everyone else, have natural gifts and you can change anything or everything in your life. Do not let guilt and/or self-pity destroy your new dreams! This would be tragic, not just for you, but especially for those who love you, the ones who have stayed by your side. You owe them your best efforts today!

It is time to create a life that reflects your abilities. When people search inside and make the decision to better themselves, and then act on that decision, they improve the lives of those around them as well. Parents, children, friends, and co-workers who have been affected by your past immaturity now deserve the best. This chapter is about creating the best for you and those around you!

Over the next few pages we will help you take all of your lists of talents, newly practiced habits and new self-images and sift through them and organize them. Life Movements, Workbook 2 will help guide you

through this process.

You could probably move on in your life without defined goals, but this would leave you susceptible to being negatively affected by changing circumstances like the boat without the rudder. It doesn't make sense to come all this way, and then leave your future to chance.

Goal-setting creates a direct path to happiness. It generates a passion for life. Goals call upon your talents and fill your heart with optimism. You began living your new self-image when you committed to using the positive attributes of the Thought Process Chart, when you explored happiness, and when you identified your talents. Now you will put all that information into a plan of action.

Time to Focus—It All Starts Coming Together Now

First, in Life Movements, Workbook 2 review your list of talents from the previous chapter. Once you have reviewed your personal talents list, organize the list according to the amount of natural talent you feel you possess. There is space in Life Movements, Workbook 2 to do this.

Reorganize your Talents List

Now go to your workbook and follow the directions in Lesson 18.1. After you have completed that lesson, continue on.

Build the Plan

Let's review. You know the talents you possess. You know, to one degree or another, what makes you happy. You know what future behaviors and actions you need to help you become happier. You have begun living by the axioms described in the early chapters. You have replaced negative emotions and thoughts with positive ones. You have an accurate chronicle of your past and current choices and behaviors. You have a new set of self-images that define who you want to become. Now you need to combine all these elements to create a single comprehensive plan that will help you become a more fully developed person.

You will need to build a goals list based on everything discussed in the previous chapters. There are daily goals, many of which you may have already begun without even knowing it, assuming of course, that you have been following through with the process along the way. You will then create a list of long-term goals.

Guests have told us how refreshing they find the SJP's no nonsense approach to the topics of maturity and change. However, the lessons contained in this program will mean little if you did not properly complete all the preparatory work in previous chapters. If you did not take the process of replacement seriously, if you avoided self-examination in your autobiographies, or if you exaggerated about your talents, then you should expect to achieve limited results. You cannot realize your new self-images using the same thoughts and actions you used in the past. It is simply impossible to make progress without the occasional scary and painful change. If you sit relaxed in your comfort zone expecting the program to do the work for you, you are short-changing yourself.

Please keep in mind, the SJP® does not change anyone. The text and related workbook lessons cannot magically reach inside of you and change how you act or who you are. The SJP® teaches you how you can change yourself. You are responsible for what you get

out of this program, just as you are responsible for your own life. All of the ability lies within you. If the SJP® was the power that changed people, participants would always need to have the text handy and be in correspondence with our instructors. In fact, we encourage all of our participants to move on with their lives. The program's goal is that you become a fully functioning person, not within a program, but in the absence of a program! In other words, you are truly free!

Lesson 18.2—Daily Goals

Go to Life Movements, Workbook 2, Lesson 18.2 and follow the directions for building your daily goals. Do not continue on until this lesson is complete.

Refer back to your happiness lists in your workbook. Identify the activities that need to be practiced on a daily basis and begin making a list of those activities. These will become your daily goals.

You may find you need some help with this process. Our instructors are here to help and guide you. Much of what you write will mirror the positive thought processes you have been practicing already. If you are trying to be a more positive, active person, the benefits will be obvious. Daily goals are simply a more detailed written version of the habits you have already been practicing.

If you have not been practicing the principles and behaviors in the positive column of the Thought Process Chart, you can build these habits now through your new daily goals list. As time passes, these daily goals will need to be updated constantly. Build and practice them now to create the needed change in your life. The feeling of accomplishment and personal confidence will be quite extraordinary. It is time now to move on to three proven daily habits, that when practiced with diligence, can help you transform yourself into more fully developed people.

Chapter 19

The Three Daily Habits: Charity, Reflection, and Prayer

In this chapter you will learn about three important daily habits that can be used to facilitate change. Based on our research and personal experiences over the past two decades, we have seen firsthand how these habits are beneficial to everyone who desires long-term happiness. Once learned, you may want to add these daily habits as part of your daily goals. Two of the daily habits, charity and reflection don't involve religious beliefs. Therefore, they are atheist-friendly, and atheists or agnostics can embrace them without reservation.

The third daily habit, prayer, is rejected by most atheists. Often atheists, and many who are angry with God, reject prayer based on a misunderstanding of what the word means. The word prayer literally means to “ask” or “petition” in Middle English (circa Eleventh Century through 1470).

At that time, prayer was not connected with religion, religious beliefs, or religious practices, nor was it considered exclusively a communication with a deity. During the Middle Ages, one might say to a friend, “I pray your forgiveness.” Thus, the praying, i.e. asking or petitioning, is not contrary to atheism. Atheists are free to pray to the universe, which is real, or to a Universal Intelligence, which is thought to exist, or to their own inner existence, which is also real. In any case, we encourage you to keep in mind that our discussion of prayer should not exclude anyone because of his or her personal beliefs.

There are certain aspects of life that can force peo-

ple to utilize their intrinsic problem-solving nature. It can be an incredibly challenging event or series of events that push a person to previously unknown internal strengths. Such events could include overcoming the death of a loved one, building an industry, climbing a mountain, overcoming cancer, coming home from war, quitting substance use, the list is endless. These events can cause a person's perspective to be completely altered and then they may become open to new strengths.

Dianne, a woman who struggled with drinking too much wine and depression problems for years after a bitter divorce, tells of her conflict-based transformation.

“I decided to really search for an answer to my misery because I was in such a debilitating state of depression. I was tired of the repetitive nagging thoughts of suicide and hate. Once I opened my mind, the least little bit, I suddenly saw things from a different perspective; this was really unexpected. I was immediately filled with optimism and everything looked brighter. My thoughts were clear. I was totally baffled how this happened. For over two years prior to this I struggled constantly wondering why my life was so hard. But then I broke through, and I knew that I could love and be loved. I was changed. Somehow, I think that all my searching just came full circle. As time has gone on the feeling has faded, but the memory is as bright as the moment it happened, and I hang onto that when things get tough. But, I can say this, I am differ-

ent because I know that I am a good person. I think I just made the decision to see things differently and a door opened. Prior to that, I was stuck and unwilling to change. I thought I wanted to change, but I realize that I was stuck in my own thoughts. Once I made the decision to really open up to other possibilities, they flooded in. It was a gift, but I think my change of heart was the real catalyst.”

This chapter looks at cases like Dianne’s and asks some fundamental questions. How can people become more open to experiences like hers? Why was she given this gift of insight, when so many others ask and seem not to receive? The answers are not straightforward, because different people have different personal experiences, beliefs, and perspectives. Nevertheless, we looked for the commonalities in cases like hers and sought to find how those who are suffering are able to open themselves to greater personal insight, clarity, and relief.

Daily habits of charity, reflection, and prayer can by their very nature attract positive options to you, so you don’t have to work so hard to create them. These habits cannot replace planning and action but they can be added to your planning and goals to foster more positive energy in an already improving life position.

Has someone ever told you to listen to your heart? If you find you are filled with anxiety and fear, it’s worth taking the time each day to slow down, analyze why you feel the way you do. Everyone has the ability to reflect on life and adjust for better results. People have been able to create a personal atmosphere that welcomes these life-changing experiences. Buddhist monks have a long, rich history of attaining this level of awareness. It has been documented that high intensity professional athletes break through to different levels of transcendent experiences. And then, of course, there are the more common cases of people such as Dianne, who are struck by a life-changing experience because their minds opened in times of turmoil and profound reflection.

If you are living the positive column of the Thought Process Chart you are already successfully practicing some of these habits. If you are thinking of people and checking your motives, you are reflecting on your behavior regarding others. If you have been doing

this, then you are already building new habits. Now the question becomes: “In order to open my heart and mind to greater insight on effective methods to further my daily goals, what do I need to do?”

Charity

Charity is when you help people or situations, and receive no direct benefit. Acts of random, anonymous kindness, love, and donations of money and time are all acts of charity. The only benefit you will get happens inside of you. In short, you will experience joy. If you give anonymously, you will instantly feel good. Because all people are connected to everything that is living, a full circle of positivity occurs. You are the only person who will see the good deed being done, assuming it is anonymous. The joyous feeling you get is from within, not the result of human approval associated with recognition for good deeds. If you want to feel joy, love others anonymously every day. You will discover a wealth of untapped resources and you will begin to learn how to love yourself.

Reflection

Reflection is the internal process of calming yourself enough to hear what your emotions and past actions are telling you. This helps you measure your human performance and then problem solve.

How is it that some people have the ability to remain calm and focused in the most chaotic situations? The answer is they are practiced at reflecting and then putting in place those actions necessary to fix personal problems and challenges. Reflection does not have to take place in a peaceful setting. It simply means concentrating; reflecting on past experiences, then using that knowledge to your benefit and the benefit of others.

Reflection can be even more beneficial when you have the time to look at your day in peaceful surroundings. Then it only takes a few moments to examine your day and ask yourself whether or not you made the best of it. Have you succeeded in your goals? Have you found your days are running more smoothly since you became committed to personal change? Do you

feel less anxiety? Do you concentrate on your fears or on your next task? Are you happy? These are the typical questions of a reflective person.

There are times in life when you face challenges and negative situations just as Dianne did. These situations are made much worse by hysterical fear-ridden thinking. As she put it, “For over two years I struggled constantly wondering why my life was so hard.” This thinking created a mental downward spiral that could only be turned around through active reflection and a sincere desire to think rationally. Dianne goes on to say, “I think I just made the decision to see things differently and a door opened. Prior to that, I was stuck and unwilling to change. I thought I wanted to change, but I realized that I was stuck in my own thoughts. Once I made the decision to really open up to other possibilities, they flooded in. It was a gift, but I think my change of heart was the real catalyst.”

With a sincere desire to practice this mental and emotional control through consistent reflection, comes a natural neuroplastic change in the brain. This creates an upward spiral that further supports the decision to reflect, adapt, and change as an individual.

When fearful thinking dominates your thoughts, you procrastinate, thus delaying the necessary brain changes. You do not pause in your fearful chaos long enough to reflect and then make the necessary positive mental adjustments. By taking the time to reflect honestly on the most positive course of action, you can avoid misery and get through any temporary setback or difficulty.

How does someone reflect? It is actually quite simple. It is the process of concentrating on your personal performance and focusing on changing your point of view about subjects that trouble you. You can start by finding a quiet place without distractions. Turn off the television, radio, or computer. Then begin thinking about whether or not you have been loving, tolerant, positive, charitable, and productive throughout the day and in your recent past. With some practice you will begin to rewire the brain which will make the process faster and easier each time you do it. Eventually, reflection becomes a reflex. In other words, it becomes a natural analytical thought process, and you

will no longer need quiet time to start. With enough practice you may begin to experience insight and a dramatic change of heart the way Dianne did. You will tap into a different state of mind, one based on forgiveness and charity, rather than on self-preservation, guilt, and negativity. You will realize you are worthy of being happy and peaceful.

Like any other mind-based exercise, reflection does not have to follow any particular ritual. The basics of reflection are really just a process of concentrating on how you have conducted yourself and whether you have been living the actions and thoughts set forth in the Thought Process Chart. As the weeks and months go by if you are diligent with this process, you will begin to be able to identify the negative thoughts and behaviors that are pulling you down as they happen. You will gain confidence and begin to trust in your own internal voice. Actions and choices that used to bring trouble and depression will become distant memories. They will be replaced with care, acts of charity, and productive mature living. No one can promise a transcendent experience like Dianne’s. But if the history of human nature is an indicator, you can expect a brighter perspective on the world as you practice listening to your heart and being charitable.

The most powerful effect of reflection is not the understanding of where you personally may have failed or succeeded that particular day, although this is important. Rather, it is the unexpected insights you will gain while in the reflective state. The byproduct of reflection can come in the form of answers to questions you have struggled with for years, as peace during times of intense chaos or as insight into complicated emotional troubles. The simple truth is most individuals do not gain new solutions to old problems because they rarely spend the time being open to new solutions. Don’t miss the beauty of life because you were unwilling to relax and see a new path. There are always answers to even the most seemingly complicated problems. They exist and are there for you, but you just might not be listening.

Prayer

If you are atheist or simply dislike the idea of dis-

cussing prayer you can skip this section and move on to the long term goals in the following chapter. We included this topic to help satisfy the questions we receive from the many guests who have faith-based belief systems.

Why is prayer important? Many people lack personal faith at times and simply forget what is inside them. They lose the ability to listen and converse with their own Soul. In these faithless dark moments of self-centeredness, prayer is each person crying out to remember the connection they have with others and with God. Many atheists experience desperate moments in their lives and prayer comes quite naturally to them as well. These prayers are not necessarily directed to God in all cases, but can be a natural internal conversation.

Even those with a strong belief in God may experience doubt. During times of extreme stress or agitation, their prayers may become bitter, one-sided monologues. Or, in these moments of human desperation, those with little or no faith in God may become open to the possibility that there is a God.

To some people their prayers may seem to go unanswered when they expect God to fix things on their terms. They forget that all the tools for happiness are internal and that God is actually within them. If you sit waiting for divine intercession then you will likely be disappointed. The purpose of prayer is to help people heal over time and to focus their energies on moving in a positive and productive direction. It is your job to change and adapt with God as your energy source.

Prayer is a verbal or mental reminder that God is there and that you will be OK through hard times. The Soul, being a part of God, cannot be injured. Prayer is most critical at times when human pain or bitterness is so great that the Soul is obscured under a thick blanket of poor decisions or self-imposed guilt. It is your internal guide back to rational thinking when you are severely hurt, desperate, or fearful.

Prayer is a process, not an event. It is a way to reconcile with the Soul when you are out of touch with the truth that everything will be alright, that within each person resides infinite power.

It is a reminder that unless people live their lives

as described in the Thought Process Chart, they will struggle needlessly with selfish, fearful ways of thinking. Prayer is the grand reminder that helps people back on the path to joyous living.

The process of prayer is not unlike the way a child talks to himself while walking by a cemetery at night. Though scared and alone, the internal and external dialogue helps him through it. It is a process of concentrating on the good during the bad. It is ultimately what gives a soldier the courage and strength to persevere in spite of her fear.

Another example of prayer's positive effect can be seen in a person's grieving for a lost loved one. At these times the pain can seem beyond human endurance. In the first stages of the grieving process many people feel as if they cannot go on with life. They feel as if they will be sad forever. Yet after a period of time, and much internal dialogue, most people recover and are able to see the world in a positive light once again. For many people prayer is necessary to the process of healing the Soul when people feel separate from the internal light that naturally guides them.

Prayer, in conjunction with acts of charity and constant reflection, create a solid foundation for a joyful existence. The three together make it nearly impossible to lose faith even when human troubles, whether self-created or otherwise, could potentially devastate them.

All Three Habits Together

Time spent praying and reflecting each day along with at least one act of charity are worthwhile daily goals while at the retreat house and beyond.

Go to Lesson 19.1 and add these three habits into your daily spiritual goals list.

You may want to begin to listen to your inner voice, your Soul, or as some put it, your heart. Feelings of restlessness, anxiety, unhappiness, and irritability are messages to be heeded. When there are things in your life that your heart cries out to change, change them; life is just too short to waste when intuition speaks.

There are only two things in life about which people worry: things they can change and things they cannot. If you are worried about things you can change—stop worrying, get busy and change whatever needs to be changed. But if you are worried about things you cannot change—stop it, because all of your worrying will

not change a thing. In either case and instead of worrying, add charity, reflection, and prayer to your new lifestyle and you may find the insights and strength to tackle challenges you thought were impossible to change. You are now ready to embark upon your long-term goals list.

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Chapter 20

ong-Term Goals

This chapter is devoted to creating your long-term goals list. Before you get started, go through your happiness lists and make sure you have highlighted all the items you have extracted and converted into daily goals. Do not read on until this is done. What should be left (un-highlighted) will be every happiness list item that may now be converted into a long-term goal.

Some long-term goals can be somewhat complicated. In Lesson 20.1 we have provided an example of a complicated long-term goal. You may find that certain goals you create will conflict with others. In the workbook lesson example, John's goal is to build or purchase a new house on 10 acres of prime real estate. This goal is dependent on John increasing his income. In order to accomplish the goal of increasing his income, John makes another goal to become a senior partner at his place of business. This requires a significant lifestyle adjustment and he will need the support of his wife, both in time and her continued energy taking care of their four children if he is to accomplish his goal. However, his wife, Denise, decides she too wants to build her own career. The start-up money they have allotted for their collective goals does not allow for payment of daycare expenses as Denise would no longer be home taking care of the kids. In this case, her goal would conflict with his new career and material goals.

This conflict is called mutual exclusivity. John's and Denise's respective long-term goals conflict with each

other over available time and resources. These types of conflicts can cause people to shut down emotionally, give up, and fail to find workable compromises. In these situations people may become negative about the process, feel overwhelmed, and abandon their efforts to create long-term goals. But there is a way to work through such complications. As you can see from the example, John and Denise worked together to resolve the conflict and they found the resources to be able to fulfill both of their new goals. They both had to make some sacrifices in other areas to make this work. In this case, they decided to sell their snowmobiles and a section of land they acquired from John's father's estate. These sacrifices gave them the means to start their new careers simultaneously, thus slowly building a greater financial future for the ultimate goal of buying a new home. What is most important is that they thought creatively to solve the problem and begin their trek to fulfilling their dreams!

It takes some time and effort to build a long-term goal oriented life, so there is no need to rush this process. If completed with tenacity and hard work, you will see your new life plan emerge. It is worth the effort.

Each of our guests have different goals and aspirations. For some, concentrating on their family might be a high priority as they may have created tremendous problems that must be addressed. Years of neglecting or abusing the children or spouse may have created tensions, poor communication, and resentment. Perhaps fixing your home is a priority because

it is in disrepair and has become an embarrassment to you and your family. If participating in an organized religion is an important part of your spiritual life, you may feel you need to reestablish your personal relationship with God by attending church for the first time in years. Your career could be on the rocks and this may be where you need to put your energies as your family will pay a dear price if you lose your job. The possibilities are endless. Ultimately your happiness lists hold the key to your long-term goals—most of the goals are already written, but need to be categorized, prioritized, and organized into actual long-term goals. To accomplish this takes five very specific activities:

- Copy an item from one of your happiness lists and rewrite it as a long-term goal.
- List any natural talents you have to achieve the goal.
- Write a detailed account of what it will take you to accomplish each goal.
- Check for mutual exclusivity. In other words are any goals in your list in conflict with your daily goals or long-term goals? If you find mutually exclusive goals, begin the process of creatively working out solutions.
- Each long-term goal must be assigned a timetable and deadline. A goal without a workable deadline is still just a dream.

The following is an example for preparing long-term goals.

Spiritual Happiness List

1. My first priority will be the people I will be helping today and in the future. With this course of action as my basic foundation for happiness, the rest of my goals will be attained. I understand that goodness is inside of every person I meet, and that I must treat everyone as the most important person in the world. I will live using the values listed in the column to the right of the Thought Process Chart.

Long-Term Goal: To make sure all those in my direct sphere of influence are treated with dignity and

kindness. Try to move away from being so self-consumed, and instead, live my life according to the column to the right of the Thought Process Chart.

2. I want to have a more consistent faith in God and a more consistent faith in myself as well.

Long-Term Goal: The path to this happiness item is to reacquaint myself with my church, and spend quality time with my family.

3. I want to be consistent in my religious life. Attend church regularly, etc.

Long-Term Goal: To know my religion and understand my beliefs.

4. I want to teach my children how to be happy, through my example. So far I have taught them how to be unhappy and temperamental.

Long-Term Goal: To be the parent that I always wanted to have.

Emotional Happiness List

1. I want to know how to communicate with my spouse without yelling or getting hysterical which causes the communication to breakdown.

Long-Term Goal: To be assertive and honest in my intimate relationships, but also have the skill not to be hurtful when doing so.

2. I do not want to be afraid to be assertive when I am upset or hurt, but I also do not want to be overbearing and resentful.

Long-Term Goal: Same as above.

3. I am happy when I am able to say how I feel without being nervous and scared. This does not happen very often, but when it does I feel wonderful.

Long-Term Goal: Same as above.

4. I want to live courageously. I live my life according to satisfying my fears, rather than taking risks, and building a better life for myself.

Long-Term Goal: I want to take some risks. I want to better my life, so the next time I am married, I do

not destroy the relationship with my constant fears of responsibility. In short, I want to change how I think, and then take the plunge with a new career, and concentrate on making others happy.

Physical Happiness List

1. I am happiest when I am running and watching what I eat.

Long-Term Goal: To discipline myself daily by eating what I know to be healthy, and to run 2 miles per day after work.

2. I want to be at a responsible weight for my body type.

Long-Term Goal: BMI = 25.

3. I want to be able to bench press 200 lbs.

Long-Term Goal: To be able to bench press 200lbs.

4. I want to run 2 miles per day.

Long-Term Goal: To run 2 miles per day.

5. I want to live drug and alcohol free, no longer feeling bloated and panicky.

Long-Term Goal: I will follow through on all the moderation goals I set in the first chapters, and I know if I do this the panic will lessen, as will the health issues. This will also get me to a body mass index of 25.

Sexual/Relationship Happiness List

1. I am very happy that I am OK with my sexuality, and am not fearful of what my partner thinks about me. I would be happier if she (he) were more open to try new things.

Long-Term Goal: To experience more varied sexual activities.

2. I would be happier if I were not pressured for sex all the time and I want to be able to communicate this without hurting my partner.

Long-Term Goal: Same as above. Also, I will become comfortable expressing my intimate feelings

kindly and with tenderness.

3. I want to fulfill my partner's expectations of me—I don't want to be a source of resentments.

Long-Term Goal: To understand exactly what my partner's expectations are, and then fulfill them without sacrificing my own happiness.

4. I enjoy that my husband/wife/significant other is there when I need them.

Long-Term Goal: Not a long- or short-term goal, I just need to fulfill my other goals so this can continue to grow.

Material Happiness List

1. I want a four bedroom house, with a back deck, and a pool for the kids. I want at least 10 acres in the country.

Long-Term Goal: Buy the house and land.

2. I want a 1978 Corvette convertible as this is my dream car.

Long-Term Goal: Buy a 1978 Corvette.

3. I want a fishing boat so I can enjoy fishing with my children like I did with my father.

Long-Term Goal: Buy a 24' Boston Whaler and trailer.

Financial Happiness List

1. I am happiest when I am debt free.

Long-Term Goal: To be debt free.

2. I want to be credit card debt free within the next two years.

Long-Term Goal: To be credit card debt free by the end of 2012.

3. I love having money in the bank and not living paycheck to paycheck.

Long-Term Goal: To maintain a minimum \$6,000 balance in the checking account.

4. I am happy when I go on vacations with my family and have enough spending money.

Long-Term Goal: Create a \$5,000 annual vacation fund.

Career Happiness List

1. I really enjoy management, and my current job has become stagnated. I need a change.

Long-Term Goal: Promotion to Senior Staff Position.

2. I want to leave my current job, I feel dead inside when I am there.

Long-Term Goal: Promotion to Senior Staff Position.

3. I want to have a job I love, and that inspires me even through tough times. I want a job that will challenge my enthusiasm, my love for management, and my computer skills.

Long-Term Goal: Promotion to Senior Staff Position.

4. Deep inside (and I have never told anyone this) I have always dreamed of starting my own computer game company. I want to be an entrepreneur and have the courage to go out and make it on my own. I have a ton of ideas, and have even started the programming on several games.

Long-Term Goal: This goal has been abandoned in favor of starting a race car company. Although the computer game company has been a dream, after further analysis, I realize that my real passion is in racing cars and managing businesses.

Computers and building and maintaining websites will all be a part of the race car company, allowing me to delve into a lot of the same programming that I have learned through dabbling in the video game industry. This will be a tough goal and decision, because I will have to pick between the low risk of gaining the staff position at my current work, or the higher risk and greater chance for happiness with this goal. Maybe I can do both. I will make those

decisions when I figure out the mutual exclusivity portion later on.

Miscellaneous Happiness List

1. I love to bird watch and build bird houses.

Long-Term Goal: Watch birds and build bird houses for one hour a week.

2. I just received my car racing license and nothing is better than placing in the top five at my local track.

Long-Term Goal: To build a race car and team and be Driver of the Year at my local track.

3. I miss my older brother. I will give him a call and set up a time to get together.

Long-Term Goal: To reestablish a relationship with him.

4. I miss hiking. I will complete my New York Adirondack 46ers Club registration this year. This would be something that would satisfy me deeply.

Long-Term Goal: I will complete the 28 high peaks after the family and career goals are met.

The remaining activities are as follows:

- Are there talents to be used to achieve the goal? List the talents where they apply.
- Write the method you will take to accomplish each goal.
- Mutually exclusive goals (those long-term goals that oppose each other) must be separated and organized as such.
- Each long-term goal must be assigned a timetable.

Example:

Long-Term Goal: This goal has been abandoned in favor of starting a race car company. Although the computer game company has been a dream, after further analysis, I realize that my real passion is in racing cars and managing businesses. Computers and build-

ing and maintaining websites will all be a part of the race car company, allowing me to delve into a lot of the same programming that I have learned through dabbling in the video game industry. This will be a tough goal and decision because I will have to pick between the low risk of gaining the staff position at my current work, or the higher risk and greater chance for happiness with this goal. Maybe I can do both. I will make those decisions when I figure out the mutual exclusivity portion later on.

With some thought on the subject the long-term goal is rewritten.

Long-Term Goal: Once I achieve the previously mentioned promotion, along with eliminating my credit problems with the increase in salary, I will be poised to leave my current career and begin my own business in renting race cars in the Eastern racing championship series.

This person is starting to figure out how to make the goals come together. Now back to talents.

What talents can be used for this example? Refer to the talents list just as we did in the previous chapter for the daily goals. Match your talents to the goal:

I have a talent for leadership and business.

I am good at daydreaming and can clearly visualize things that I want.

I handle money well and I have always been a hard worker.

I have a talent for management (similar to the talent mentioned above).

I have been courageous in the past; I must now restore my courage.

I am naturally enthusiastic. I possess strong management abilities and natural computer skills.

I have a talent for racing cars.

Assign a method to achieve the goal:

Long-Term Goal: Once I achieve the previously mentioned promotion, along with eliminating my credit problems with the increase in salary, I will be

poised to leave my current career and begin my own business in renting race cars in the Eastern SCCA racing championship series.

To achieve this goal I need to attain a promotion at my current job. This will provide the cash needed to create this business. I also need to take care of my credit and streamline my investments. This is so I can be bankable for the new business. I will organize a race team consisting of family and friends. My brother is a highly skilled automotive mechanic. I will recruit him as the race team leader. Once these things are done, I will buy a car and race it at several events. Using my natural abilities, I will earn a reputation as a top competitor. After the reputation of that car is established, I will spend my early evening hours with my kids and Denise. Later each evening I will build the race car rental website. I'll then connect my website to the SCCA (Sports Car Club of America) website as a race car rental service. I will be successful, with all my talents and my love for racing and computers. I can't wait to start this new business!

This stage is crucial, because this is where the rubber meets the road so to speak. This is your future life plan, and as such you want to be thorough and courageous.

Organize the mutually exclusive goals:

In this case there are several goals that may conflict with each other. I cannot be an absentee father. It could become easy for me to be swallowed by my own interests, forgetting why I do these things in the first place. This is to be a happier father, husband, and friend.

Next, it is important for me to continue to learn how to communicate better, so my marriage and children's lives are not left on the back burner. Obviously I cannot rush this. It is a huge investment of time and energy. I will need to be patient and take care of my current career first or I will not be able to afford to make the switch to this new career in racing.

Then finally build the timetable.

With a kind, compassionate heart, all of your goals will come to fruition much more quickly. As always,

keep an eye on selfish habits, especially when you ask yourself what long-term goals need to be accomplished right away. You are trying to improve yourself, so you can become the person you described in your new self-images. You must ask yourself, how can this happen? What parts of your life need to be changed first?

Prioritizing these long-term goals is a uniquely personal experience. Everyone is different and has individual needs. Go through your new long-term goals list and decide which goals you want to start immediately and which are less important and can be started later. As in the examples given above, John needs to rebuild his current career before he can buy his new home and before he can start his new career in car racing. So, in his case, he has already begun to mentally prioritize his long-term goals. Keep this in mind as you write the timetables for each goal. If you have two goals that conflict with each other, either push one of them off to a later date or eliminate one completely (whichever one is less important, of course).

Timetables

Go through the list and assign a completion date to each goal. How long will it take to accomplish the goal? A goal is not an actual goal until you assign a completion date. Without definition, goals have no boundaries. Ill-defined goals are “pipe dreams” and usually never get done. This is reality, so do not avoid holding yourself to a schedule. Remember, a goal is not a goal until you write it down, plan for its completion, and assign a completion date to it.

Be realistic with the time needed to complete your goals. Review the completed list after you go through

and set the time limits.

Now, go to Lesson 20.1 and follow the directions to build your own comprehensive long-term plan. Do not read on until you have completed your long-term goals list.

Update the Goals Lists

As time passes, you will want to update both of your goals lists. It is natural to discover many of the things you thought would bring you happiness really do not. This process of eliminating activities you find unsatisfying is a part of life. As goals are achieved, spend time creating new goals regularly. This is important. This is how confidence is built: through the realization of dreams brought about by hard work and stick-to-it-iveness.

We know the last few chapters have been fairly mechanical and are based on spending much time and effort writing and filtering ideas and dreams, but these very mechanics change people. The human experience is an emotional one that is governed by your thoughts and actions. Should your thoughts and actions be driven by goals and aspirations to be more developed and more fulfilled, then your life includes those qualities. Should you avoid self-examination, then you have chosen to live with the consequences of such behavior. Keep uppermost in your mind that to win in life is much easier than the path of laziness. The path of laziness ends in places you don't want to be.

Guide your own life and habits to match your dreams and you will have fulfilled the reason you are alive—to be happy.

SJP

Chapter 21

To Be Free

For the last 20 years, thousands of people have asked Saint Jude Program instructors some simple common questions; “Why am I so unhappy?” “Why do most people I meet struggle so much?”

There are no simple answers to these kinds of questions. The variables of circumstance, experience, and individual problems are infinite. However, by examining some of mankind’s misery throughout history and relying on years of experience working with troubled individuals, we can say with some conviction that the majority of mankind’s unrest comes from an unwillingness to care for each other.

Purpose, satisfaction, and happiness all stem from each individual’s beliefs and the actions driven by those beliefs. If people remain centered in self, their world can become very small, and their life exhausting. It is only through personally driven desires for happiness, purpose, and fulfillment that people are motivated to become better humans and therefore willing to help those around them. If you spend time manipulating and controlling others to serve your wants and needs, you avoid the responsibility of caring for others and being truly compassionate, thus missing the beauty of positive relationships. On the other hand, if you live by the principles of compassion and kindness, you then must devote your career, family life, and spare time to the service of others. This requires commitment, perseverance, and hard work, but offers limitless rewards.

Everything you have learned in this program takes

some amount of work. Positive personal change and the ability to adapt to a constantly shifting landscape can be a challenge. Some of the lessons may have been obvious to you while others may have brought forth moments of dramatic clarity and emotion. Sometimes wisdom is there for the eye to see, but does not become internalized until just the right moment when everything comes together. The Golden Rule to treat others as you would want to be treated is so simple, and yet probably one of the greatest challenges each person encounters in their daily lives.

As you complete this process, try to remain open to each lesson. Be thorough and committed to see this process through to completion. Question everything. Listen to your heart and Soul. Analyze and examine every decision. And remember you are supposed to be happy. It is now time for you to actively create your future and positively influence the lives of those around you.

Moving On

As you complete the program, we would like to take this time to wrap up the entire SJP® process in a way that is easy to understand. Here’s what you’ve accomplished so far.

You understand there is no disease that renders you powerless over substances and your behaviors. You understand you have full power to choose to use substances or remain drug-free, and that this choice

is an event, not a lifelong struggle. You know that using drugs and alcohol is a quick fix, leading only to short-term happiness. You understand the basics of neuroplasticity and the Freedom Model®. You have been taught about the Natural Axioms. This knowledge can bring you to a deeper and more sustaining level of personal understanding and happiness. You have worked hard through your autobiographical accounts to recognize the choices that have lead you to an unsatisfying way of life.

You know where you have been at fault; therefore, you know what you need to change in yourself so you can find greater purpose and satisfaction in your life. You know the path to joyous living is through adapting to an ever-changing world and maturing out of an immature way of thinking and living. You've built a set of new external and internal self-images which if worked toward, will bring much greater self-worth and happiness.

You know that you can reconnect with your heart and Soul by practicing charity, prayer, and reflection. You can embrace these actions as daily habits to give your life more meaning, perspective, and purpose. You understand your emotions are ultimately under your control and they serve as a gauge to help bring you more joy.

You have allowed yourself to dream again through the goal-setting process. You know without your dreams and aspirations life can seem pointless and empty. You can now create a better life by working constantly towards your goals and re-evaluating them periodically. You have learned that by working toward your daily and long-term goals consistently, you are fulfilling your new self-images, maturing, and amending yourself. This maturation allows you to repair, rebuild, and strengthen your relationships with others on their terms, thus reinforcing your belief in yourself, the future, and those around you. You know you can become an active participant in life bringing good-will towards all of humanity. As that occurs, you will experience a life of sheer joy and fulfillment.

And lastly, you can now move on with the knowledge that you were born as a problem-solving being, blessed with a changeable brain, an adaptable body, a free mind, a set of controllable emotions, and a group of natural axioms that are based on your intrinsic desire for greater happiness. Armed with these truths we sincerely hope you strive forward to achieve your dreams and build a life that benefits you and all those around you. This is, after all, why you were created.

Thank you. It has been an honor to serve you. Take care.

SJP

Appendix A

A Researcher's Look at Alcoholics Anonymous

According to the Alcoholics Anonymous Preamble:

"Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety."

Let us save the more shameful claims by Alcoholics Anonymous for last and deal with some of the mundane aspects of who Alcoholics Anonymous says it is. It contends that: "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking." Untested that sounds great, but is it actually true? For several years we tested the claim that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking, and we actually found several other requirements that AA overlooked when writing the preamble. Most notably, to be a member one must conform to the proper protocol. When called upon at a meeting one must say, by way of introduction, "I am your name [first name only] and I'm an alcoholic [or a drunk, or a dipsomaniac, etc.]" Suppose you were to say "I'm Bill and I used to be a drunk?" The group usually responds to this sort of introduction with boos and hisses. This response doesn't lend itself to making one feel welcome or a member of the group. On other occasions the group's old-timer may approach you after the meeting and advise you not to come to AA meetings because your claim that you "used to be" an alcoholic is dangerous for newcomers to hear. And while most sensible people would think that overcoming their abuse of alcohol is

good news for the newcomer, it is inconsistent with AA's rhetoric that "once an alcoholic; always an alcoholic." The point is that there are many requirements for AA membership, not the least of which is that "you completely give yourself to this simple program." The real requirement for membership is to follow like sheep; that is, "say what they say;" "do what they do;" and "think what they think."

What about AA's claim that: "There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions." According to Alcoholics Anonymous' Annual Reports if AA had to survive on the "contributions" from its membership, there would be no Alcoholics Anonymous. Alcoholics Anonymous' revenues come primarily from commercially run alcohol rehabilitation programs. The rehabilitation programs, here in the U.S. pay Alcoholics Anonymous for books, other printed materials and AA paraphernalia. The real Alcoholics Anonymous is a not-for-profit money maker that reports to have \$10,000,000 as a "prudent reserve." Based on its own annual report the bulk of Alcoholics Anonymous' annual revenues come from its profitable relationship with commercial alcohol rehabilitation programs. Thus, claiming that it is self-supporting through its own contributions is at least, disingenuous, if not outright fraudulent.

Next AA claims that: "AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution..." Is there any truth to this claim? In a word: "No." The word "allied" means related, connected, linked, similar or aligned. "Sect" is another word for "cult." Thus AA claims it is not "related with any cult;" it is not "connected with any cult;" it is not "linked with any cult;" it is not "similar with any cult; and it is not "aligned with any cult." Yet, the founders of AA and the first people to get sober with the founders all got sober in the Oxford Group, a fundamental-

ist Christian movement headed up by a cult leader named Frank Buchman. Case in point, "Bill Wilson was once quoted as saying that even though he did not want the connection to the Oxford Group and its religious teachings associated with Alcoholics Anonymous, he had incorporated most of their ideals and precepts in the Steps and in the writing of what was to become the A.A. Recovery Program." (Mitchell K., 1999)

As for AA's assertion that it is not allied with any denomination, the fact remains that it is a fundamentalist Christian organization according to Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith, the alleged founders of Alcoholics Anonymous. Specifically, Alcoholics Anonymous is not based on Judaism, Islam, Buddhism or Hinduism. As for its claim of no political affiliation, both Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith were employees of the National Council on Alcoholism. This government subsidized organization was founded on its political agenda to promote the disease theory.

And finally AA's claim that it is not allied with any organization or institution, such a claim would have to ignore years of documented history in order for it to be true. In its earliest days one could not tell where AA left off and Works Publishing, Inc. began. Today AA has members in key positions in federal and state governments to continue to promote itself. Point of fact, Alcoholics Anonymous is allied with a sect, a denomination, politics, organizations and institutions (and always has been.)

Furthermore and although AA claims that it "does not wish to engage in any controversy," its actions in this regard speak much louder than its words. Alcoholics Anonymous has a long history of being involved in, and in many instances, being the instigator of major controversies. For example and despite

what AA officers say and what you may have read or heard about Alcoholics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (AAWS) is perpetually involved in controversies such as litigious matters. "Since 1985, AAWS has been actively involved in court cases as plaintiff against companies and individuals who AAWS perceived as violating certain intellectual property rights claimed by AAWS." (Mitchell K., About.com.)

While AA may appear to "neither endorses nor opposes any causes," as a practical matter and throughout its history AA has been very much an activist organization with respect to promoting its agenda and the agenda of its members. Notably, the "recovery" community's adoption of the disease concept began with an early AA member named Marty Mann. Her efforts, combined with a somewhat dubious scientist named E.M. Jellinek, began national acceptance of the disease concept. It was Jellinek's "scientific" study that opened the door for the medical community's support. E.M. Jellinek's study was funded by the efforts of Marty Mann and R. Brinkley Smithers. And, like so many other circumstances involving Jellinek and Marty Mann, the study was bogus, if not outright fraudulent.

The surveys on which Jellinek based his conclusions were from handpicked members of Alcoholics Anonymous. The data for the research was collected by AA's Grapevine. "In 1942, Grapevine periodical published a survey to examine the stages in drinking history of alcoholics. The survey, published on the first page of the magazine, was sent only to members of Alcoholics Anonymous. At the time of the survey's publication, Grapevine was circulating approximately 1600 copies (a few years later it became the official periodical of AA.) The analysis of the Grapevine survey was compiled and analyzed by Dr. E.M. Jellinek, Sc.D. at Yale University's Section of Studies on Alcohol under the umbrella of the School of Physi-

ology, and published in the Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol." (Milano, 2003.)

There were 158 (less than 10%) questionnaires returned, 60 of which mysteriously disappeared and were not included in the study. Jellinek's conclusion was based on less than 100 handpicked alcoholics chosen by Marty Mann. The fact that both Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith (the alleged founders of AA) were employees of Marty Mann's National Council on Alcoholism in its earliest days not only provided AA's endorsement to the controversial "disease theory," but clearly was an alliance with a highly political organization.

Further, AA's affirmation that "Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety" is AA's public shield to conceal its real purpose. As it is with all cults, AA's primary purpose is its own survival. For those who have carefully studied AA's history and activities, it doesn't really matter much how they disguise their cult building activities, "a rose by any other name..." "To stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety" the AA way is to sell the AA program to others thereby increasing meeting attendance and ultimately increasing the size and strength of the cult. There is an entire chapter, Chapter 7, in the book entitled Alcoholics Anonymous describing exactly how to recruit others into the cult.

Does Alcoholics Anonymous Work?

A young researcher and journalist, and AA insider named Richard Kolenda published his own analysis of AA called "Analysis of Comments on AA's Triennial Surveys." With Mr. Kolenda's permission we have reprinted some of his article in our analysis below.

In its opening sentence of its preamble, Alcoholics Anonymous' claims that it "is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from

alcoholism." While this may be a good marketing strategy does it actually help people? How effective is "sharing experience, strength and hope" in helping someone else, and if it really is effective, where is the empirical data that proves the method? First, can sharing anecdotal information with someone else with similar problems be helpful? Please keep in mind that the entire program of Alcoholics Anonymous is based on anecdotal data. With that in mind consider the following:

While anecdotal accounts of individuals' successes and failures make for interesting reading, such reports can actually provide those attempting to change their lives with excuses for failure. These excuses come into play by way of a whole variety of thought processes (albeit unsound.) All of the excuses emanate from a common source: comparisons. Stories about other substance users, unintentionally but inevitably, challenge the still active drug user to rationalize why he or she is not like the person in the story. These rationalizations abound: I'm older; I'm younger. I'm male; I'm female. I'm white; I'm black. I'm from the city; I live in the country. I'm Irish; I'm German; I'm Russian; I'm Japanese; I drank a quart a day; I drink a pint a day; I drank at home; I am a bar drinker. I am a periodic; I drink daily. I'm a plumber; I am an engineer; I am a physician, I'm a truck driver. I am rich; I am poor. I had a good childhood; I had a horrible childhood, and so on, and so on. As you can imagine the number of permutations approaches infinity.

In addition to the comparison problem, there exists a body of knowledge that definitively demonstrates the lack of success of anecdotal accounts as a method of helping substance users eliminate their substance use problem. Alcoholics Anonymous, for example, is a program based on its members' personal stories. The book entitled Alcoholics Anonymous is, on the whole, a regurgitation of AA members' stories. Actually, personal stories, autobio-

graphical anecdotes, comprise 71% of the book. Twenty-nine percent of the book is claimed to provide a description of the “program of recovery.” However, 54 of the 164 pages that claim to be the description of the program are, in fact, anecdotes (personal stories) to convince the reader of the effectiveness of the program. To wit, 33% of the program description is actually an anecdotal sales effort to get the reader to buy into the program. Thus and in ag-

gregate, 80% of the book is anecdotal reports to convince the reader that the program works (or to sell books, which is not the same thing.)

So, what then, are the results achieved by anecdotal accounts of successes and failures. For that answer we turn to Alcoholics Anonymous General Services Office (AA GSO.) In 1990, AA GSO, the governing organization overseeing all “autonomous” meetings,

published an internal memo for the employees of its corporate offices. It was an analysis of a survey period between 1977 and 1989. The results were in absolute contrast to the public perception of AA: “After just one month in the Fellowship [meaning AA,] 81% of the new members had already dropped out. After three months, 90% have left, and a full 95% have disappeared inside one year!” (Kolenda, 2003)

Appendix B

Minnesota Model

Certainly, the Minnesota Model was a program first, followed by self-justifying research. The Minnesota Model became the industry standard in 1949, but quite without efficacy studies until the mid 1980’s. For more than 30 years the Minnesota Model did not know whether or not the program actually helped anyone. For the last 20 years the Minnesota Model claims it “has been monitoring treatment outcomes (how patients are doing after treatment) and our [meaning the Minnesota Model] data shows success.” They report that “on average, 54% of our patients main-

tain an alcohol- and drug-free lifestyle during the entire year after treatment. An additional 35% significantly reduce their use. Between 70 - 80% report substantial improvements in the quality of their lives, with positive changes in relationships with family and friends, job performance, and the ability to handle problems....”

The Minnesota Model success rate looks mighty familiar. Early AA statistics are reported in the book entitled Alcoholics Anonymous. In that book Page XV is the beginning of the forward to the second edition. This foreword be-

gins with the following notation: “Figures given in this foreword describe the Fellowship as it was in 1955.” On page XX in the same forward it states, “Of alcoholics who came to A.A. and really tried, 50% got sober at once and remained that way; 25% sobered up after some relapses, and among the remainder, those who stayed on with A.A. showed improvement...” Practically speaking the success rate statistics quoted today by the Minnesota Model are statistically about the same as the statistics reported in 1955 by Alcoholics Anonymous.

Treatment/ Alcoholics Anonymous	Alcohol and drug free life style for 1 year/ got sober at once	Reduced their use/ some relapse	Improvements in qual- ity of life/ showed improvement
Hazelden (Minn. Model) Statistics	54%	35%	80%
Alcoholics Anonymous	50%	25%	100%

There are, of course, some fundamental flaws in both sets of statistics which are either, intentional or unintentional, but in either case mislead the reader. Alcoholics Anonymous reports: "Of alcoholics who came to A.A. and really tried, 50% got sober at once..." Significantly, Alcoholics Anonymous did not report "Of alcoholics who came to AA, 50% got sober at once." What Alcoholics Anonymous reported on was a subset of those who came to AA. Specifically, Alcoholics Anonymous reported only on those "who came...and really tried." Alcoholics Anonymous failed to tell the reader what criteria was used to determine those "who really tried" as opposed to "those who did not really try."

Next Alcoholics Anonymous asserts that "...25% sobered up after some relapses..." Again the reader is left without a definition for the phrase "some

relapses." Alcoholics Anonymous does not describe what is considered a relapse. The term "relapse" seems harmless enough, but what if a member relapses once a week or every few days? And, what if this behavior extends over a period of 25 years or more?† Often those who relapse are between the ages of 40 to 60 years old when they decide to stop drinking (and/or drugging.) Can Alcoholics Anonymous rightly take credit for an individual's triumph over substance abuse, when for 25 years Alcoholics Anonymous did not substantially affect the individual's drinking (and/or drugging) behavior.

In more recent years studies have concluded that as a function of age, the probability increases for substance abusers to spontaneously stop their substance abuse, with or without the help of a program. That is to say, as substance abusers get older they are

more likely to stop using alcohol and/or other drugs on their own. And finally, Alcoholics Anonymous does not identify the specifics with respect to its claim that "among the remainder, those who stayed on with A.A. showed improvement..." The question, then, is: what constituted "improvement." Did they have better jobs? Did they manage their relationships better? Did they make more money and pay their bills on time? Did they enjoy better physical or mental health? Did they get into less trouble? Did they control their tempers better? Or was it perhaps all of these? Or, perhaps, it was none of these—perhaps it was determined that they showed improvement by the mere fact that they continued to show up at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. Whatever the case, the real deception is not of an analytical nature. The real deception is:

Alcoholics Anonymous Claims	Claimed Success Rate
"got sober at once and remained that way"	50%
"sobered up after some relapses"	25%
"...the remainder ...showed improvement..."	25%
Implied success rate	100%

† Author's note: Although this chronic relapse pattern over a 20 to 30 year period and all the while going in and out of Alcoholics Anonymous may appear to the casual observer as an anomaly, such behavior is actually commonplace among members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Alcoholics Anonymous' claimed success rate gives the reader the illusion that Alcoholic Anonymous has accounted for 100% of the population studied. This success would certainly be great news, if it were not so flagrantly fraudulent. Remember that Alcoholics Anonymous is actually reporting only on those "who came...and really tried."

While we cannot know exactly what the criteria was to distinguish between those who "really tried" and those who did not, it is reasonable to assume that those who came to Alcoholics Anonymous and who left shortly thereafter would probably have been counted among those who did not "really" try. Working with that assumption and based

on Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Office graph that showed that within one year, of those who came to Alcoholics Anonymous during that year, 95% left Alcoholics Anonymous before the end of that same year. Thus, it would appear that those "who really tried" consists of 5% of the total within any given year. Therefore the actual analysis is:

Alcoholics Anonymous	Actual Success Rate
Those who <i>did not</i> really try	95%
"got sober at once and remained that way"	2.5%
"sobered up after some relapses"	1.25%
"...the remainder ...showed improvement..."	1.25%
Actual success rate	5%

There can be no doubt that the authors of the book Alcoholics Anonymous intended to mislead the reader by making their statistics sound like a 75% to 100% success rate. In a study conducted in 2006, we told 41 Baldwin Research Institute, Inc.'s employees in groups of 3 and 4 per group that they were required to study the book Alcoholics Anonymous. After reading the paragraph in the forward of the second edition that gives the aforementioned statistics we ask each student what they understood the success rate of Alcoholics Anonymous to be. Of the 41 polled 35 thought the success rate, according to what they had just read, to be 75%. The other 6 had concluded that they had no idea because there was no way

of knowing how big the population was that apparently did not really try. Of the 41 subjects polled, all but 1 were good readers with good to excellent comprehension. Slightly over 30% had college degrees and approximately 10% had advanced degrees. Yet more than 85% of the employees that read the paragraph accepted the statistical misinformation as fact. Accordingly, there exists only two possibilities: (1) The authors of the paragraph did not know what they had done and were exceedingly "lucky" that what they had written was misunderstood to their benefit, or (2) The authors knew exactly what they were doing and intended to deceive the reader into believing that the program of Alcoholics Anonymous is 20 times

more effective than it actually is.

After studying the book and the clandestine society of Alcoholics Anonymous for more than 30 years, it is clear that the AA authors intentionally deceived their readers. This conclusion is based on the fact that deceptions such as this are repeated over and over again throughout the book. The point being that once might be a fluke; the same technique used a couple dozen times is deliberate. Moreover, it is dishonest.

This, then, brings us to the word manipulation used in the reporting of the Minnesota Model's statistics. The Minnesota Model's first claim is that it: "has been monitoring treatment outcomes (how patients are doing after treatment) and our [meaning the

Minnesota Model] data shows success. On average, 54% of our patients maintain an alcohol- and drug-free lifestyle during the entire year after treatment." Parsing this statement to determine its meaning leaves the reader with several possible understandings. Consider the entire statement is qualified with the introductory phrase "On average" Fundamentally, there is nothing sinister about reporting statistical averages. But if averaging is used, it is incumbent on the author(s) to tell the reader what data made up the average. For example, suppose the average has been calculated with two widely divergent data, say 78 successful patients in one year and 30 in another year and based on a total of 100 patients each of the two years. This would, of course, yield a 54% average for the two years. However, averaging data that falls at opposite ends of the spectrum exceeds acceptable statistical practices. Thus, reporting data qualified by "On average ..." is essentially meaningless without the details of what the average is based upon. Furthermore, averaging numerous points that produce a wide first standard deviation is, of course, arithmetically possible; however such an average is of questionable value or perhaps of no value at all.

Next the Minnesota Model claims that "our [meaning the Minnesota Model's] patients maintain an alcohol- and drug-free lifestyle..." In this case it is more important to observe what is not said. The Minnesota Model did not report that "patients maintained abstinence!" Hence, it is up to the reader to determine what is meant by "an alcohol- and drug-free lifestyle." Could "an alcohol- and drug-free lifestyle" mean abstinence? Certainly, but "abstinence" and "an alcohol- and drug-free lifestyle" are not necessarily synonymous. Consequently, the ambiguity of "an alcohol- and drug-free lifestyle" also allows for the possibility that abstinence was not maintained, but merely a "style" of life consistent with living alcohol- and drug-free. The choice of words, "an al-

cohol- and drug-free lifestyle," used by the Minnesota Model certainly raises question as to what the Minnesota Model was measuring. It is reasonable to guess that the Minnesota Model did not have abstinence as a measure for their "successful" 54% group because the Minnesota Model did not report that the 54% achieved a year of abstinence.

Furthermore, the Minnesota Model's numbers do not add up. The Minnesota Model reports that "On average, 54% of our patients maintain an alcohol- and drug-free lifestyle during the entire year after treatment. An additional 35% significantly reduce their use." That produces an 89% rate of improvement. In the very next sentence the Minnesota Model reports that "Between 70 - 80% report substantial improvements in the quality of their lives, with positive changes in relationships with family and friends, job performance, and the ability to handle problems..." The Minnesota Model's analysis indicates that 9% to 19% of their patients who "maintain an alcohol- and drug-free lifestyle..." and who "significantly reduce their use..." did not "report substantial improvements in the quality of their lives..." Apparently and inexplicably, 9% to 19% of those who allegedly either stopped using or moderated their use did not think that their lives had "substantially" improved according to the Minnesota Model's report. More puzzling still is the Minnesota Model's claim that "The Twelve Steps [meaning the 12 steps of the Alcoholics Anonymous] are a foundation and guideline for living and are fully integrated into the treatment process and care plan [meaning the Minnesota Model's care plan.]" It is difficult to understand how "the twelve steps" of the Alcoholics Anonymous program, which historically has produced less than a 5% success rate, can be "a foundation..." for the Minnesota Model's "treatment process and care plan," which according to the Minnesota Model produces on average a 54% success rate. It is im-

possible, then, to reconcile a 10 times differential between the two programs, Alcoholics Anonymous and the Minnesota Model, which according to the Minnesota Model are both founded on the same 12 step process.

Yet, another conundrum presented in the Minnesota Model's claimed 54% success rate is the Minnesota Model's assertion that "... mutual self-help groups provide wonderful fellowship and help people hold a steady course after treatment, particularly by building connections within their home communities. Recovery from addiction is a life-long journey and treatment is only the first step. Working the Twelve Step program and attending meetings is proven to help people maintain abstinence and grow within their recovery." But, before taking an in-depth look at the claimed success rate, it would be negligent not to point out that all four of the Minnesota Model's assertions (i.e. (1) "mutual self-help groups provide wonderful fellowship..." , (2) "[mutual self-help groups] help people hold a steady course after treatment..." , (3) "Recovery from addiction is a life-long journey..." , and (4) "Working the Twelve Step program and attending meetings is proven to help people maintain abstinence...") are simply not true. If mutual self-help groups did provide "wonderful fellowship," how is it that 95% who attend this "wonderful fellowship" leave within the first year? And, how do mutual self-help groups "help people hold a steady course after treatment" when 95% leave within the first year? As for the Minnesota Model's assertion that "Recovery from addiction is a life-long journey..." there has never been, nor is there now, a credible study supporting such an absolutely absurd idea. And finally, the Minnesota Model's assertion that "Working the Twelve Step program and attending meetings is proven to help people maintain abstinence..." is simply not true. In fact, just the opposite has been proven: Working the twelve step program and attending meetings is proven to be detrimental to

those trying to achieve abstinence. The studies with respect to the detrimental effects of 12 step programs and attendance at 12 step meetings are conclusive.

Now then, directing our attention to the Minnesota Model's claimed 54% success rate, how could the Minnesota Model possibly achieve a 54% success rate one year post treatment when the Minnesota Model's aftercare program, Alcoholics Anonymous, proffers no better than a 5% success rate. This inconsistency begs the question, which one is lying: Alcoholics Anonymous claiming a 5% success rate or the Minnesota Model claiming a 54% success rate? As for the Minnesota Model's claimed 54% success rate, there are, however, factors that may skew the data in the Minnesota Model's favor. How are the subjects selected for the study and how often are the studies done: once a year, a couple times a year or once a month? Are the subjects randomly or pseudo-randomly selected or is 100% of the population included in the study. What is the size of the population studied? How is the year constructed? Is there

a group that all leave treatment on the same day and then are contacted one year from that day? Or perhaps there is individual follow-up for all patients one year after discharge. Either way it is significant whether or not the Minnesota Model relies on self-reporting or third party reporting. It is a well established fact that self-reporting is unreliable.

Also significant is how the Minnesota Model collects its data. If data is collected by mail-in questionnaires, this is known to produce corrupt data. Also there are several factors that skew data toward a positive outcome two of which are: First, patients who maintain sobriety after discharge are several times more likely to fill out and return a questionnaire than those who failed. Second, validity of the data is challenged by a variety of outside and unrelated pressures. For example, if the subject is on probation or parole, the subject must report abstinence without regard for who is asking because to admit in writing or in a telephone conversation to using is a violation of probation and parole. The point is that the Minnesota Model's claimed 54%

success rate is presented devoid of the information needed to assess the validity of its claim. Moreover, the Minnesota Model is not without bias with respect to its claimed success rate. And, keep in mind that according to the Minnesota Model, it did not do any research with respect to its program during the first 37 years of operation. To wit, the Minnesota Model was not founded to conduct independent research.

The Minnesota Model's research is reported here for no other reason than it is the model that is used in approximately 95% of the conventional treatment programs in the US. Further, it is recognized that those involved in the design of and the proliferation of the Minnesota Model have at least made an effort, regardless of their ineffectiveness. However, if one of these programs provided data that could withstand the same scrutiny imposed on the Saint Jude Program® and the Saint Jude Home Program®, Baldwin Research Institute, Inc. would be the very first to applaud the honesty and praise the success.

Appendix C

The Research About the Most Commonly Used Replacement Therapy Drugs: Methadone and Suboxone

Baldwin Research Institute has thoroughly studied the available information with respect to the use of methadone and suboxone (buprenorphine) in the treatment of opiate use. Even though methadone clinics are commonplace in most American cities, both large and small, Baldwin Research Institute has been unable to reconcile the logic of giving dangerous habit-forming drugs to drug users to replace another dangerous habit-forming drug. If the intent of the therapy is to bring the patient to an eventual drug-free state, prolonging the process is quite simply not in the patient's best interest. Moreover, it lengthens the time that these patients are exposed to drugs that pose significant risk. Consider the following:

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Public Health Advisory issued in 2007, instances of accidental overdose by those prescribed methadone were rising at an alarming rate, with the rate of accidental death from methadone overtaking that of illicit opiate users. They cite: the difference between methadone and other pain relievers is that it [meaning methadone] stays in the body long after it ceases to relieve pain. A dose of methadone will relieve pain for four to eight hours, but it will stay in the body for up to 59 hours. "As a result, patients may feel the need for more pain relief before methadone is gone from the body," according to the FDA. "Methadone may build up in the body to a toxic level if it is taken too often, if the amount taken is too high, or if it is taken with certain other medicines or supplements."

Methadone poisoning deaths nationwide increased significantly from 1999 through 2004, and data indicated that the number of deaths in many states continued to increase in 2005 and 2006. Poisoning deaths in which methadone was mentioned increased 390 percent—from 786 in 1999 to 3,849 in 2004 ... according to the National

Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). The highest rate of increase for methadone poisoning deaths was among individuals 15 to 24 years of age—the rate in 2004 was 11 times higher than that in 1999. In comparison, among those 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 years of age, the rate of increase in 2004 was seven times higher than the rate in 1999, according to NCHS.

In 2008, Buddy T. wrote in his Alcoholism Blog on About.com: "Deaths due to the misuse of the painkilling drug methadone increased 600 percent from 1999 to 2005, according to the latest statistics from the National Center for Health Statistics. Deaths from methadone overdoses increased from 786 in 1999 to 4,462 in 2005..."

Considering the high risk of death as a result of methadone treatment versus heroin users going through normal withdrawal from heroin use, without question, normal withdrawal is far safer and significantly faster. An additional benefit of going through withdrawal (i.e. detoxification,) once the body is free from the effects of heroin; the body is also drug free.

As for the efficacy of methadone clinics, there is no way of getting at the true data regarding such enterprises. Most methadone programs receive government payments or are directly funded by the state and federal government. This presents several irresolvable conflicts of interest. First, the operators of methadone clinics want to continue to get paid by the government so their reporting of success with their clientele is designed to meet government requirements, regardless of actual outcomes. Second, the government bureaucracies supplying the funding for these clinics have a vested interest in having the outcome information "look good" to fulfill the bureaucracies' reporting requirements. That being true, there is no real evidence that giving dangerous habit-forming drugs to those who already take other dangerous habit-forming

drugs is a solution for their problem. Furthermore, there is virtually no difference between overdosing on an illicit drug versus overdosing on a legally acquired drug. Dead is dead!

As for treating drug users with suboxone, this, too, introduces unnecessary additional risk. Consider the following from

<http://www.drugs.com/suboxone.html>:

"Suboxone: Generic Name: buprenorphine and naloxone (byoo PREH nor feen and NAH lox own)

What is Suboxone? Suboxone contains a combination of buprenorphine and naloxone. Buprenorphine is an opioid medication. Buprenorphine is similar to other opioids such as morphine, codeine, and heroin however, it produces less euphoric ("high") effects and therefore may be easier to stop taking. Naloxone blocks the effects of opioids such as morphine, codeine, and heroin. If Suboxone is injected, naloxone will block the effects of buprenorphine and lead to withdrawal symptoms in a person with an opioid addiction. When administered under the tongue as directed, naloxone will not affect the actions of buprenorphine.

Important information about Suboxone: Suboxone can cause death from overdose, especially if it is injected with a tranquilizer... Suboxone can cause drug dependence. This means that withdrawal symptoms may occur if you stop using this medication too quickly. Withdrawal symptoms may also occur at the start of treatment due to dependence on another drug. Suboxone is not for occasional ("as needed") use. Do not stop taking Suboxone without first talking to your doctor. ... Use caution when driving, operating machinery, or performing other hazardous activities. Suboxone may cause drowsiness, dizziness, or impaired thinking. If you experience drowsiness, dizziness, or impaired thinking, avoid these

activities. Avoid alcohol while taking this medicine. Alcohol may dangerously increase drowsiness and dizziness caused by the medication. Suboxone may dangerously increase the effects of other drugs that cause drowsiness, including antidepressants, alcohol, antihistamines, sedatives (used to treat insomnia), other pain relievers, anxiety medicines, and muscle relaxants.”

The argument for not taking suboxone is the same as the argument for

not using methadone—it is a dangerous habit-forming mind-altering drug. Moreover, the risk of fatality increases dramatically when suboxone is taken with other drugs such as benzodiazepines, which are commonly used during drug detoxification and by opioid users. And, to tell an opioid user not to use alcohol while taking suboxone is commensurate with telling a person not to breathe. All habituated drug users (including alcohol) are “poly-drug”

users; that is, they quite naturally gravitate to using any substance that produces an effect which they find enjoyable, in some fashion or another. On the other hand, when a habitual drug user decides to stop using drugs, the evidence overwhelmingly shows that habitual drug users successfully quit using “on their own” without the aid of any substitute drugs or medication. (See Appendix D: The Disease Concept of Alcoholism (and other Addictions.)

Appendix D

The Saint Jude Program® Success Rate Statistics

Please remember that the Saint Jude Program® is the *only* program in the United States which continuously evolves based solely on research.

The Saint Jude Program® offered exclusively at the St. Jude Retreats® is the only program in the world that conducts ongoing, confidential, follow-up surveys with the permission of program graduates and their families.

Baldwin Research Institute, Inc., the parent company of the Saint Jude Retreats®, cooperates with independent research companies to conduct biennial surveys of Saint Jude Program® graduates to ascertain the abstinence based success rate of the Saint Jude Program®. Program graduates are selected at random by an independent firm, (2008, Clearwater Research, Inc.) and are then surveyed by phone interview as to the status of their sobriety. Then, a second and separate call is placed to the graduate’s family (a corroborator) and they, too, are surveyed to validate or invalidate each graduate’s response. Surveys were done two times per year by Baldwin Research Institute prior to 2004, and have since been completed biennially by independent research organizations. A survey has been conducted in this manner since the inception of the Saint Jude Program® in 1991 and all random samplings include all pro-

gram graduates who have consented to inclusion in the research. More than 95% of program attendees consent to inclusion in BRI’s research.

The survey consists of a single inquiry pertaining to the alcohol and drug use of the individual. The answers are gathered from the graduate and the corroborator and entered accordingly. The survey is set up to include only two categories; “drunk” and “sober.” Those who may have successfully moderated their use (our research supports that this occurs in a relatively small percentage of our program graduates) must be included in the “drunk” category for research purposes to eliminate the gray areas that many facilities use to bolster their claims of success.

Baldwin Research Institute, Inc., (BRI) contracted with Clearwater Research, Inc. (Clearwater) to conduct a follow-up survey of a random sample of Saint Jude Program® graduates. Clearwater conducted the survey and provided the required products and services including sample design, questionnaire consultation, data collection, and analysis. The following is the *unedited* Clearwater Research, Inc.’s final report for the 2008 Study:

2008 Sobriety Follow-up Final Report
April 21, 2008

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Introduction and Background

Baldwin Research Institute, Inc., (BRI) contracted with Clearwater Research, Inc., (Clearwater) to conduct a follow-up survey of a random sample of Jude Thaddeus® graduates. Clearwater provided sample design, questionnaire consultation, data collection, and analysis.

Methods

Clearwater conducted a computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) survey of a random sample of 223 participants in the Saint Jude Program® and one corroborating friend or family member for each participant. Data were collected between the dates of February 18 and April 2, 2008. We provided BRI with assistance to adapt the questionnaire for CATI administration, a pre-test of the programmed CATI questionnaire, data collection, data set preparation, and analysis. At the end of the project, we delivered a cleaned data set, a report documenting

the survey design and implementation, frequency tables of the survey responses with statistical analysis, and other deliverables requires by the Request for Proposal (RFP).

Survey Instrument

Clearwater collaborated with BRI to adapt the existing interview protocol for use with our CATI system. The questionnaire was very short, essentially asking one question about the sobriety status of the program participant. We provided our standard review of the questionnaire to assess possible issues with question wording, item order, and the flow of the survey from start to finish. Our Bid assumed that the average interview length would not exceed one to two minutes per respondent, would not include any open-ended items, and would be conducted in English only. We tested the questionnaire programming thoroughly to ensure accuracy in data collection. Clearwater data collection and research staff also closely monitored the interviewers during the fielding period to identify any issues that eluded detection during testing. The final questionnaire is presented in Appendix A of the complete study (see note†). The average interview length was approximately seven minutes per record. This includes all of the time spent by an interviewer getting the question answered by both the guest and the corroborator. This was less than our original estimate of ten minutes per record.

Sampling

Clearwater consulted with BRI regarding the specific information needed for fielding. Baldwin and Clearwater mutually agreed to have Clearwater use Microsoft Access to randomly choose names from a list provided to Clearwater by BRI. After names were selected, Clearwater accessed BRI's in-house database containing contact information for each participant in the Saint Jude Program to gather specific information that was copied manually into a spread-

sheet. The contact information was loaded into our CATI system and the interviewers began to contact designated individuals and complete interviews. Out of a total of 956 records called, 232 resulted in completed interviews with both parties, giving an overall response rate of 26.17%. Clearwater interviewers "chased" members of the sample who were not reachable at the household or telephone number provided by BRI when someone we contacted could provide us with an updated telephone number.

Data Collection

For the Sobriety Follow-up project, Clearwater adhered to the instructions in the Sobriety Survey Protocol provided by BRI with the RFP. Data collection was originally scheduled for February 18—March 17, 2008 but was expanded through April 2, 2008. Clearwater collected data using our 135-station computer-aided telephone interview (CATI) system. Interviewers were able to see and record responses to questions on a computer screen. The software managed the telephone calling, controlled distribution of sample, consolidated data, and tracked interviewer activity and productivity. Interviewers were thoroughly briefed prior to data collection and rehearsed the questionnaire before conducting actual interviews. After the first week of calling, interviewers were briefed a second time, immediately following changes in the programming to make the survey flow better. Monitoring staff listened to a sampling of interviews throughout the fielding period to maintain data quality. Hard copies of monitoring reports are included with the final deliverables. Clearwater used computer-aided dialing, but not predictive dialing. Predictive dialing has the potential to annoy respondents by introducing a delay in connections after respondents answer the telephone. This delay leads to higher hang-up and refusal rates and a correspondingly lower response rate for the survey. Interviewers at-

tempted each record a minimum of three times or until a final disposition (e.g. completed interview, refusal) was reached. All definite appointments were attempted regardless of the attempt number. Some records were attempted up to 14 times with an average of 5.37 attempts per Guest/Corroborator pair to locate the correct individuals and make contact with them. To maximize the likelihood of reaching the sampled person interviewers called each telephone number at a variety of times, including weekdays, weekday evenings, and weekends. Each attempt represents a different calling time, but could include dialing several different phone numbers. Detail descriptions of each attempt can be found in the attached "Attempt File" (See Appendix F of the complete study for a description of the layout.) Our interviewers are trained in techniques of refusal avoidance that are effective in maximizing response rates. We developed an interviewer manual for the Sobriety Follow-up study that provided the interviewer with information about the study to be used while relating with respondents to keep them on the phone. Answers to frequently asked questions and guidelines for dealing with certain situations were available during the interviews on hotkeys listed in the interview manual. The interviewer manual is presented in Appendix B of the study.

Data Preparation

During data collection, interviewers documented any errors they encountered on data change forms. At the conclusion of data collection, these errors were corrected in preparing the data set for analysis. The data were converted and formatted for review in SPSS (a statistical analysis software package) and Microsoft Access. Clearwater pays close attention to comprehensive and routine data inspections, data cleaning, and data set preparation. The completed survey data set was cleaned and prepared in an electronic file format in SPSS and Excel.

Any data changes were documented on data change forms which are included with the final deliverables. For table production and statistical analysis, variables and value labels were added to the cleaned SPSS data set. Calling on the sample was considered complete at a point all records had reached their maximum attempts or a final disposition had been assigned. After we exported the data from the CATI system, it was cleaned and compiled it into a labeled SPSS data file. Clearwater calculated the final disposition for each sample record. The CATI call history tables recorded the interim or final disposition entered by the interviewer for each attempt. Database programming referenced both the CATI call history table and the data sets to determine the correct final disposition.

Call Outcomes

Each call attempt was given an interim disposition depending on the outcome of the call. At the end of the field period, each record was assigned a final disposition for the study based on the history of interim dispositions and data collected for that case. Because there were multiple phone numbers on each record, the interim dispositions only captured the results of the last phone number attempted, so additional notes were made. (These notes are available in the attached Attempt File of the complete study.) Table 1 shows the calculated final dispositions. Detailed descriptions of each disposition can be found in the interviewer manual in Appendix B, Table 2. The final dispositions shown represent the overall outcome of a Guest/Corroborator pair. Some individual refusals may be hidden within the partial complete counts.

Response Rate

We calculated response rates based on a breakdown of four final disposition categories summarized in Table 2. The response rate is summarized in Table 3. The overall response rate was 42.26%.

Table 1: Final Disposition

Code	Description	Count
22	Final refusal	29
35	Guest deceased	28
36	Complete	232
41	No numbers left to dial	498
42	Partial — guest only	55
99	Insufficient contact information	114
TOTAL:		956

Table 3 also estimates the invalid numbers from the total number of sample. The methodologies behind each response rate are described below. For this project, each attempt required the interviewer to dial every available number. Due to this decision which drastically increased the efficiency of the data collection process, several records do not have specific disposition codes. In order to calculate an accurate response rate, it was necessary to estimate the proportion of invalid records within the “Unknown” category. This was done by randomly selecting 52 records from this category and manually

assigning them a disposition based on interviewer notes. This proportion is labeled E in the calculations below. Accurate descriptions of each call attempt can be found in the Attempt Log File.

These response rate calculations are based on rate calculators developed by the American Association of Public Opinion Researchers (AAPOR.) Response Rate 1 is simply the number of interviews divided by the number of total records. Response Rate 2 attempts to give a more accurate picture of the level of participation by controlling for all attempts which could not have

Table 2: Response Rate Formula Categories

Symbol	Description	Disp. Codes	Count
I	Final refusal	36	232
P	Guest deceased	42	55
IN	Complete	99, 33	114
U	No numbers left to dial	41	498
O	Partial — guest only	22, 35	57
TS	Total Sampled	All	956

reached a respondent.

Discussion

When both the Guest and the Corroborator were reached, 133 agreed the Guest was sober and in 99 instances at least one said they were not. Based on just the Guests' response, 189 Guests said they were sober, while 108 said they were not. According to Corroborators' responses, 153 Guests were sober and 79 were not.

†A copy of the entire study, including all appendices, will be made available upon request to Baldwin Research Institute. These appendices are not included here as a matter of space considerations.

Table 3: Response and Invalid Rates

Symbol	Description	Formula	Rate
RR1	Response Rate 1	$RR1 = (I+P)/(TS)$	30.02%
RR2	Response Rate 2	$RR2 = (I+P)/(TS - IN - (E*U))$	42.26%
INV	Invalid Rate	99, 33	28.95%

Appendix E

Substance Use and Localization

Localizationism is a theory developed three centuries ago. The theory has been, and continues to be, used by the treatment industry to support its assertion that once a neuroplastic change has occurred, and an individual crosses the neurological line from normal to addicted; the person can never be normal again (The Alcoholics Anonymous text states clearly: "Once and alcoholic, always an alcoholic.")

In the strict localizationism theory each section of the brain has a particular function. Should a specific area in the brain be hurt or damaged, say by a stroke, or a traumatic brain injury, then the corresponding functions of that section are inescapably and permanently altered or wiped out. There is some truth to this theory. If a stroke victim has lost his or her ability to speak it is usually because there is damage to the areas of brain tissue that generally deal

with speech (posterior inferior frontal gyrus also known as Broca's Area.) In the limited view provided by localizationism of the brain and its functioning power, substance users and stroke victims present their damage in a very similar light.

With modern neuro-imaging scans, (CAT, EEG, MRI and PET scans) brain damage can be observed in detail. Neuro-imaging is a relatively common procedure and often supports the localizationism theory; however the localizationism theory is limited. Yes, the brain can be mapped and the functions generally charted, but upon further investigation it now seems that these are not fixed bordered certainties as was once thought.

If one thinks of a substance user as sustaining the same sort of damage as a stroke victim the idea for lifelong sub-

stance use treatment to achieve permanent sobriety may seem plausible. After all, a stroke is the destruction of brain tissue resulting in permanent damage, and requires long term rehabilitation. The heavy substance user might cause damage to his or her brain, so it would seem natural to believe long term treatment is the answer there, as well. But this is true only if the alterations to the nervous system caused by drug and alcohol use are permanent, which in the vast majority of cases, they are not.

Moreover, even stroke victims can reverse their symptoms through the power of thought coupled with dedicated physical action. Some stroke victims, even severe cases, fully recover their abilities after the damage or missing tissue continues to be monitored by neuro-imaging. These individuals regain control and use of the capabilities they lost as a result of their stroke.

Motor functions come back, loss of speech is reversed, etc., and yet when a scan of the damaged individual is done, the brain tissue is still damaged or missing.

Until the last century, these recoveries were a mystery. Prior to the development of neuro-imaging, it was assumed that the sections of the brain that ordinarily were thought to deal with speech or walking were not the zones that were damaged. This theory explained these seemingly miraculous recoveries. It was not assumed that the individuals who recovered had taught themselves how to rebuild their capabilities through certain mental and physical exercises, thereby creating a natural healing process that allowed the brain to bypass its damaged areas and put to work areas of the brain that were available to take on the extra load. The scientific community never even considered such an explanation before because the localizationism theory did not allow for such an idea. Common medical wisdom at the time said, if you hurt this section of the brain, then that is affected. But the brain is not that simple, and thank goodness it is not. Neuroplasticity means that not only do healthy zones within the brain have the ability to take over the functions of hurt or missing tissue, but it is now proven that new neuronal structures and new connections can grow or can grow stronger and adapt to compensate for human functions once lost to injury, substance use and even birth defects. We mentioned Hebb's Law in the text, "Neurons that fire together, wire together." It was observed that neurons would actually rewire themselves to become more efficient in processing the newer needs of the stroke patient. So much for the "hard-wired brain!"

Medical science came to understand that functionality lost to missing or damaged sections of the brain could be regained by healthy sections of the brain adapting and performing double duty. For example, if the speech center is damaged or missing, the over-allotted neuron paths in the motor neuron section can be taught to process speech. The brain changes its neuron process-

es because of the stroke patient's stubborn desire to talk fluently again. The mind can and does change the brain's priorities, thus producing seemingly impossible healing.

The physical structure of brain tissue and the wiring that runs it are constantly changing according to experience, motivation, physical exercise, and outside stimuli. What was once thought to be a hard-wired, genetically-driven machine turns out to be a constantly changing, plastic and marvelously adaptable organ. This is great news for substance users. Thought can and does change the brain. If a stroke victim with measurable damage can regain full physical control through hard work and neuroplastic change, then a substance user, who may not actually be damaged, certainly has the ability to change both mind and brain for the better. In fact, substance users do this every day.

Some drugs damage the brain while others seem to metabolize quite efficiently causing little or no damage. Alcohol is the most widely used drug in the world. Its use dates back at least 9,000 years. Alcohol, when ingested, can be one of the most damaging substances to the brain and body.

Anyone who is a drinker knows that if you drink heavily, often enough and over a long enough period of time, eventually you may mentally and physically crave alcohol. It is widely accepted that many people (but not all) who drink consistently experience bodily changes from metabolizing alcohol. These changes may or may not include the brain tissue, but the brain has to deal with any physical changes caused by alcohol use.

The brain, as well as the rest of the body, adjusts itself to accommodate the excess simple sugars consumed in the form of alcohol. When a person sobers up after an extended period of active drinking, the nervous system has difficulty immediately returning to its sober normal state. In extreme cases, this can result in delirium tremens (DT's) or other withdrawal symptoms. Alcohol with-

drawal is characterized by body shakes, abnormal sweating, convulsions, and in severe cases, death. Should the person experience withdrawal symptoms and survive, the symptoms usually subside within two to ten days. The body is an amazing mechanism.

Once the person has stopped drinking and has survived withdrawal, the nervous system is no different from the way it was prior to drinking. This, of course, does not mean that the individual does not need additional medical care. The side effects of heavy drinking, such as malnutrition, electrolyte imbalances, or heart, liver, pancreas and kidney problems, may require additional medical attention. However, any symptoms of "physical dependence" caused by the effects of alcohol on the nervous system are completely reversed if the individual quits drinking for five to seven consecutive days.

This is important, because much research has attempted to show that heavy alcohol and drug use have a permanent destructive addictive effect on the brain. However, all of the permanence research has failed to prove the permanence theory. And millions of severe alcohol users who have exhibited the classic withdrawal symptoms, survived, sobered up and moved on with their lives with no treatment, whatsoever.

The substance use industry mixes its religious teachings with neuroplasticity and localizationism in an effort to explain the false assumption that people are powerless over their actions. The term powerlessness became popular for the first time in the 1930's by a failing, drunken businessman named Bill Wilson, one of the co-founders of AA. Wilson was not a scientist, nor did he have a clue as to what happened in the brains or bodies of heavy substance users. He based his theories about alcohol problems on his own perceived personal weaknesses.

With the advent of neuro-imaging, the science of neurology became the newest way to look at "addiction." Yet, during the second half of the twentieth

century, powerlessness had become accepted by the substance use industry. For that reason, any new avenues of research that were developed were often corrupted to support the already accepted powerlessness norm no matter how false or inaccurate the claims were.

Now based on the new sciences, the “addiction movement” has become, and continues to be, an amalgamation of religion, neuroplasticity and localizationism. Originally, addiction grew out of the 1930’s fundamentalist Christian organization known as the Oxford Group. They were the predecessor of all 12-step groups as well as other new age alternative programs. Subsequently, localizationism was added to support the erroneous claim that the brain cannot be changed back to a normal state once substance use has changed it to the addicted state.

Neuroplasticity was incorporated into the addiction treatment industry late in the 20th century.

It offered a plausible explanation as to why people become “addicted.” In order to make the addiction theory fit into the idea of a neuroplastic change, credible science was distorted to say that substance use irreversibly changes the brain. Hence, the substance abuse industry built a fail-proof (but flawed) paradigm using a hand-picked mixture of religion and science that resulted in the notion that everyone who abuses substances will need treatment, forever. But as we have said before, people get over substance use and abuse all the time.

There is a common misunderstanding in the substance use industry that the physical brain creates all thought, rather than thoughts being the engine that drives the brain’s functions. The logic is that if the physical brain is altered through chemical means, the person’s thoughts and attitudes are then under full control of the substances ingested even after the initial effects or euphoria pass. This is the basis for the common theory of physical “addiction.”

We now know that this is not the case. Your brain is not hardwired and, as a matter of fact, the brain is one of the most adaptable and forgiving organs in the body. You have full control of yourself and you have the ability to alter your brain’s wiring and resource allocation so it can better support your life’s needs and desires. This can be done even while a person is drinking and/or drugging. The effects of alcohol and drugs are temporary. They do not affect your ability to make decisions after cessation of substance use.

For the purposes of this program, we concentrate on this order of sensory logic: 1. thought, 2. brain processing, 3. changes in brain mapping and functionality, and 4. human action. This of course, is not to say that the reverse is not possible. When we touch something, the order of input is quite the opposite: 1. touch, 2. brain processes the sense of touch, and then, 3. we think “I just touched ...” However, we are concentrating on those aspects of life that begin with thought to focus on the amazing cognitive abilities that

are responsible for the immense power you have to change your life for the better and put you back in charge of yourself.

For centuries the belief was that a person was simply an organism guided by electrical and chemical impulses caused by external stimuli emanating from gray matter. We believed we were reactive beings, constantly shoved here and there by life’s constantly changing circumstances. We were victims of our environments. But this narrow theory could not explain the complexity of living life, human beings’ remarkable ability to overcome great physical damage and adversities in life, or our ability to build goals in our mind’s eye for the future. It could not explain our creative nature or the abilities that emanate from our desires and our minds.

Neuroscience and specifically the study of neuroplasticity, our ever-malleable brain, have changed all that. Our thoughts and emotions do guide us and they can change everything about us, including our brains. This is fantastic news for those who desire a better life. Not only can you change your present circumstances, but science proves that your decision to change can force your brain to adapt and further support the choice. The system is driven by your mind, which leads the body to adapt and implement the changes you desire. It is now time to make some decisions. Throughout the Saint Jude Home Program you embark on the process of personal change, the first aspect of which is dealing with using substances.

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	No re-arrests	Month 1	After Month 1
No Treatment	44%	21%	34%
Alcoholism Clinic	32%	21%	47%
AA	31%	22%	47%

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