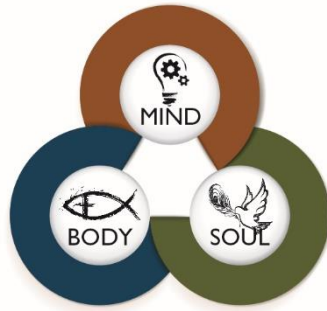


Mold Me Like Clay



Author: Sandie Gilbert

Walking with Jesus 365 is a ministry dedicated to helping people be free emotionally, mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. May you learn walking with Jesus is your journey.



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I never published the book but made copies and gave them out to help others.

Many of the people who gave me Copyright permissions have retired or taken their websites down. I have tried to note this throughout the book.

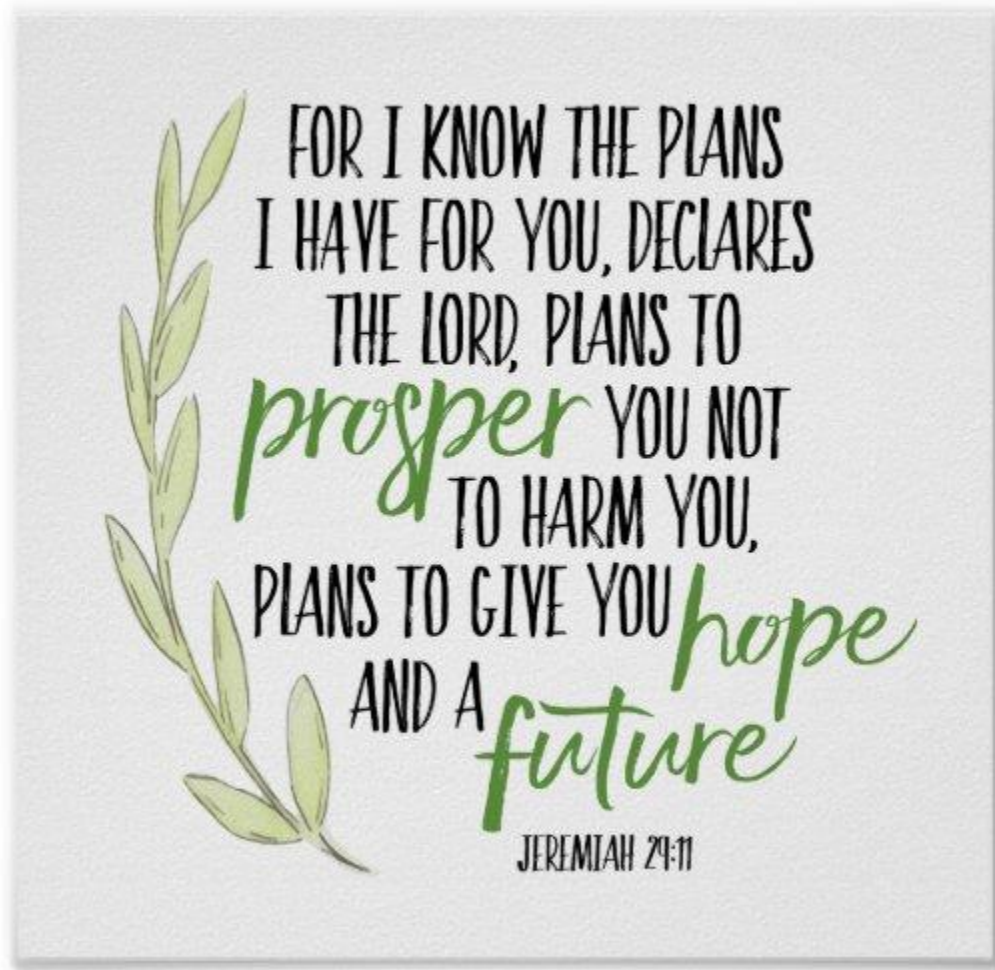
*This book will be available in download form. I want it available so anyone can have help. You are welcome to donate to the Ministry if you like,
it is not required.*

Second Revision Copyright 2023

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Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.



Hope is to expect with confidence: TRUST / desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment (Definition from <https://www.merriam-webster.com>)

Since we have hope remember:

2 Timothy 1:7 'For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind'. (NKJV)



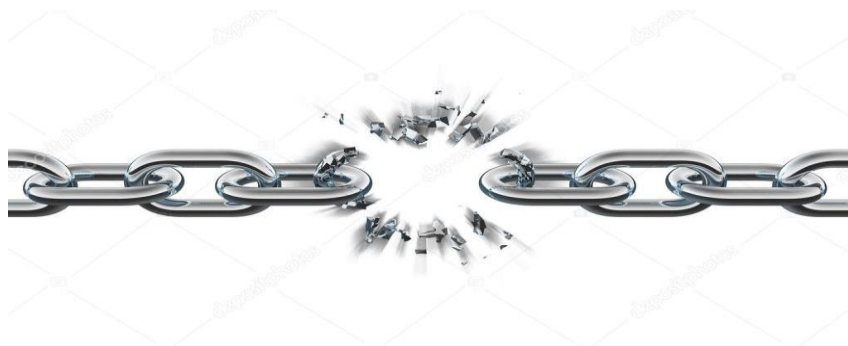
For God has not given us a spirit of fear, But of power,
love, and of a sound mind! 2 Timothy 1:7

Ephesians 6:12 'For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.'



We are in a spiritual war for our lives. This book and Hope Life Recovery are all about the fight for our lives and not giving up hope. This is Christian Life Recovery. We use professional recovery tools along with God's Word to help others live a free life, to break the chains of bondage.

May God's Blessings and hedge of protection be upon each person as they go through their life journey and healing process.



We are not licensed therapists. If you are struggling with depression or serious mental health issues or addictions, please seek professional help. This book is a tool to assist you. You May Print this workbook for teaching, but no part may be reproduced to profit from.

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This book is dedicated to my mother, Betty Koch. I thank God that He blessed me with a Christian mother. She has been by my side through thick and thin. She did not always agree with my choices, but she always kept on loving me and praying for me. She has always had the patience to listen to my ramblings. She has helped me pick up the pieces of my life many times.

Thank you, Mom, for being the BEST Mother and my BEST Friend. Thank You for everything you have done. Thank You for all you still do!

THE SERENITY PRAYER

God, grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change; Courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.

To live one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; Accepting hardship as the pathway to peace.

Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it. Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His will. That I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next.



May our Heavenly Father bring healing emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually to each of you.



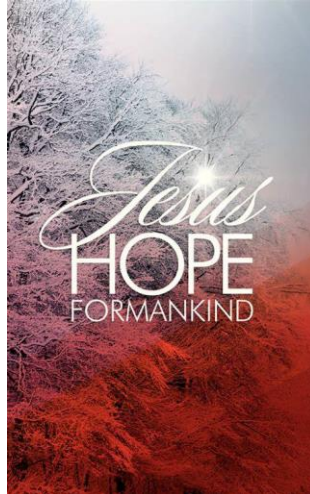
Introduction

You never know what another person's life is like. You could not know unless you have walked in their shoes. As a society judgement, gossip, lies, false accusations, and more... run rapid. People bring up one another's past from 30 years ago like they just did it. So much for forgiveness. Where is the value of life? Let me say for every one of us, spend time cleaning up your own life and you have a full-time job! None of us are perfect. We need to learn to build one another instead of tearing one another apart. You do not know what types of traumas or bullying someone is dealing with or has dealt with.



With the recent Covid Pandemic and injustices of this world people are snapping. The suicide rates are up, drug and alcohol abuse are out of control, people are suffering. It is time to let this rage and anger go. That can only be done through our Lord Jesus Christ. If you want real lasting heart change, you need Him!

Jesus is our Hope.



When Jesus walked this earth, He modeled examples of His mercy and grace. He walked His talk. He poured out His compassion to others. He served others. In the New Testament, read about the men and women whom Jesus showed compassion too. Look how He forgave them and healed them. He did not look down on anyone for their social status, sickness, color, sex or crimes. Jesus modeled for us to love the sinner but not the sin! He reached out to everyone. That does not mean everyone received Him. He reached out to a beggar, a thief, many lepers, an adulteress, a harlot, the woman at the well, a murderer, along with others such as fisherman, a tax collector, etc. Whoever reached out to Jesus ...did not leave the same. They left renewed, refreshed, healed and forgiven. God will turn your life around. It is your choice! Will you let Him?

As you go through this book you are encouraged to pray daily, read your Bible (there are great Bible apps for devotions). Meditate upon God's Word daily, journal and have a true friend who will listen. It is best to find a mature Christian who can mentor you. It is important to find someone you can trust. You do not want to be hurt further and have your personal business plastered across social media! Find a church that teaches the Full-Gospel of Christ. If you do not know of a good church in your area email info@hopeliferecovery.com We will help you locate a church in your area. We have many contacts over the US to seek out a good Bible based church.

Remember, change is not easy. It can be very painful. It can bring hurt, pain, emotions, and tears that you have buried deep. Remember in time, healing will

come. Restoration will come. Remember you cannot change others, but you can change yourself. May God bless you and bring peace to your life. May you know the joy that is everlasting.



GROUP USERS:



For groups using this book please use the following ideas:

Each person needs:

- *A copy of "Mold Me Like Clay"*
- *A Bible (NIV or NKJV or NLT preferred) These are easier to Understand*
- *A notebook for weekly notes*

- *A journal to make a record of your goals, recovery and healing & to monitor progress as you heal*
- *A prayer partner*
- *Local help phone numbers*
- *Your pastors number*
- *Your mentors number*

LISTENING RULES:

Listening is important in a group or working one on one with others. Part of healing is learning to listen to others. How often do you listen to friends and family? How often do you give the answers before they are finished speaking? I know I can be guilty!

Rules:

- 1. Focus on the positive.*
- 2. Do not minimize another person's feelings.*
- 3. While someone is talking you may ask questions after they have finished speaking. Do not offer advice unless they ask you.*
- 4. Listen because:*
 - *Listening will be a lifelong skill that will enable you to be a good friend, good worker, good mother, good father, good brother or sister, and be a great mate to your spouse.*
 - *It will help you be compassionate and understanding.*

- *Listening is an especially important part of communication.*
- *If you plan to be a facilitator or leader of a group, you must be able to listen. Ask yourself this question after a meeting, 'What do I know about this person that I didn't know before spending time with them?'*

It is important to listen. People do not want others to start analyzing them. They want someone to listen. People are not helpless. People in pain are usually depressed, discouraged, and deal with low self-esteem. They need to find out who they are in Christ. Listen to people voice their needs. Pray with that person. How we pray is important. Pray specifics when you are able.

When speaking with someone:

- 1. Have a quiet environment without distractions (turn your cell phone off and any other technology).*
- 2. Be patient, you can hear faster than a person can speak.*
- 3. Really listen to what they are saying. Do not be looking for what you will say next or get absorbed into self.*
- 4. Do not be biased in your opinions, keep an open mind.*
- 5. If you do not understand what a person is saying or what they mean, ask them to explain.*
- 6. Keep everything confidential. This is important, as you are becoming friends and confidants. You can devastate this person even more if they hear you were talking about them or if something comes back to them and they know you are the ONLY one they told.*

Your Will Be Done

Father, I thank You for this day
Father I thank You for this day sober
And I offer myself to You
For You to build with me and do
What You will, Your will be done

Relieve me of the bondage of myself
So I can better do Your will
Take away my worries and troubles too
That my victory will bear witness to
Your love, Your power and Your way of Life

Father, help me reflect your Love
To everyone I see today
From my heart thru my eyes
In my deeds, in the words I say
Help me reflect your precious love today

Chorus

Your will be done, not mine
In Your way, in Your time
Your will be done, not mine
Help me to seek, help me to find

I pray in the name of Jesus Christ Amen

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To start off I am going to share the quick version of the wounded me to the restored me. God really can turn things around if you will allow Him. While you are going through this book start working on your story.



I originally wrote the first edition of this book in 2004 and just gave it to people and never sent it to print. In the last 16 years so many more things have changed so therefore my life story changes. Never Give up through your journey in life!

My Life

I have always related well with the woman at the well. Praise God for His Redemption. I am healed and whole for the most part now. Now my children are all grown so I can really share my story. I will leave some parts out because I do not believe in telling what can hurt or tear down others. There are ways to tell life stories! Every Story will be different and unique to your own circumstances.

I grew up in the south and have southern traditions. From religion to farm life, the father gone working all the time, respect your elders and children be seen and not heard. The good parts were morals and values were installed. I was not afraid to work hard. (I do not believe in entitlements) We cared about others, we were not from It is all about me, narcissistic group.

We did not know what ADHD was in those days. I sure had it! I was always average to below average in my grades, distracted easily which did not help me to stay out of trouble. (I outgrew this in my 20's and was an 'A' Student with my college courses after my 30's). I was insecure from an early age. I was chunky dunk and the whole nine yards. We were taught respect but the only Love I saw modeled was by my grandfather. We were cared for and not abused any, but hugs and I love you was not around too much. I was very insecure as I frequently was asked why I could not do any better and not encouraged in most areas of life.

We were not taught anything about sex, so we learned from the sex ed tapes in Junior High. In my pre-teen and barely teen years there were a few situations of inappropriate touch I went through but not raped. My family was unaware as I hid this. I only share now as I hope this will help others. I became sexually active at 16. Most of the kids I went to school with were between 13-16.

So, with this said I was married at 16 which was too young, but I was hardheaded and determined. Of Course, it did not last long.

So, this set off a course of Wild Partying, Drugs, Sex addiction (I did not know till much later it was addiction.) I worked hard but went from job to job, multiple relationships, and marriages. I wanted to be loved, I wanted to feel special. I was not a chunky dunk kid anymore. I had blossomed and dating was partially a game at times to get the best-looking guy at the bar. Yes, guys women played that game too. I was also immature and wasted lots of money on buying gifts for others and doing for others. I do have a giving nature, but you do not buy friendship or love. It gets you nowhere. If anyone is respectable, they will recognize what is happening.

I was the gossip topic of many and black sheep of the family. (My Mother hates when I say that but back then I was.) During this time, I was also what they now call date raped. Being on the wild side meant I had risky behaviors. One of those was being drugged and woke up being photographed. I heard that this had happened to many others too.

I lived in an environment that ole evil one thrived in. When I was 24, I quit any kind of drugs. From 24 on my life started turning around as I had my first child.

At 29 I had my second child. From 24-48 years old was very transitional. I became a Christian at 25. I did not even understand the baggage then. I went through multiple marriages and relationships during this time. I went through one year of partying at 27 and one at 33. I did not pick drugs back up. but I was drinking, dancing and short termed boyfriends. Through it all I was learning the hard way! Looking for love in all the wrong men! I will not say places because I did not meet them in bars. It was in churches, workplaces, and later years online (that is another whole story). I worked hard to provide for my children. I loved them dearly. I apologized to both for moving us around so much and some of the people that were in their lives. This did put both through some issues which did not help as they were ADHD too.

My Daughter went down the same path for a bit but is now doing well. That is her story to tell. She is so awesome and a great Mother! I have 2 beautiful Granddaughters. My Son also turned out to be an awesome young man. He went through some things. Thank God that I was in Church during this time and trying to do the right thing. I was good to people, Caring, tried to help others be their best. My children never went without, and they always knew I loved them. Mom just picked up with men she was not matched with. I share that because I was saved but I was not free from my baggage, from my hurts, from my insecurities. I learned a lot but had a long way to go. So first I was saved. That was the starting point. Then I found out I was co-dependent and that linked me very easily to people with addictions, rather alcohol or drugs. So, I changed that pattern. Then I thought a Christian man who loves me will be different. Then came physical abuse, cheating, pornography, verbally abusive to me and my children were not shown the love they should have been. (If you know me do not assume you know who I am talking about, I do not want to hurt others and I was in several unhealthy relationships. I hope everyone else has healed and is living a good life now!) Blending families is not always easy. So anyhow Then came another spiritual growth spurt. I learned about generational curses, soul ties, sexual addiction, and more. WOW was it time to clean house in a big way. So, from 24-48 was a journey. I would be strong and have my life together long as a relationship held together...because I thought I had to have man to be complete. After this I learned, I did not have to have someone. I dated around and learned about cleaning up my baggage and through God and His Holy Spirit my life did a major turnaround. Once again, I had been in church, in ministry etc. Cause I was stable if my relationship was. The deal is I needed a stable relationship with my Savior...Jesus Christ! Once I learned why I kept repeating the same mistakes, I went through some spiritual cleansing.

After getting myself together, My Journey continues. I have been married for 10 years. God knew my soul mate. He knew who was right for me and who was right for him. Our meeting is another whole book! But We both have learned what true love is! We have learned true love sustains us through all things. We have had a wonderful, blessed marriage. We have a great blended family and that went through a little trial and error too. Where we both had our struggles in life God brought just the right life partner to support one another through any issues. My husband is in recovery. He had a year sobriety when we met. He has counseled others with

addictions, helped parents and children in court ordered cases to work on family skills, worked with jobs for felons and working currently with those in opioid crisis situations. He is also a musician and was playing in the praise band until recently. He is a cancer survivor. My husband had one attack after another as he was helping others and God gave Him the strength to stand in truth and help others. After we married, I worked with Mental Health and Substance Abuse clients in Intensive Services. I worked with women who went through way worse scenarios than I ever did. We could not bring up God in a government agency but that is what they needed. You see all those years I struggled God was with me and slowly I was learning! Without God I would not be here today! I have worked with youth a lot of my life but now with women and helping them to be free and to encourage them. I know what it is like to struggle. But I am truly a free woman now! Praise God. I have just moved back to my hometown to help my dad as a daughter and caregiver. (My brother was helping him but died a few years back from a massive heart attack). I was working as a shoe store manager during 2020 which reminds me of Jesus washing the disciple's feet. It is a blessing to help others.

I have worked for 20 years doing online ministry. This has led to our current Ministry Walking with Jesus 365. Currently, we have a website and facebook. I am excited to see what God has in store. We go to Forerunner Church, which is awesome.

I have learned to speak up, use wisdom, not stay around negative environments, to surround myself with real friends and family. I deal in truth and expect the same from those I love. I have been healed from emotional, mental and physical abuse. I have been freed from sexual and relationship addiction. I am spiritually and physically whole. I have taken college courses to help me really understand dynamics of some of the things I have been through in hopes to help someone else break cycles at a young age rather than struggle for years to be free.

Also, where friction has been in my family amends are made! God works miracles! Amazingly enough life brought me right back where most my hurt and pain started, and it hasn't been easy but it has allowed some deep rooted issues to heal.

Thank God for years of a praying Mother!!! Also, all my family now hugs and says I love you and shows love now. Between Rick and I we have 2 daughters, a son, 2 granddaughters a dog and cat. We are blessed.

That is about as short as I can do my life story to show you God heals!!!! Do not give up. Always have hope! The Journey to 59 years old has had many speed bumps but I have gotten over them and got on with life and there have been good times through these hardships, but there could have been many more good times and less hardships if I had understood why I kept making the same wrong choices.

Assignment: Start writing your life story. Keep it in a safe place. It can be hard facing truths sometimes...but the Truth shall set you free! Remember to have a true close friend or mentor to help you through rough times. Do not try to do this alone. May I suggest Ladies have a lady to help you and men have men to help you. You need someone healthy to mentor you. Often people are attracted to healthy people of the opposite sex trying to assist them with wellness. It happens in clergy and counseling all the time. Transference is a real thing. You are getting healthy, so this is a step to help you. Ladies, especially for you. When we come from unhealthy backgrounds and a man is understanding and listens, we misunderstand it often as he is interested. So, until you learn how to be healthy first take precautions. Done it myself in the past and I have seen it done to. Play it safe and smart!



As we start into this journey of Life Recovery 'HOPE' is vital. It keeps us going. Through all the craziness in my Life I may have given up on situations but never stopped hoping for a better life. What are you hoping for? What are your dreams and desires? Is God part of your future? Journal about it.

The following Verses are from the NIV Bible from the Gateway Bible Site. These are all verses on hope: I have followed each verse with the insight I get from each of these verses.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

I cannot see our Heavenly Father, but I have faith, confidence, and assurance He exists. I have seen Him work in my life, keep me alive, deliver me, keep my family safe, protect my children and grandchildren. I have had dreams and visions to pray for people and later find out these people were in trouble at the exact time God laid them on my heart to pray for. Do I doubt...Yes, I am human. Ultimately, I get into praying and God's word and I have friends to pray, and my Hope is restored!

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

God never forces us to do anything. We must be willing. Eve had a choice in the Garden and made the wrong choice which brought hell on earth. One day all will be redeemed. Do not try to figure it all out because you will not. We have got to have Faith. God has plans for all of us and as we read here plans to Prosper, Plans of Hope and Plans of a Future. He does not want to harm us. Once again ole evil one is out there wreaking havoc. Turn to God and Pray! God wants to Prosper you...choose Him!

1Peter 1:13 Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.

Grace is defined as favor, good will, generosity, kindness, (in Christian belief) the free and unmerited favor of God, as manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowal of blessings. (Oxford Dictionary) I do believe in a life hereafter in Heaven therefore my Hope is in a Savior and Eternal Life.

Ephesians 1:18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

God's calling on your life is to a restored relationship with Him. He is our creator and designer. For we are His workmanship [His own master work, a work of art], created in Christ Jesus [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, ready to be used] for good works, which God prepared [for us] beforehand [taking paths which He set], so that we would walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us]. Ephesians 2:10 Amplified Bible.

Galatians 6:8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Galatians 5:13-26 (NIV) explains the above verse best. 13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 15 If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever[c] you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

(This is a great place in your group to discuss this)

Isaiah 40:31 but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.

This has always been a favorite verse of mine. I suggest a small study in your group of eagles and how they rise above the storm! We live in crazy times and I am so thankful I have a personal relationship with our Savior. It is through Praying to him, reading His word The Bible and by speaking with other Christians and reading books that are inspired by Him that I refresh and renew my soul. He gives me strength. This world, the lies, deceptions and craziness drain me. What you feed into your mind is what you will put out. Therefore, if I watch the news and listen to negative talk or surround myself with negative people...guess what I start doing??? I become situationally depressed and negative which is not the true me. When I start recognizing this, I realize I have not been as close in my relationship to our Father above. Look at things on earth. If you are around your family or friends all the time or coworkers and then your situation changes that you are around a different group of people what changes do you notice? A great question is rather you are in addiction phase or in recovery phase who do you associate with. I always find being in a relationship with Jesus Christ gives me strength, direction, answers, and when everything around me is nuts, I am at peace I do not grow weary cause my 'Hope' is in Him! That does not mean there will not be some frustrations or battles. Make Sure your battle plan in life is focused with Jesus as your Hope!

Mark 9:23 "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes."

The oxford dictionary defines believe as: accept (something) as true; feel sure of the truth of. We are a society of fast everything. Fast Food, Instant gratification, with internet and mobile phones everything is at our fingertips. So many things are instant. With people the term everything is possible may take time. God's time is not our timing. We need to slow it down. Fast decisions often lead to mistakes. But we can find hope here as all is possible if we only believe. Easier said than put to practice.

Philippians 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

We are a work in progress. We are on a journey. It is time to see the good in you. It is time to heal. It is time to rid baggage. It is time to get rid of toxic environments. What you have experienced can help others find good in themselves. We all have a story. Until our last breath is drawn, and we meet on the other side we have a skill, a calling, a job, that is being completed in and through us. Always Hope!

Psalm 9:18 But God will never forget the needy; the hope of the afflicted will never perish.

Very self-explanatory here. Do you feel needy? You are not forgotten! Being afflicted can be pain, suffering, trouble of any kind. Here it states your Hope will never perish. There is always hope. If you feel desperate and like you have no hope and cannot find hope through these verses promise, reach out to a counselor, pastor or your therapist. You may find a support group in a church that you can share and know you are not alone.

Psalm 33:22 May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you.

If you do not feel loved just draw closer in your relationship with God. He has unfailing love. Sometimes we may go through a little tough love, but His love is unfailing. Also Do you know how to love, do you know what real love is. Often, we have distorted views of love because we did not come from a loving home, we have experiences abuse, we've been through bad relationships. There is real love! I have experienced the falsehood and the real thing. I have also put out the false thing and the real thing. As we go through our journey in life we live and learn. Also, Love is a choice not a feeling! Feelings get us in trouble. We go through all sorts of feeling which we will discuss later in this workbook. As we go through these feeling we will have choices we make! May we learn to have unfailing, unconditional Love as God shows us. First, we must know love!

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Is your joy and peace missing... God will fill us up if we turn to Him?

Psalm 3: 2-6 Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him." But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. I call out to the Lord, and he answers me from his holy mountain. I lie down and sleep; I wake again because the Lord sustains me. I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side.

Whatever you may be going through and no matter how many you feel are coming against you, trust in God. Pray and get others to pray for you. God will bring you through and deliver you. You will hold your head high in confidence and not in shame. You can learn to not live in Fear!

John 5:6-9 When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." 9 At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

Simple here, do you want to get well? How bad do you want it? We just need someone to give us a hand. Are you going to take it? In recovery often interventions are part of the process. How bad do you want it? People dealing with abuse have often become accustomed to it as a way of life. That is not love, when you are offered a way out how much do you want it? I really think the word Fear plays a large part here. Too often people become accustomed to a lifestyle they are in and it kills them slowly or rapidly. If you are reading this it means you are looking for that hand reaching out ...for a way out.

Romans 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

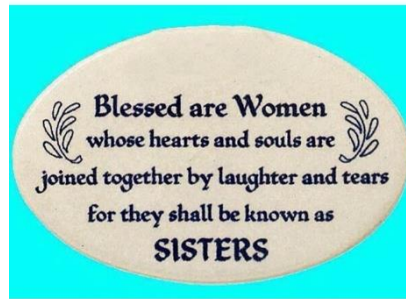
Ole evil one loves to play guilt trips and shame you and will use people to shame you and hold you back. That is toxic! Through this course we will learn more about how to step away from being shame based.

Hope does not put us to shame! God Loves You and He will teach us all how to have hope.

To have Hope... You have got to have faith to believe and trust in something or someone. If you have been lied to and hurt, it can be hard to believe to trust. It is painful and often we build up walls to protect ourselves. We must be careful who and what we put our trust in. There are many pretenders and fakes out there. We all can say we have been deceived and probably deceived someone ourselves. You may not see God but when you learn to start trusting Him and see Him start to work you can learn to

have hope. Ole evil one has already set things in place to discourage you but do not give up. I have found out in Life that God is the only one I can completely trust and believe, and my Hope is in Him. I do not say this lightly. I say this after lived experience.





Women of the Bible

Good girls & bad girls are both found in the Bible. God loves both types of gals. There are ladies and there are harlots, God loves both! Remember God knows we are human and make wrong choices at times, but He still loves us and wants to help that us have a new life that is full of joy.

From Bible times to modern times behaviors have not changed much. The lives of women in the Bible sound much like those in modern times. The difference is the punishments. There were pure women. Jesus was born of a Virgin. There were divorced women, harlots, adulteresses, and demon possessed women.

There were women with moral values and women who were just as manipulative as you could imagine. The main difference, as stated earlier, was the punishment. In those times adultery meant death or stoning. No matter what walk of life these women in the Bible came from they all had something in common. They let God make a difference in their lives. Today the same is true. No matter what you have done God loves you. He loves unconditionally which is something man cannot do. God does not agree with the wrong choices we make and there are consequences for those. (The Bible tells us we reap what we sow.) In your journal write some of the consequences you have dealt with.

Men and women will turn away and go separate directions over bad decisions. Remember God is still there. He is waiting and ready to help you pick up the pieces. Only you can make a choice to turn to God and let Him help you. God stands waiting with open arms. Our Hope is in Him! God keeps His commitments.

Read the following stories from the Bible. If you are partaking in a study group discuss how these stories relate with life today. Discuss how God can change your life as He did with these women from biblical times. In some cases, the women did not change but caused destruction for other people. Life is a great teacher. We can learn from lies and deceptions of others and what not to do too. We can also learn from others how to have virtue, strength and joy with peace.

Eve: Genesis Chapters 2 & 3

Eve had the life. She was leading lady. She knew only goodness, peace, and joy! She had the man God put her with. She did not have to worry about what to wear. There was no sin! WOW! What would that be like? Then crafty ole evil one satan comes along and he tempts her. Up to this point there was only good. Satan told her she would know good and evil, and she wanted that wisdom. Remember God walked with them in the Garden and God created them and He offered them everything except the fruit of one tree. He had already shared His knowledge with them.

Just like today we often know right from wrong, but we choose the wrong because it is appealing at the time. Is not that like today... wanting the one thing you are told you can't have. Just could not be satisfied with everything the world had to offer except one forbidden tree. What is your forbidden tree? God Still Loved Adam and Eve but all of mankind has suffered from their disobedience. When we make wrong choices, others will suffer too. Try to look at the consequences beforehand and make the right choice. This start in creation also brought the first shame. Verse 7 in chapter 3..they suddenly felt shame. Be careful who you listen to in life!

Ruth: The Book of Ruth

Ruth was a young widow. Ruth was loyal in helping Naomi. Ruth was a hard worker and provider as she gathered grain from the fields. Her love and work ethic gained her favor with Boaz who took her under his wing and encouraged her and provided her safety from others as she worked. Boaz was a Godly Man. Ruth went to Boaz at Night and He cared about her reputation and wanted the town to know her as a virtuous woman. Boaz took Ruth as his wife. Ruth's son was the grandfather of King David.

I have given a little story on each of the first two ladies.

Assign the following ladies to your group or do individually and discuss their lives and compare to current situations. My favorite is the woman at the well. Also notice as you go through this about women in Ministry. If you have been taught women are to be silent in the church or cannot be ministers etc. pay attention to the section Women in Ministry. Mary Magdalene with several other women and the Woman at the Well were important in carrying God's word. God used redeemed women of the world to carry the message.

Deborah: Judges Chapters 4 & 5

Esther: The Book of Esther

Hagar: Genesis 16 / Genesis 21: 9-21

Rahab: Joshua 2

Samson and Delilah: Judges 16

David and Bathsheba: 2 Samuel Chapters 11 & 12

Mary: Matthew: 1:18-25 / John 19:25-27

The Sinful Woman: Luke 7: 36-50

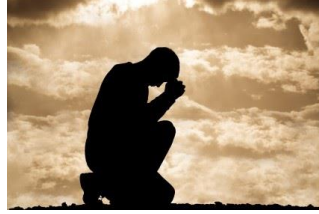
Mary Magdalene: Luke 8:1-2

Women in Ministry: Luke 8: 1-3 / Luke 23:27-30 / Luke 24: 1-12

The Persistent Woman: Matthew 15: 21-28

Woman at the Well: John 4

Each of these stories are unique and quite different.



Men of the Bible

Stories of men in Bible times are quite interesting. Some are like today and some are not. One big difference was the culture of that time allowed for many wives. That was not God's way. God says, 'A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife', not his wives. In the beginning God created woman not women. Let us face reality guys. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 mistresses. How many times have you said I do not understand what you mean to your wife or girlfriend? Imagine 1000 different personalities, 1000 women with PMS, and later in life 1000 wives going through menopause. Imagine all the child support for all those babies and 1000 jealous women. Not all that glamorous is it guys?



In Bible times there were many men of God that took a strong stand for their beliefs. Later you will read the story of Job. Many men gave their lives for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many people have today become martyrs. Men dealt with lustful temptations back then too. Will you SAY NO as Joseph did to Potiphar's wife or slip up like David with Bathsheba? Greed and power corrupted many men as it does today. Today you have the MeToo Movement. Women are not quite as they were then. (Just a note there are lies told also for personal gain...so do not be so quick to judge. Know your facts!)

Thank God for forgiveness, sanctification, and renewal! Thank God for His mercy and grace that surpasses all understanding. Thank God for how he takes these lumps of coal and applies pressure to make handsome diamonds. Yes guys, there is a woman out there that sees you as a diamond through her eyes. If not quite yet, maybe with a little more applied pressure, a little more refining and the shining up of a few rough edges; you will become a diamond in some lady's eyes.

Following is a list of stories of men from biblical times. If you are in a group, make sure to have a discussion on these stories. Many lessons can be learned from these men. God made some radical transformations with these men. You will learn how many men backslid but then came back to God with a repentant heart. Thank God for forgiveness.

Samson: Judges 13-16

Discussion: How do you relate with Samson?

David: The Psalms tell his true feelings. These stories tell of the many questions he had. They show love and adoration for God. They show the anger David felt. Read 1 Samuel 16 through 2 Samuel (all chapters) and I Kings chapters 1 & 2 to learn of David's life. David is confronted by a lion and a literal giant. Remember, whatever your giant is in life, it can be defeated when you take it to God and trust Him to help you get through it. The giant will be defeated! You will read of David's love for God, but also of betrayal, lust, adultery, and the ultimate forgiveness that came later. You will learn, even with repentance, there are still consequences from our choices.

Discussion: How do you relate to David?

Job: Read the complete book. Learn how to persevere and have strength as you go through spiritual battles. Remember you do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities and darkness.

Discussion: How do you relate with Job?

Saul / Paul: Read from the book of Acts of Paul's transformation. Learn how he martyred Christians, then how God completely changed his life around. It is not known but is speculated that he was beheaded in Rome. He changed so much that he dedicated the rest of his life to serving God. God forgave him and will forgive you too.

Discussion: How do you relate with Saul/Paul?



Time to cut the cords and stop enabling!



No More Excuses!

The flag is a symbol of freedom and unity in America. The Statue of Liberty is a symbol of our freedom. We can freely Worship. The Bible Contains God's Word that shows us how to be free! If we allow God to mold us like clay, we can learn personal freedom. This freedom comes through the acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. The Cross is the true symbol of freedom! As we trust in God, we can have the strongholds in our lives broken. We can be free and find deliverance from addictions and codependency. His forgiveness is always readily available.



The hard part is breaking old habits. Your situation did not happen overnight, and it will not be mended overnight. In the following pages you will learn what codependency is. You need to know what it is so you can learn how to detach from those situations. When you understand what relationships are healthy and unhealthy, you will be on your way to emotional healing. These relationships may exist among family, friends, someone you are dating or a spouse. The Bible speaks of the sins of generations being passed down, but those cycles can be broken. It is your generation for change.

Codependency involves being a caretaker of people who cannot handle or solve their own problems. Often these situations are relationships with alcoholics or drug addicts. Many of these result in mental, emotional, or physical abuse. Instead of functioning as a caretaker, enabling that person will only make it worse. Tough love is needed. You can have compassion, but you must be firm for your loved one to have any chance at recovery. Codependency can be just as damaging as addiction.

Christ has compassion for us on a regular basis. People will never learn to stand on their own two feet if you carry them everywhere. To detach from a codependent relationship means to allow a person to realize that they are responsible for themselves. They need to work and learn the pride of providing for themselves before they can provide for a family. They also need to acquire a whole range of problem-solving skills.

Remember change comes from within. You may influence another person, but you will not change them. Change is a personal choice. It is time to stop playing mommy and cut the apron strings. It is time for the person who has been dependent on you to grow up and you must allow them to do so. Be a friend to them but not an escape route. Above all, pray for your friends and loved ones in this situation. Pray for God to give you the knowledge and wisdom needed to assist them in making the changes that will put them on the road of recovery and do not assist them in staying lost in their addiction.

CODEPENDENCY: SYMPTOMS & MYTHS

The following information is by Kay Marie Porterfield. She wrote the book "Coping with Codependency." Permissions Granted in original Book 'Mold Me Like Clay.'

CODEPENDENCY SYMPTOMS:

The opposite side of granting control of our lives to other people is trying to seize control of their lives. If we do not respect our boundaries, we cannot respect theirs. We codependents may not punch people or even threaten them, we are much too nice for that. We may not call them names, but we are experts at bossiness. We always seem to know what the people around us should be thinking and what they should be doing. If we do not tell them outright, then we manipulate them into being the way we want them to be. We do not do this because we are bad people, but often because we are insecure people ourselves. Controlling others makes us feel wanted and needed and like we are on solid ground. Too often, trying to control others becomes a means of survival as we learn to deal with our own dysfunctional families.

MANIPULATION TACTICS CODEPENDENTS USE:

- 1. People pleasing: When we tell people what we think they want to hear no matter what we are really thinking and feeling. We are manipulating them into liking us. We pretend to be something we are not to avoid conflict and prevent people from rejecting or leaving us.*
- 2. Being instantly intimate: Sometimes codependent people crave closeness so much that we overwhelm people by crashing through their boundaries. We try to spend every minute we can with them. We share our problems with them whether they want to listen or not. We demand absolute loyalty.*
- 3. Care taking: We confuse caring about people with taking care of them. Often, we try to help people when they neither want nor to need our help. Other times we may hook up with people who really do need help and we give so much of it that we keep them dependent on us.*

4. Fixing: After a while simply taking care of people and trying to meet their needs is not enough. We go a step further in invading their boundaries by trying to change or fix them. Some of us become part-time counselors. Others become reformers. We are experts at nagging, pleading, cajoling, and whining and when people complain, we tell them that we are doing it for their own good.

5. Playing guilt games: instead of owning up to the anger we feel when our attempts at manipulation fail codependents become hurt and sad. We usually make sure people around us know how bad they have made us feel and try to make them feel guilty for hurting or disappointing us.

CODEPENDENCY MYTHS:

1. "I must have been born this way." Codependents are made not born. Hiding from self and depending on things outside for our own self esteem were lessons we learned in childhood. Since our codependency is something learned one lesson at a time, we can unlearn it one lesson at a time.

2. "Give me time; I'll outgrow this." All teenagers experience some of the symptoms of codependency some of the time. Rather than moving through the hard lessons of the teen years' codependents stay stuck there. If your youth seems far more painful than that of most teenagers you know, if you feel unhappy with yourself most of the time, you can take a chance on letting your codependency cure itself or you can take charge and do something about it now. Codependency is not just another growing pain.

3. "Codependency is a disease with no cure." The word codependency sounds serious, as though it was a fatal curse or incurable disease. It is not! Codependency is a survival skill, a set of relationship patterns and attitudes that you learned. You can unlearn them. Codependency is a set of coping habits that no longer work for you. Breaking bad habits takes effort, but it can be done.

4. "Why does everybody pick on me?" Since codependents blame themselves for everything that goes wrong in the world. You may feel that just being labeled a codependent is another way of finger pointing. It is not! You did not ask to be raised

in a family that trained or taught you how to be codependent. Choosing to remain stuck in codependency is a conscious choice for which you are responsible.

5. "I must be crazy." Absolutely not! As a codependent you may do things that make no sense to people outside of your dysfunctional relationship but make perfect sense to your codependent loved one. As you move toward independence and leaving home, as you form relationships with friends, classmates, teachers, bosses, coworkers, boyfriends, and girlfriends, it becomes painfully obvious that codependency is not working. It no longer meets your needs. It is making you miserable. Feeling bad is not the same as being crazy. Calling codependency craziness is a way of giving into it and getting out of doing something about it.

Coping with Confidence: by Kay Marie Porterfield offers practical help to young adults who want to break free from codependency. Another excellent book by Kay is Violent Voices.

After reading all the information on codependency you might recognize symptoms that resemble your situation. Not all the characteristics are bad if used properly. It is when these traits become obsessive that there is often a problem. Often people with control issues become codependent. It is easy to do since the addictive personality needs a caretaker. The controlling person takes over the care taking.

Where do you go from here? I am going to cover a situation, detachment from the situation, and healthy resolution of that situation. Ask yourself if your own feelings depend on others liking you? For example, you go to a new job. At this job there are sixty employees. Fifty-five of these employees think you are the greatest. Five think you are the biggest pain ever. The five are ruling your thoughts. Why? Because you need to be liked! Everyone wants to be liked. Face it from school years to your older years there has always been someone to be a thorn in your side. Get over it! If you like yourself and you know you are doing your best, be content with that. Where there is room for improvement, improve! Whoever is a constant pain to you, pray for them. Remember you are out to change yourself, not others. Many times, someone may be jealous over you or your success. It does not mean something is wrong with you just because others wag their tongues.

Let us take a close friend that you think is your best friend ever. You feel great when they are happy with you. You know they like you. Then your friend has an off day and is in a horrible mood. This so-called friend starts pointing out what they think are your faults. How do you feel now? If the way you feel is altered, creating a bad self-image, something is wrong. If this is a onetime thing from your friend, you can write it off to a bad day. It will take forgiveness. If this person puts you down on a regular basis you may need to detach from that person. It hurts to pull away from someone you thought was a friend or from a painful relationship. In time you will feel better, especially if you learn from the situation and do not get into another one.

Remember misery enjoys company. I had two awfully close friendships that brought much pain. One was a worldly party time friendship and the other one was a friend in the church. I say this because; you can be hurt by people anyplace. To learn to like or love someone else you need to learn to like or love yourself first. There is a fine line between love and conceit. Be happy with who you are. In God's eyes we are all equal. A humble heart is a beautiful thing. You can be humble and confident. Your actions will always speak louder than words. If you have trouble understanding how to love yourself, here are some pointers:

- 1. Take care of your body. Proper nutrition and exercise give you a great feeling of wellbeing.*
- 2. Stop putting yourself down. Have a positive outlook on life. Ask yourself if the glass is half full or half empty? Positive being half full. Everyone has things they want to change about themselves, whether they admit it or not. Remember to focus on the positive and improve on the rest. Don't let negativity rule you.*
- 3. Be patient and gentle with yourself and nurture yourself. Think of raising a child. It takes a lot of patience, gentleness, firmness, and you must nurture them. Pamper Yourself!*
- 4. Remind yourself how well you are doing.*
- 5. Forgive yourself! If you have asked God for forgiveness, He has forgiven you. We are often hardest on ourselves and satan likes to put people on guilt trips. Follow God's example, when He forgives you, your transgressions are removed as far as the*

east is from the west. They are gone! It is time to forgive yourself. When satan reminds you of your past remind him of his future!

6. Replace bad thoughts with ones of joy.

7. Remember everyone is tempted. Even Jesus was tempted when He went into the garden to pray. The difference was He did not give into the temptation. He spoke the Word of God over the temptation to the tempter. (Know your Bible!) The Word is powerful and living. When temptation comes, if possible, remove yourself from the situation. If you can't leave the situation, try to change your thoughts. (Think of ways temptation comes and how to change that situation to a positive one. We will share about this in study time.)

8. Keep a strong support system. Find family, friends, church members or coworkers that will help you maintain a healthy lifestyle.

9. Love yourself now!!! Stop putting it off. Pamper Yourself. Buy a new outfit, get a new haircut, start a diet if needed. Get exercise. Learn to rest and relax.

(Come up with a list of ways to relax, to boost your self-esteem and feel good about yourself. If in a group, share only those ideas you feel comfortable for others to hear.)

Ask yourself the following questions. These are all things that can affect your life as a codependent.

- Do you focus on solving other's problems and not your own?*
- Do you have trouble being at peace when you are worried over other people's struggles?*
- Do you focus on pleasing and protecting someone else?*
- Do you manipulate others to do things your way?*

- *It is fine to feel good from assisting others but is your actual self-esteem artificially boosted by helping others? Your self-esteem should come from within.*
- *Do you put your own interests and hobbies to the side to do what everyone else wants? Where is your identity? Friends should take turns.*
- *Do you try to dictate what others wear because they reflect you? Remember everyone is unique in their own way.*
- *Do you seem to forget how you feel or what you want in life? It is time to get in touch with your feelings. It is great to help others. As Christians we are called to be servants and help others. In the process, do not forget to take some time for yourself. Remember who you are.*
- *Do you still have dreams, or did you trade them in for everybody else's dreams? It is time to have dreams of your own and to set goals for yourself.*
- *Does fear of rejection cause you to say or do things that go against what you believe in or what you feel is right?*
- *Does another person's anger dictate your actions?*
- *Do you feel you have to give gifts all the time to be secure in your relationships?*
- *Do you leave your other friends behind as you involve yourself with someone?*
- *Do you put your morals and values away to connect with someone else?*
- *Does the quality of your life depend on someone else's?*

In answering these questions be as honest as you can. At group discussion we will cover these questions.

HOMEWORK

It is time to be aware of what is going on around you. Awareness means getting our needs met without infringing on the rights of others.

1. What has it cost you in the attempt to control others?

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

2. List some personal behaviors / feelings that you can control in order to keep yourself safe from others.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

3. List examples of how you are controlling or attempting to control others.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

4. How effective have your attempts to control others been? What has been the outcome of these situations?

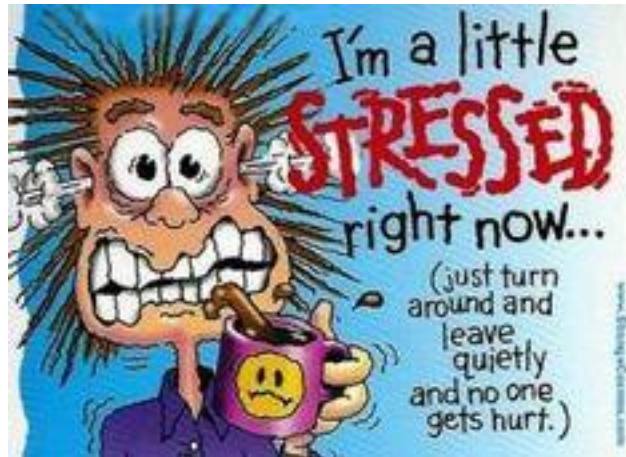
5. List two examples of something you have done for someone in the last two weeks that they could have and should have done for themselves.

1.

2.

6. List all positive things you have done for yourself in the last week.

7. What are boundaries? Look at your relationships with family, friends, coworkers, spouse, significant other, and children. Are you enabling them? What boundaries do you need to set?



STRESS

Are you stressed out? Webster's dictionary defines stress as tiredness, nervous, or depressed as a result of overwork, mental pressure, etc. Stress involves mental, emotional, and physical reactions. Stress can be the result of both positive and negative events. Change in our personal surroundings can also result in stress.

On the following pages you will find stress symptoms, a test on burning out and a test to determine if you are a perfectionist. Sometimes this creates stress since a perfectionist is often too hard on themselves or others. Often a perfectionist will do things themselves that they feel no one else can do properly. You will learn ways to manage stress and suggestions for a better night of sleep. You need rest!

The mental effects of stress may result in lack of concentration and lack of problem-solving techniques as well as forgetfulness. The person may make small mistakes since their mind is so preoccupied, they may not pay attention to the small details. Stress may cause problems at home, at work, and with friends. Friends may become forgetful and may seem not to care as much since you are already so preoccupied.

Emotional responses to unmanageable stress may include worry, irritability, and a tendency to become easily discouraged. Dealing with this type of inner turmoil often leads to depression.

The physical reaction to stress is fight or flight. When stressed many people fight verbally or physically. Some people run away. Some may be gone for a short time and some for good. Fight or flight is a response to stress, not a solution.

STRESS SYMPTOMS:

Constantly Fatigued

Increase in Smoking or Drinking

Accident Prone

Drug Abuse

Gets Sick Easily

Live a Fantasy Life

Decreased Sex Drive

No Attention to Detail

Slumped Posture

Dwells on past / not present

Angry & Irritable

Become Less Productive

Depression

Boredom

Jealousy

Apathy

Restless

Cannot Concentrate

Anxiousness

Negative

No Joy in Life

Cries

Isolation

Blame Game

Forgetful

Critical of Self

Increased Heart Rate

Tightness of Chest

Difficulty Breathing

Sweaty Palms

Trembling, Tics, or Twitching

Tightness of Neck or Back

Headache

Frequency of Urination or Diarrhea

Procrastination or Inability to Complete Projects

Nausea or Vomiting

Sleep Disturbance

Appetite Increases or Decreases

Assignment: Make a list of how many of these stress factors are affecting your well-being. What can you do to minimize stress in these areas of your life? (Use your journal)

Draw a picture that shows how you feel about yourself currently.

BURN OUT TEST

(Are you stressed to the point of burning out?)

HOW TO SCORE YOURSELF

Give yourself a score between 1 & 5 on the following questions.

1. Do you have trouble finding joy in your life? Does joy seem to be no place in sight?

1 You are doing great. Hardly any problems at all.

2 Not doing so well at.

3 Starting to have more problems dealing with.

4 Doing poorly, having many problems.

5 Cannot handle anymore.

2. Do you see less and less of your best friends and family that you used to see quite often?

1 You are doing great. Hardly any problems at all.

2 Not doing so well at.

3 Starting to have more problems dealing with.

4 Doing poorly, having many problems.

5 Cannot handle anymore.

3. Do you make time to phone friends and family or are you too busy in daily routines?

1 You are doing great - hardly any problems at all.

2 Not doing so well.

3 Starting to have more problems dealing with it

4 Doing poorly - having many problems.

5 Cannot handle anymore.

4. Do you get tired easily? Do you feel like all your energy has left you and you just want to sleep or relax?

1 You are doing great - hardly any problems at all.

2 Not doing so well.

3 Starting to have more problems dealing with it

4 Doing poorly - having many problems.

5 Cannot handle anymore.

5. Do people tell you that you do not look too hot or you look like somebody drug you through the ringer?

1 You are doing great - hardly any problems at all.

2 Not doing so well.

3 Starting to have more problems dealing with it.

4 Doing poorly - having many problems.

5 Cannot handle anymore.

6. Were you once a people person, but now find yourself saying very little to people?

1 You are doing great - hardly any problems at all.

2 Not doing so well.

3 Starting to have more problems dealing with it.

4 Doing poorly - having many problems.

5 Cannot handle anymore.

7. Do you seem to get less accomplished the harder that you work?

1 You are doing great - hardly any problems at all.

2. Not doing so well.

3 Starting to have more problems dealing with it

4 Doing poorly - having many problems.

5 Cannot handle anymore.

8. Do you feel sadness or depression or loneliness you can't explain?

1 You are doing great - hardly any problems at all.

2 Not doing so well.

3 Starting to have more problems dealing with it

4 Doing poorly - having many problems.

5 Cannot handle anymore.

9. Do you forget scheduled appointments or lose things often? Do you misplace things a lot?

1 You are doing great - hardly any problems at all.

2 Not doing so well.

3 Starting to have more problems dealing with it

4 Doing poorly - having many problems.

5 Cannot handle anymore.

10. Are you unable to laugh at yourself? This is assuming you can take a joke about yourself.

1 You are doing great - hardly any problems at all.

2 Not doing so well.

3 Starting to have more problems dealing with it

4 Doing poorly - having many problems.

5 Cannot handle anymore.

11. Does sex seem more like a chore? Have you lost the intimacy?

Have you lost the excitement of sex that it seems like work?

1 You are doing great - hardly any problems at all.

2 Not doing so well.

3 Starting to have more problems dealing with it

4 Doing poorly - having many problems.

5 Cannot handle anymore.

12. Are you having physical problems that are new? Ex: Muscle aches, pains, headaches, and a simple cold that will not go away?

1 You are doing great - hardly any problems at all.

2 Not doing so well.

3 Starting to have more problems dealing with it

4 Doing poorly - having many problems.

5 Cannot handle anymore.

13. Are you agitated easily or more critical of others or unhappy with others more?

1 You are doing great - hardly any problems at all.

2 Not doing so well.

3 Starting to have more problems dealing with it

4 Doing poorly - having many problems.

5 Cannot handle anymore.

14. At the end of the day do you feel like you do not know where you are or where you should be going?

1 You are doing great - hardly any problems at all.

2 Not doing so well.

3 Starting to have more problems dealing with it.

4 Doing poorly - having many problems.

5 Cannot handle anymore.

15. Do you have less patience? Are you more irritable? Do you have a short fuse? Do you find yourself disappointed more with other people?

1 You are doing great - hardly any problems at all.

2 Not doing so well.

3 Starting to have more problems dealing with it.

4 Doing poorly - having many problems.

5 Cannot handle anymore.

SCORING: SEE IF YOU ARE A POTENTIAL BURN OUT VICTIM

25 You are great!

25-45 There are things you need to start watching out for.

50 You are a candidate for burn out.

60 You are starting to burn out, you need to watch out.

75 You are endangering your physical health and mental wellness. It is time to re-evaluate your life and de-stress a bit! Your plate is too full!

Use the rest of this page to write ways you can simplify your life. Ways to avoid the burn out process.



AM I A PERFECTIONIST?

There is nothing wrong with wanting things done the right and in the proper way. We must remember that there is only one who is perfect. That is God! We all make mistakes. This is how we learn and mature. If we make mistakes and do not learn from them, we need to evaluate the situation and how we can work on the problem area. Perfectionism can create a lot of stress on yourself and others. You may be expecting too much of yourself and too much of family, friends, and coworkers. Look at the following statements about perfectionism. Perfectionist traits can be normal, but anything can be carried too far and become a compulsion.

- 1. Do you put excessive demands on yourself?*
- 2. Do you put excessive demands on others?*
- 3. Do you seek excessive approval from others?*
- 4. To succeed is normal. You should have a positive self-image. The question is: Does this healthy self-image turn into a compulsive drive for achievement of a superior ideal?*
- 5. Do you see everything in black and white without any gray areas? Do you feel you are the only one with the right answers? Do you have trouble meeting someplace between those black and white areas? (We learn to compromise without doing anything that is morally wrong!)*
- 6. Do you suffer from depression from self-hate? Are you too hard on yourself?*
- 7. Do you get obsessive thoughts that overwhelm you? Is it usually from personal insecurity?*
- 8. Do you move from one crisis to another? Do you thrive on solving one problem after another? Do you think you would be unhappy if you had no problems?*
- 9. Do you have trouble with insomnia? If so, is it because of unresolved problems that will not allow you to be at peace until they are resolved?*
- 10. Do you have to place everything in exact order? Ex: books, DVD's,*

clothes, notes at work, etc. Does it drive you crazy when something is out of order?

- 11. The perfectionist is caught up in self. They have trouble listening to others since they feel they have all the answers. They thrive on the approval of others. They only share things about themselves, that will build them up. They have trouble admitting failure.*
- 12. What stature of people do you hang with? Do you look at all people as being equal in God's eyes? A perfectionist does not feel they can. be average because average is failure to them.*
- 13. A perfectionist is a person of extremes. They do great with success, but become depressed with failure. (Remember success comes from learning from our failures.) Wisdom is not with us at birth. We gain knowledge as we grow up. From this knowledge we grow up and with the experience hopefully wisdom is gained.*

Please answer the following questions. Rate each one on a scale from 1-10. (1) = Not at all (10) = Very much so. Be honest with your answers. Honesty will help you to evaluate priorities later.

- _____ I am often frustrated with people's performance.*
- _____ If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing right.*
- _____ If you cannot do your best, do not do it at all.*
- _____ People ought to do right.*
- _____ Things ought to go right.*
- _____ There would not be any hassles in life if people would just cooperate with me.*
- _____ There would not be any hassles in life if I could just get it together.*
- _____ The grammar of these questions irritates me.*
- _____ I wish everyday could be a 10.*
- _____ I remember vacations that were ruined or nearly ruined because something went wrong.*
- _____ I find myself going over things I should have done better.*
- _____ I cannot leave things alone until I get them the way I want them.*

- _____ I believe that someday everything will go smoothly.*
- _____ Life is hard. Sometimes I do not know if I can make it.*
- _____ I find myself wandering at times if I am really doing enough for God?*

ADD UP YOUR SCORE:

- 50. You are a borderline perfectionist*
- 75. You are a perfectionist*
- 100. You are probably impossible to live with*
- 150. You are from another planet babe – come back to earth.*

WAYS TO MANAGE STRESS

- Ask yourself in six months will this matter. If not, forget it.*
- Develop a forgiving attitude. Most people are doing the best they can.*
- Know your own self-worth and do not depend on others for it.*
- Set your values and morals in life and live by them.*
- Take responsibility - know what you can change or control and leave the rest behind.*
- Set realistic goals and expectations. Come out of the twilight zone and face reality. Remember you do not have to be 100% all the time.*
- Watch what you say (avoid gossip) and it will not come back to you.*
- Choose your friends carefully. People who are depressed and down all the time can pull you into their rut.*
- Stand up for what you believe in. Be assertive when necessary. It is okay to say no. Know your limitations. Do not give into peer pressure.*
- Choose the environments you work in carefully. The environment at work, home, or for leisure should be in line with your personal needs and desires.*
- Prioritize to reduce stress. Do not schedule more than you have can handle. Learn to delegate tasks to others that are capable.*
- When needed, take a time out. Remove yourself from a stressful situation temporarily to regain your composure or to refresh your mind.*
- Think before you act.*
- Have a quiet time. If you have children and are unable to get away from home, have a quiet time. During this time, they lie down and take a nap or read a book and you take quiet time in another room. If you live in a noisy area try earplugs or relax with a headset hooked up to your favorite music to block out the noise.*
- Use your bedroom for sleeping. Keep your work and television in another room. This should be a place to relax. Go to bed a little earlier so you can get up a little earlier. This way you will not be in such a hurry. This is a great time for devotions and prayer.*
- In the evening prepare for the next morning. Set the breakfast table, make lunches, have everyone set out their clothes. This prevents a lot of stress.*

- *Try to keep half a tank of gas in your vehicle. Running on fumes is stressful. Allow yourself 15 extra minutes before appointments. Keep a map and know directions ahead of time. Map Quest or Google Maps are great sources to map out a trip. If all else fails, ask directions. (Careful who you ask – I have been sent on a few wild goose chases.)*
- *Don't rely on your memory. Hide house and car keys places you have easy access if you lose yours or lock yourself out. Write down appointments for you and your family and special events. A great place to keep them is in Microsoft Outlook on your calendar. Remember to set reminders to yourself. Write down thoughts or inspirations. It can stress you out to keep too much going on in your mind.*
- *Live within your budget. Try not to use credit cards for ordinary purchases.*
- *Eat healthy.*
- *Drink sensibly. Abusing alcohol or food will cause stress.*
- *Exercise regularly. Do not exercise 2-3 hours before bed. You do not want your heart rate up when you are trying to rest or sleep.*
- *If you smoke, quit!*
- *Avoid caffeine or keep in moderation. Remember chocolate and sodas have caffeine. Try to avoid caffeine in the later part of noon as it may keep you awake.*
- *Do something that will make you feel better about your appearance? (Remember within your budget.)*
- *Learn to live one day at a time. We cannot change the past. Tomorrow is not here. Today and what is in front of you is current. Deal with what is at hand.*
- *For everything that goes wrong you probably have 10 or 50 or maybe even 100 blessings. Count them. Try not to get caught in a rut.*
- *Learn to slow down and enjoy the simple things in life.*
- *Be kind to unkind people. They need it most. Do unto others as you have them do unto you.*
- *Learn to laugh again and again and again. Humor is great medicine.*
- *Pray, Pray, and Pray. God will see you through.*

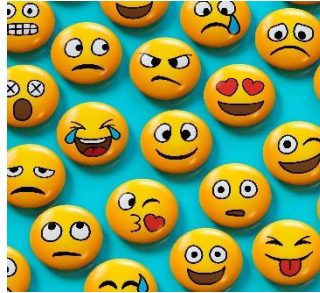
WAYS TO GET A BETTER NIGHT'S SLEEP

- *Have a comfortable bedroom. Fix your décor in a way you can relax. This will be different for everyone since we all have our own styles. If you design your bedroom for comfort, you will sleep better.*
- *Besides your basic lighting, have some soft lighting. As you prepare for sleep dim lighting can help you relax. Touch lamps are great for this and ceiling fans with attached lighting kit and remote control to dim the lights.*
- *Sometimes reading can help you fall asleep. Make sure it is a book you can relax with. A magazine of current events or a horror story could get the blood flowing strong and give you an adrenaline boost that will keep you awake or give you nightmares later. If you are married and you and your spouse fall asleep at different times, try a clip light for your book.*
- *Try to go to bed the same time each night and get up each morning at the same time. You sleep and rest better when your body is on a schedule. Make sure you get plenty of sleep.*
- *Try to avoid naps during the day if possible. If you find you must nap, try to take it the same time each day.*
- *Try to keep your bedroom as a resting and sleeping spot. Having your office in your bedroom (laptops included) and a television in your room may keep you awake. It is quite easy to get caught up in a TV show or to get wrapped up in an office project, or chatting with friends via internet. All these things are fine to do but should be kept separate from where you sleep.*
- *Try to avoid stimulation 3-4 hours before bedtime. Coffee, tea, soda, and chocolate all have caffeine. Nicotine is a stimulant too.*
- *Try not to eat a large meal 3-4 hours before sleeping. If you have the munchies before bedtime, try a glass of milk or hot decaffeinated tea (sleepy time helps many). Try a light snack. A couple of graham crackers work well.*
- *Keep your bedroom dark at night. You will rest better unless you fear the dark, which some people do. If you need some light, try to place a night light where it will provide dim lighting that will not be in your eyes. Lined Curtains can help block out light. If you like to sew, make some curtains and line the back with dark fabric.*
- *Choose a comfortable bed and pillows. Your linens can make a difference. If you want soft and sexy try silk, if you want warmth try flannel, if you want cool try cotton.*
- *If you feel unsafe at night take measures to secure yourself. Make sure smoke detectors have working batteries, install a fire or burglar alarm, & keep a phone nearby. Make sure to check your windows and doors before snuggling in for the night. All latches should be secure. If you can have pets, get a dog that will alert you if anyone is*

messing around. Always pray for God to keep his guardian angels around you and your family and friends.

- Do not use alcohol to fall asleep. This can create an addiction.*
- Keep your bedroom temperature comfy.*
- Exercise regularly but avoid 2-3 hours before going to sleep. You need time for your heart rate to settle down so you can relax and sleep easily. Even if exercise tires you out, your metabolism may take time to slow down.*
- Sleep in a well-ventilated area. Getting stuffy at night may cause you trouble sleeping. You may need a humidifier to help you sleep.*

NOTES:



FEELINGS

We need to express our feelings. We need to express what has happened in a situation and how it made us feel.

Read Ephesians 4:25

LIST OF FEELINGS

1. Do you feel totally betrayed or left unprotected?

The people who were supposed to take care of you and protect you, did not. What has happened to you is unfair and should not have happened to you or anyone. The person you thought would love you, protect you, and treat you kindly abused you. The abuse can be physical, mental, or emotional. Now you may feel rejected and left all alone. You may feel you are not good enough or that you did something wrong. You may feel that you have no one to go to and feel all alone.

2. Alone?

You may become a loner. You stay off to yourself. You feel left out and unable to share your secret or your hurts with anyone.

3. Unable to trust?

You have been hurt badly! You poured your heart and soul out to a person that lied to you or deceived you or abused you. There may have been times that you asked for help and people would not help you. This makes it so you have trouble confiding in anyone for lack of trust. Often it is a close relative that is covering up the abuse. Often when a person has been abused, they have a problem with trust for their entire life.

4. Are you overwhelmed with fear or fearful thoughts?

You have been intimidated, threatened, or abused. You are scared of what will happen next. Often you become very insecure. Since you cannot trust, you have a fear factor. The Bible tells us we do not need to fear. Fear is a tactic from satan. He uses it to keep you from reaching out and doing better in your life. "For God does not give the spirit of fear, but of POWER, and LOVE, and of a SOUND MIND.

5. Confused?

You do not know what to do, where to go, or who you can trust. Your fear to move on turns into confusion. You have trouble making decisions. Remember God had given you a "Sound Mind." Shake it off and move ahead. You may have made poor decisions in the past and be afraid to make the right decision now. Learn by your mistakes and move ahead in the right direction. You can do it.

6. Low self-esteem?

You may feel unworthy of love. You may feel you will never be loved again. You may have believed some degrading comments made about you. Well, shake it off! You are worthy! God loves you. There are many people who have been through the same thing, and they have found true love or true contentment. Love is not abuse! You have dealt with abuse, love will come, but first learn to care about yourself and to love yourself. You have your own special skills, your own special likes. You have gifts that God has blessed you with. Do not allow your blessings to be robbed from you because of another person's foolishness. Let the real you blossom.

7. Guilt?

Feeling guilty because you did not stop the abuse or that you did not stop it sooner? Feeling guilty... it was your fault? God does not put us on guilt trips! Guilt trips are a ploy from satan to keep you depressed and down and out. It is good to get over it and to get on with life.

8. Shame?

You may feel dirty or like a bad person. You may feel humiliated from the abuse you have been through. You may feel you cannot be pure. Jesus died on the cross to take away our sins if we will only ask him. When we become a Christian, it means all our sins are forgiven. God tosses them as far as the east is from the west. That means

when you accept Christ you are sinless at that point. He cleanses every sin and makes you pure and white as snow. Beyond the time of salvation and acceptance, we remain pure by constantly asking God to forgive us of our sins through the blood of Jesus.

9. Anger?

You are hurt and it just digs deeper and deeper. You get mad and then you get angry. You may feel anger at yourself. You may feel anger at the person who has hurt you. If you were a child and a parent allowed another person to abuse you, you may feel anger at both, wondering why the parent allowed it. Hard as it may be, you need to learn to let go of the anger or it will get the better of you. Chances are you will start to display this anger toward others and keep a bad cycle going.

We need to be careful of how we treat others and how we talk to others. The way we speak to others can encourage them or it can hurt their feelings and tear them down. If a person is spoken to in a tone that demeans them, or if verbally they are abused, it may create a shame-based person.

Examples of how a person may become a shame-based person:

- You are bad! You are ugly! You are fat! You are stupid! When these things are spoken to a person it instills in their minds at this point, they believe they are a bad person.*
- You are not good enough. Your personality stinks. You will never amount to anything. You will never go anywhere in life. No matter how hard you try you will never measure up.*
- You do not belong. You are reminded you do not fit into this family. (Caution needs to be used here, especially with stepfamilies, adoptive families, and foster families.) Remember there are no illegitimate children, only illegitimate parents. (Psalm 139) God loves all children!!!! In the New Testament you will find many instances where Jesus showed compassion unto children. Make sure your children feel accepted at home. If you do not do this you may find your children in a gang, or a cult or in jail. Adults, what about your social clicks? How many times have you pushed somebody aside because they did not meet your social status? Remember, in God's eyes everyone is created equal!*

• *Some parents try to discipline by withdrawing love. Children need discipline but also love. As the parent you need to tell them why they are being punished and when the punishment is done you still need to hug your child and let them know you love him or her. Often a child does something and does not understand why they are wrong. Do not ever tell your child they are unlovable. The Bible tells us not to let the sun go down on your wrath. You may be upset with your child but make amends before you go to sleep. Hug them and kiss them and this will follow over into their adulthood. This is all part of forgiving and putting things behind you.*

• *Some parents tell their children they are a mistake, or they should not exist. They tell them they are not wanted anyplace or by anyone. Careful of your words!!! No child is a mistake! Do not shame a child for the decisions you made. God places a soul in every human creation. So therefore, all children are special in God's eyes, and they are not a mistake! My son was born out of wedlock, and I thank God for Him. He is not a mistake; he is a gift from God. I thank God for Him. God does not make any junk!!!*

Being a shame-based person is a form of emotional abuse that can manifest itself in disinterest, neglect, and abandonment. Be careful of the words you say to your family and over your family. Examples of words:

- *Do not be so serious.*
- *Do not have feelings.*
- *Do not cry it makes you a sissy.*
- *Wipe that smile off your face.*
- *Do not show affection.*
- *Do not be playful.*

These are all phrases that attack a person's personality. It can cause a person to feel they are bad. Shame-based people have negative thoughts about themselves. They think, "I am ugly, I am stupid, no one will ever love me." This shame often turns to self-hatred. Shame is usually used in controlling a person. The phrases above are very calm to what a lot of children hear!

Shame Verses Guilt

Shame is defined as a painful feeling of having lost the respect of others because of improper behavior or incompetence. Shame is defined as dishonor or to disgrace. Guilt is the result of having done wrong or committed an offense. Guilt is a painful feeling of self-reproach resulting from a belief that one has done something bad or immoral.

- Shame is an evaluation of how you feel about your basic worth as a person. Guilt is a reactive feeling to a certain behavior.*
- People who feel shame often feel like fleeing, fighting, or freezing. Guilt might motivate a person to start working on a solution.*
- Shamed people feel that nothing about them is okay. They have a blurred perception. Guilt comes from acknowledging that we have crossed over our own boundaries or have crossed the line with someone else.*
- Perfectionists often tend to have feelings of inadequacy based on shame. They mask their feelings of inadequacy behind their perfectionism. Guilt is knowing you made a mistake, but not viewing yourself as completely inadequate.*
- People ruled by shame think they are a mistake. They may feel they cannot change their life or make choices for themselves. Guilty feelings can empower people to make change and make choices according to their conscience.*

GROUP EXERCISE

Now you should have an idea of your core feelings. You should be able to recognize if you overreact or under react to situations. The following assignment is to develop a plan of responses that will help you make life easier.

When I Feel:

My Response will be:

When I Feel:

My Response will be:

When I Feel:

My Response will be:

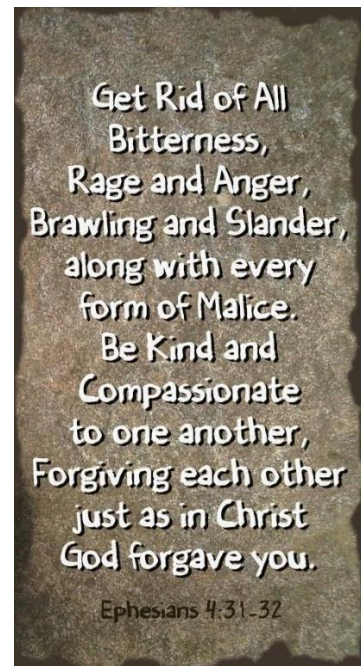
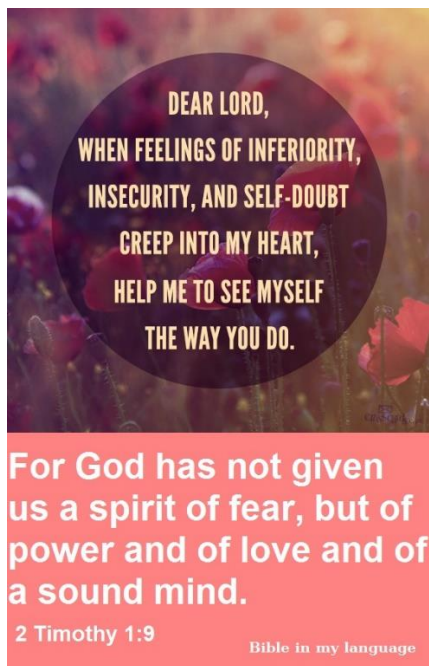
When I Feel:

My Response will be:

When I Feel:

My Response will be:

Look up Bible scriptures that will help you with these feelings.



HOMEWORK:

Values: An idea or standard based on a moral.

Rule: A standard set by everyone.

Using your journal:

- 1. Write down your values.*
- 2. Find scripture to back up your values.*
- 3. Rate yourself from 1-10 on how closely your life reflects these values. (1 being the least and 10 being the greatest.)*
- 4. What are the feelings over which you have little or no control?*
- 5. What feelings do you find yourself suppressing? Why do you think you suppress these feelings?*
- 6. What feelings did your family of origin consider were inappropriate or did they reject?*
- 7. What are examples of how you protect your feelings when you are hurt or feel vulnerable?*
- 8. How have you reacted to losing control of your feelings or how do you think you would react if you lost control of your feelings?*

Ephesians 4:26 Be ye angry and sin not....

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness....be put away....

I John 4:18 There is no fear in love....

Isaiah 35:4 Be strong, fear not.....

Matthew 10:26-31 You are more valuable than many sparrows.

Key Things to Remember:

- *God is in control. (Proverbs 19:21, 21:24, Psalms 73:23-24)*
- *You are forgiven. We all make mistakes. When someone uses this against us it makes us feel unworthy or bad. Remember God will forgive you when you ask Him too. When someone tries to make you feel bad by bringing up the past, they are trying to shame you or make you feel guilty. Remember God has forgiven you. Verses on sin being forgiven: (Psalms 32:1-3, 103:12, 130:3-4, Romans 5:1, I John 1:9, Proverbs 28:13-14.)*
- *Is it true? (Colossians 2:8, Romans 16: 17-18, John 8:3) If the truth is not being told remember the following:*
 - *Can you do anything about it?*
 - *Is this your problem or someone else's?*
 - *If it is not true, disregard it.*
 - *If it is true, try to find ways to change that behavior or action.*
 - *Make goals and plans to help you achieve a solution to the issue(s).*
 - *Ask God to help you. (James 4:2 "Ye have not, because you do not ask God." Colossians 3:15.)*

The Temptation of Jesus

Luke 4:1-13

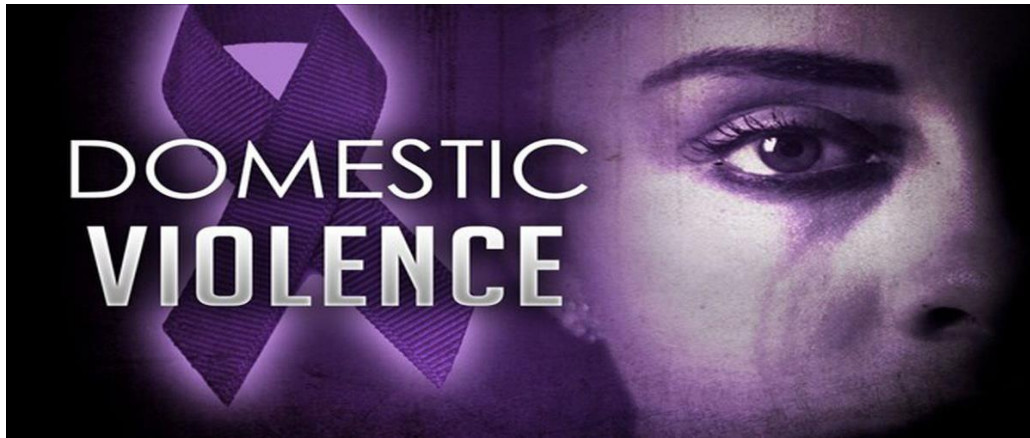
1Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, 2where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. 3The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." 4Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'" 5The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. 7So if you worship me, it will all be yours." 8Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'" 9The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. 10For it is written: " 'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; 11they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" 12Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" 13When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him.



Many feelings you think you are having may be temptations. It helps to know what God's Word says to know if the ole evil one is taunting you. If so, you should know how to rid him. Jesus set the perfect example as you just read. Many things are not actually temptations. They are sinful desires or feelings. Are you really in touch with

your feelings? Or are you misled by wounds from physical, mental, verbal, or sexual abuse?

Assignment: Discuss how you feel about the above statement.



*Do you or someone you know have the venom of a snake...Physically, Mentally,
Verbally, Emotionally or Spiritually?*

Ephesians 4:26

"Be angry and do not sin do not let the sun go down on your wrath." NKJV

Read:

Colossians 3:8-10

Proverbs 15:1-2

According to Webster:

Anger is a feeling of displeasure, resulting from injury, mistreatment, and opposition and usually showing itself in a desire to fight back at the supposed cause of this feeling, pain or trouble. Anger usually is accompanied by feelings of resentment and/or a desire for revenge. Another form of anger is indignation which is righteous anger aroused by what seems unjust, mean, or insulting. The other form of anger is rage which suggests a violent outburst of anger in which self-control is lost.

Control is to exercise authority over a person and to direct or command.

Abuse is to wrongly use or to hurt by treating badly. It is to use insulting, coarse or bad language about. (Verbal Abuse) It is the improper treatment or excessive use of something or someone.

The sections of this chapter will be:

- *Bible scripture & definitions of anger, control, and abuse.*
- *Characteristics of an abused person.*
- *Physical abuse.*
- *Verbal Abuse.*
- *Controlling Behaviors.*
- *Tools for directing anger.*

Anyone can have a potential for anger. Anger can be healthy, and it can be unhealthy. Some people do not fully recognize anger since they have grown up around it and become conditioned, it seems normal to them. The person is so used to being in denial to cover the feelings of abuse that they experienced growing up. Also, in the definition of anger is righteous anger, which is aroused by the unjust, mean and insulting.

Everyone can have a different opinion of what is right or wrong. We need to seek what God's word says about right and wrong. The answers will be found if you seek them out. When Jesus went into the temple and saw the money exchangers, He was totally angry!!! These people were defiling the House of God!!! This righteous anger was warranty.

Some people hold anger in. Other people show their anger in words. At times this can become verbally abusive with name calling, and demeaning insults. Some people get mad and scream. People throw things, put holes in walls, or play head games using sarcasm and controlling behavior to hurt. Some people get mad and hurt others by pushing, shoving, slapping, or hitting. Then there are the cases that escalate and end up in attempted manslaughter or homicide.

People who hold anger in and do not learn to constructively deal with it often end up with physical or mental illness. These people never learned the skills to vent anger so often they end up with ulcers and anxiety troubles and turn to alcohol or pills whether legal or not. People need to learn to turn to God and trust him.

People who simply show their anger in words can do lifelong damage. The old saying is "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Bones heal, but verbal abuse digs deep and lasts unless you learn how to deal with it. Many marriages break up over communication issues, usually when name calling, and demeaning language is used to bully their spouse.

Nagging can even fall into this category. Why do children turn against parents who have brought them up telling them they will never amount to anything? Why do people quit jobs when their boss tells them all the reasons, they cannot do the job, instead of training them to do the job properly first? Why do so many children have emotional problems from peer pressure? Kids are cursing and calling each other demeaning names and some of them end up in therapy and we wonder why they have low self-esteem. What we say and how we handle situations will influence many people. Remember to treat others as you want to be treated. Verbal abuse goes hand in hand with emotional and mental abuse.

Sarcasm, smart remarks, and manipulating someone into doing things in our way fall into this category. Some people get mad and become destructive to their surroundings. Look at road rage! Look at holes put in walls. I have watched many youths put holes in the walls because their parents deserted them or someone one is teasing them and picking on them. People get mad and start throwing and breaking things in the house. When a person blows up there is usually an underlying cause, it is often not the immediate issue that touched off the incident. When someone becomes explosive, they have usually been holding a lot of hurt and anger inside. The person does not know how to vent the anger, so they become irrational and strike out.

Usually by the time someone becomes physically abusive they have already been verbally abusive. Most the time when a person strikes out, words have already been exchanged. It comes back to self-control.

Assignment:

List 3 situations in your life that started as something simple and turned to a huge blow up. How could this situation have been changed to a positive? How could this have become “a agree to disagree situation”? List ways the offender and the offended should have changed their action and reaction.

The difference between physical abuse and discipline: (hopefully this will help with child rearing techniques.)

Physical abuse: Involves touching another person in anger for any reason. It is usually out of control and the motivation is to vent frustration.

Discipline: Done for a reason. Is done for direct disobedience to Bible-based values and not done in anger. The motive is to correct and train and is followed by the reassurance of love and forgiveness.

Physical Abuse Verses:

- *Proverbs 11:7-9*
- *Proverbs 22:24-25*
- *Proverbs 29:22*
- *Ephesians 6:4*

Notes

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

The following information has been obtained by permission from "The Broken Spirits Network." (Obtained with Mold Me Like Clay Book... Website no longer active)

Domestic Violence: The intentional emotional and/or physical abuse by a spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, or date.

Why do people stay in abusive relationships? A person looking at an abusive relationship from the outside tends to ask one major question: Why does he/she stay? Although the idea of walking away from a relationship seems easy enough, it isn't for a victim of domestic violence. Following are a few common reasons that victims of domestic violence stay:

FEAR: Fear is a common emotion expressed in an abusive relationship. If attempts are made to remove themselves from the situation, the retaliation from their abuser can be horrible. So, instead of trying to change things and risk being hurt more, the only option left is to stay.

ISOLATION: An important tactic used by the abuser is isolation. Turning the victim against their family and friends makes them an easier target. If the victim has no one to turn to then they think their only option is to stay.

ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE: Quite often, the abuser is the primary money maker, leaving the victim without means of financial dependence. Leaving is near impossible if there is no money to fund that escape, so the victim's only option is to stay.

CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES: If a child is raised in an abusive environment, they are more likely to have tolerance to that type of behavior than someone who hasn't. Children that were raised in domestic violence as means of resolution will learn that domestic violence is a solution in general. Children in violent households are equally more likely to become abusers. They are more prone to allow themselves to be abused.

PROFILE OF AN ABUSER: This section briefly covers some traits and characteristics commonly displayed in an abuser. Although these traits do not apply to every abuser, they do apply to most of them.

FACTS

- *The abuser is not always a man.*
- *An abuser is not always the product of an abusive childhood.*
- *You cannot always spot an abuser from a mile away. In fact, many former victims will tell you that they would have never suspected their abuser until it was too late.*
- *An abuser is not restricted to inflicting only personal pain. Most times, the psychological damage far extends the physical damage.*

COMMON TRAITS

- *Denial: In many cases, the abuser will act as nothing has happened, in order to excuse his/her behavior. If they do admit their actions, it is always the fault of the victim. They justify their actions by saying they were provoked.*
- *Abusive men and women tend to feel inadequate and depressed. They usually are perceived as arrogant and overly self-confident. This is a defense mechanism they use to hide their dislike for themselves.*
- *Jealousy and Possessiveness: An abuser feels jealous and over-possessive of their victim. They always demand to know their victim's whereabouts. They get insanely jealous at the slightest hint of someone else getting any of their victim's attention and become very hostile at the thought of losing their "property".*
- *Domination and emotional attachment: An abuser expects complete attention and support from their girlfriend / boyfriend/ wife / husband. Abusers expect and demand complete control and submission on part of the victim.*
- *Inability to understand and/or recognize their problem: The abuser is the last person to admit they have a problem if they ever admit it. Abusers commonly do not respond well to counseling because they are unable to understand their anger or confusion.*

ALCOHOL & DRUG ABUSE: Abusers tend to lean towards drugs and/or alcohol as an "escape." However, the effects of the alcohol and drugs make the attacks much more intense. Many Interviewed abusers, accused of murder, use drugs and alcohol

as their alibi. They say they did not know what they were doing, or they can't remember.

MANIPULATION: Abusers know how and when to make their partner feel guilty. By causing guilt, the victim is more likely to stay and deal with the abuse, rather than feel "responsible" for any harm their abuser might inflict on themselves. Suicide is frequently used as a method of manipulation. Sometimes an abuser will go as far as to cut or cause other forms of harm to themselves in order to keep their victim from leaving.

FREQUENT ABUSER: Many abusers have previous instances of abuse in their pasts. Some might have been arrested or treated for violent tendencies. Often their current partner is unaware of these situations.

OBSESSED WITH WEAPONS: Many abusers are infatuated with weapons. They will collect certain weapons, spend countless hours speaking about weapons, and participate in events which give them the power to use weapons.

STALKING: As an undercover method of maintaining control, an abuser will stalk or follow their partner from a far. Its purpose is to frighten their victim, and to prevent them from taking the initiative to leave. Overall, stalking invokes fear, without the abuser even touching their victim.

This section will deal with victims of abuse. (This information continues to be taken from the website: <http://brokenspirits.com> with their permission. This was from Mold Me Like Clay Book this website is no longer active)

From victim to survivor: The way a person handles a stressful situation, such as domestic violence, attack, or rape can vary from person to person. The emotions expressed tend to be similar in nature. Following is a list of emotions and feelings that tend to be present after abuse has taken place.

The emotions of the abuse survivor:

GUILT: Very often, survivors will recall situations and make statements like "I should have known..." or "If only I had..." Sometimes it is easier for the victim to blame themselves than to admit their abuser was truly to blame.

SHOCK AND DISBELIEF: Sometimes, the survivor will have an incredibly hard time facing the fact that the abuse has taken place. The survivor often makes excuses for their abuser's behavior.

LACK OF CONTROL: During the attack, the victim was entirely without control. The fear of helplessness may extend into other aspects of their lives, for varying amounts of time.

FEAR: Fear is the biggest tool used by an abuser to receive and maintain control. This fear is not only of bodily injury but of death as well. Many survivors say the reason they don't fight back or receive help right away was because they were fearful that their abuser would injure or kill them.

HUMILIATION: The survivor may feel dirty and ashamed, especially in cases where sexual abuse has taken place. Many things that took place during the abuse can be difficult or embarrassing to speak about.

BRANDED SYNDROME: The victim may feel that everyone around him/her can tell that they have been abused. In cases of male victims, the abuse itself is not nearly as bad as the fear of people finding out about the abuse.

ANGER: Anger is a common feeling that develops after an attack. Anger is a healthy and common reaction for a survivor, as long as the anger is not aimed at self. Anger can be a tool for regaining the strength and courage needed to take control of their life back.

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS: Aside from the symptoms associated with the abuse itself, some other physical symptoms are muscle tension, headaches, stomach pains, nausea, appetite loss, sleep disturbances, fatigue, and nervousness.

FEELINGS MOST FREQUENTLY EXPERIENCED FOLLOWING A SEXUAL ASSAULT

1. FEAR

- Of being alone*
- Of the rapist returning*
- Of places and people that remind them of the assault*
- Of others finding out*
- Of men or women in general*
- Of having to report the crime or going to court*
- Of their own anger*
- Of going to sleep*

2. GUILT

- For having caused the rape*
- For not fighting more*
- For being stupid enough to get in that situation*
- For all the feelings they feel*

3. ANGER

- At society and the legal system*
- At significant others for not understanding*
- At the abuser*
- At the disruption in their life*

4. SHAME & EMBARRASSMENT

- The feeling that everyone can tell they were the victim of assault, just by looking at them*

5. BETRAYAL

- *By the abuser*
- *By significant others*

6. LACK OF TRUST

- *In their own ability to make judgments*

7. POWERLESSNESS AND DEPRESSION

- *Feeling as if things will not get better*
- *Feeling totally victimized*
- *Feeling helpless*

TOOLS FOR COPING

Be gentle with your own healing process. You, and only you, know how you are feeling and how you are coping with the aftermath of the abuse. Allow yourself to feel however you need to feel, whether it is feeling angry, sad, or regretful. These feelings are perfectly normal for abuse survivors.

Give yourself time for healing. The pain and turmoil following the abuse does not go away overnight. Instead, it is a long and hard process all survivors must go through in order to heal and go on with their lives.

Try to understand and express your feelings. Your mind, body, and soul are all going to have certain ways of coping with the abuse. Taking a moment every now and then to acknowledge these feelings and behaviors are a good idea for coping.

Listen to your body. If your body needs a break, take it. The body is a strong and resilient machine, but for your body to be at its best you must take care of it. Take a few minutes in your day to do something you enjoy, by taking a minute to relax, this can make a world of difference in your recovery process.

Identify your support network. Try to be aware of supportive people in your life. Know who can talk to and trust and who you cannot trust. It is necessary for recovery to have someone you can share with.

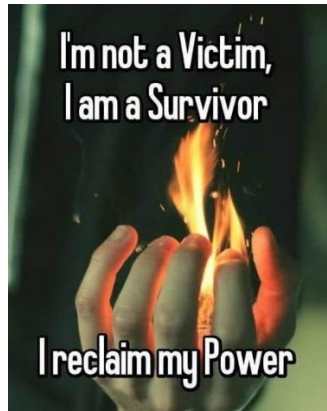
Express feelings through writing or art. Capturing your feelings at a moment can make it easier to get the most out of therapy or counseling. Many times, when a person goes to visit their therapist or counselor, they are unable to explain their feelings they were having prior. Writing these feelings down or expressing them through artwork can help you in the healing process. It will help your mental health care provider to offer the best and most effective treatment.

VICTIM SURVIVOR RIGHTS

- 1. You have the right to decide what happens to your life at any time.*
- 2. You have the right to decide what you want to do about the abuse. People can give you options, but the decision is entirely yours.*
- 3. You have the right to decide whether you will report the crime to the police and how you want to report it.*
- 4. You have the right to decide who will know about the abuse and when.*
- 5. You have the right to be informed at any time about the police and/or the district attorney as to the progress of your case at any time.*
- 6. You always have the right to have a support person with you, and you have the right to choose who that person will be.*
- 7. You have the right not to be a 'victim' for the rest of your life. You were a victim, but now you are a survivor.*

REMEMBER: YOU ARE A SURVIVOR!!!!!!!!!!

(End of information from "Broken Spirits" website.)



CHARACTERISTICS OF ABUSED PEOPLE

1. Low self-esteem.

2. They are in denial about how far the abuse has gone. Sometimes they do not even recognize abuse and accept it as normal.

3. Often, they are sick and may have addictions. Physical and mental illness may be a result. Sexual addictions may be a characteristic. An abused person may often feel starved for affection. They may misunderstand sexual encounters for intimacy. An abused person may hop from one relationship to another or from one encounter to another for one of a few reasons:

- They are scared to commit or be attached for long periods of time for fear of being abused.*

- They are so over-bearing no one sticks around.*

- They keep looking for a fairy-tale relationship since they have trouble facing reality and live in a fantasy world.*

- The abused person usually has such a need for intimacy that they may end up addicted sexually looking for love in all the wrong places and ways.*

1. They may end up with addictions to alcohol or drugs to cover and mask their hurt and pain.

2.Many abused people have psychological hurts and pains. To the abused these pains are very real. I have known many people addicted to pain killers and anti-depressants and other medications. They become experts at manipulating physicians to get medicines and mask their deep inner turmoil. When a physician confronts them, they change to a new physician. If they have used up their resources in physicians they will go to friends, family, or whoever to find some type of medicine to mask their pain. They become masters of manipulation. (Loved ones, you are not helping this person if you are enabling them. They hide their hurts and pains deeply which will cause major illness if not dealt with.) The chronic use of medications can affect their liver and other body organs.

3.Abused people are often paranoid. Fear is the main emotion abused people experience. Instead of thinking about what is best for them, they focus on everyone else and how others will be affected by their choices. Their decisions are often made in fear because they fear more abuse from someone.

4.Abused people may have problems setting limitations or boundaries in life. They do not know when to say no or recognize when enough is enough. They get set in negative patterns and do not know how to escape. When parents have been abused and do not know how to set boundaries, they may pass this trait on to their children. If a child does not see a parent limit alcohol or medication, they may follow that example. If a child sees a parent going from partner to partner and not setting sexual standards, they may find themselves becoming a victim since this is the example they have seen.

The Bible speaks of the sins of one generation being passed on to the next generation. This is because the sins are modeled in front of every generation of children. The generational curse can and must be broken. We have a choice in what we are going to pass on to the next generation. You may not have chosen your family or the situations you grew up in, but when you realize the addictive traits or abuse that have been passed from generation to generation, you can start the first steps to recovery. You can be the one that starts the change for a positive reaction in your family.



Narcissism

At the website www.mayoclinic.com Narcissism is explained as Narcissistic personality disorder — one of several types of personality disorders — is a mental condition in which people have an inflated sense of their own importance, a deep need for excessive attention and admiration, troubled relationships, and a lack of empathy for others. But behind this mask of extreme confidence lies a fragile self-esteem that is vulnerable to the slightest criticism.

A narcissistic personality disorder causes problems in many areas of life, such as relationships, work, school or financial affairs. People with narcissistic personality disorder may be generally unhappy and disappointed when they are not given the special favors or admiration, they believe they deserve. They may find their relationships unfulfilling, and others may not enjoy being around them. (end of mayo clinic description)

I have known many people that were narcissistic. They tend to be judgmental and stir trouble for others in attempt to make themselves look better. Many I have known also struggle with addictions. They also tend to use Gaslighting with people which we will discuss later. Narcissistic people lack empathy and do not learn from the consequences of their actions. From my Studies at Light University, I learned of the following characteristics I will name, that it takes 5 for diagnosis.

- *A grandiose sense of self*
- *They are preoccupied with fantasies of power and success.*
- *They believe they are incredibly special and only high-status people can understand them.*
- *Require excessive admiration.*
- *Sense of Entitlement*
- *Interpersonally exploitative (This is making use of a situation or treating others unfairly in order to gain an advantage or benefit.)*

- *Lacks empathy.*
- *Often Envious*
- *Arrogant and haughty behaviors.*

The associated symptoms of narcissism:

- *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (This person may be a total sweetheart and loved by everyone at work and entitled at home leaving you walking on eggshells. Or vice versa)*
- *Critical and complainers*
- *They are hard to please*
- *Tend to lecture*
- *Tend to have affairs*
- *Tend to be more involved in pornography*
- *They are tense inside...the motor always running*
- *They think in Black and White*
- *Misperceive reality*
- *Beat a dead horse*
- *Must prove a point*
- *Their loyalty depends on if you agree with them or not.*
- *Can enjoy arguments*
- *Obsessive, addictive, impulsive*
- *Emotionally Immature*
- *Self-absorbed*
- *Boundary Issues*
- *Intense emotional problems*
- *Feel easily rejected*
- *Often Verbally, mentally or physically abusive*
- *Use Foul Language*
- *Insecure and Insensitive*
- *Blame Others*

Brain scans of a person that is narcissistic show up as borderline personality disorder. Therefore, there can be issues with communication emotionally and with executive functioning. Often Narcissism comes from unhealthy brain patterns. You can learn about that through a study of Neuroplasticity.

God wired people to be empathetic so narcissism can be controlled but it will take some work. A Narcissist will have to learn to retrain their brain and change neuro pathways. They cannot trust their perceptions as they come from faulty thinking. It is suggested to get professional help to get you on the right path. It takes 3 weeks to make or break a habit! If you have spent a lifetime of narcissism, it may take a bit longer. It may be changing one thought pattern at a time. It is called progress not perfection.

With Narcissism be careful of The Dark Triad. The belief I am more special than you, I deserve your attention more, Winning is more important than morality or ethics, they must get what they feel they are entitled to. Lack of empathy coupled with a lack of remorse, they know right from wrong but believe they are above the rules. These are often associated with a psychopath.

Romans 1:29-32

New Living Translation

29 Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. 30 They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. 31 They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. 32 They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.

Not all narcissists are on the dark triad, not all narcissists are psychopaths, but all psychopaths are narcissists.

Be careful also on the receiving end of this. Narcissists are very charming and major cons!

Proverbs 2:12-14

New Living Translation

*12 Wisdom will save you from evil people,
from those whose words are twisted.*

*13 These men turn from the right way
to walk down dark paths.*

*14 They take pleasure in doing wrong,
and they enjoy the twisted ways of evil.*

Hebrews 5:14

New Living Translation

14 Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.

Very seldom will a narcissist go for therapy because they think they are right.

They are usually wolves in sheep's clothing.

Earlier we talked about traits of a narcissist. Now we discuss the wolf in sheep's clothing that may not be as easy to spot. (To those reading this you may be the narcissist, or you may be on the receiving end) If you have the Narcissistic traits, please seek help...If you are on the receiving end you have decisions to make! Therapy may help or you may need to remove yourself from the situation. I have had to pull away from these situations. It is not always easy. A dear loved one of mine was married to someone who was extreme narcissistic, and they pulled almost every stunt in the book to manipulate her, guilt her, abuse her, abusive to her children, threatened suicide, did insane things involving the law to control her and for a long time manipulated the system in to believing him. So, if you are barely in a situation like this and recognize it. You may want to RUN!!!! Not Run away from where you are but do not get involved!

Subtle deceptions or narcissism can include:

- *Subtle disrespect*
- *Undermining authority*
- *Being intentionally misleading*
- *Withholding information*
- *Shaming*
- *Guilt-Tripping*
- *Minimizing your feelings*
- *Questioning your motives*
- *Picking your values apart*
- *Withholding affection*
- *Withholding money*
- *Mind Games*
- *Challenging character*
- *Playing the after all I have done for you card.*

An example of this can be We really need to pray for her, she did this... while rolling eyes, using sarcasm and cutting rude remarks.

A few of these symptoms do not mean a person is a narcissist but if most of them ring a bell...Be careful! Dealing with this can be incredibly stressful which can affect your body, immune system etc. Remember one bee sting may not kill you unless you are allergic but a 1000 might. Be careful! These people say the right things to cover themselves, especially when in court, but they will never follow through.

Proverbs 26:23-25

New Living Translation

23 Smooth words may hide a wicked heart,

just as a pretty glaze covers a clay pot.

24 People may cover their hatred with pleasant words,

but they are deceiving you.

25 They pretend to be kind, but do not believe them.

Their hearts are full of many evils.

Just FYI Narcissist can retrain the brain but usually ones in the Dark Triad do not. Darkness does not like Light. Therefore, Counseling is tough. If you are narcissistic learned behavior can be unlearned. Narcissists are often influenced by.

- *Dictator style father*
- *Over spoken outspoken mother*
- *Kids treated as total royalty.*
- *Kids told everything is good when it is not. They do not learn problem solving.*
- *Realty TV, the celebrity culture, full of self-promotion*
- *Social Media and the Selfie Craze*

If you have been through Narcissistic abuse, it is time for healing! Careful of friendships and relationships. You may have false perceptions and need to clear your thought patterns and get healthy yourself. Often a person tangled up in a Narcissistic relationship, can find healing from codependency healing. Other healing may start with journaling. Why do you feel numb? Why do you feel alone? Why do you feel insecure? Learn to speak for yourself he has been speaking for you. Remember you cannot heal until the abuse stops. You need to be away from the person. They are toxic to you. Learn your uniqueness and not shame. Learn your value and worth and replace the truths of who you really are and rid the lies of being told your bad or worthless or nothing without this person. Start your healing!

Remember Narcissism is brokenness from sin.

Gaslighting

Medical News Today describes Gaslighting as a form of psychological abuse where a person or group makes someone question their sanity, perception of reality, or memories. People experiencing gaslighting often feel confused, anxious, and unable to trust themselves.

I have experienced gaslighting throughout my life. It is not fun. When you are of total sound mind and someone repeatedly says you are wrong, you do not remember, I did not say that it is not that way, etc. I have experienced from people covering up their own guilt as they cannot admit fault. Eventually after decades of the lies sometimes the Narcissists believe their own lies. Deception at its best. Often you are made to question truths you know are lies. Mind Games are not fun!

Gaslighting by someone can cause you to question your memories, the gaslighter will withhold information, belittle your feelings, pretend to forget events, change the topic, avoid questions involving truth.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline indicate that a person experiencing gaslighting may:

- *feel confused and constantly second-guess themselves*
- *find it difficult to make simple decisions*
- *frequently question if they are too sensitive*
- *become withdrawn or unsociable*
- *constantly apologize to the abusive person*
- *defend the abusive person's behavior*
- *lie to family and friends to avoid having to make excuses for them*
- *feel hopeless, joyless, worthless, or incompetent*

The National Domestic Violence Hotline offer ideas on how to gather proof. These include:

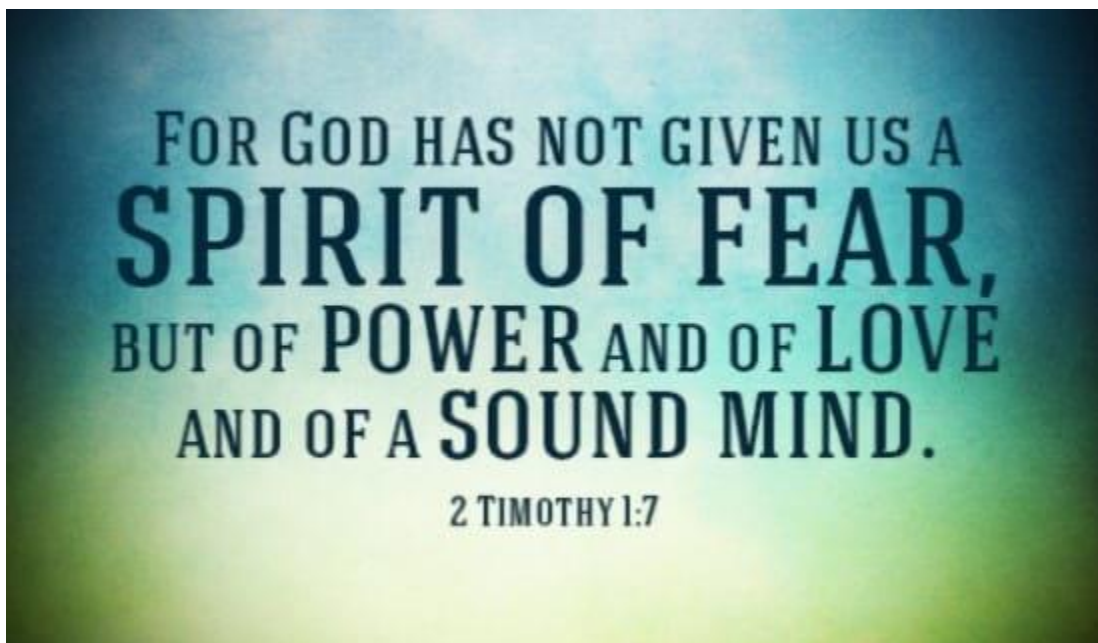
- *Keeping a secret diary: This allows a person to track events, including the date, time, and details of what happened.*
- *Talking to a trusted family member, friend, or counselor: This may help someone gain an outside perspective on the situation and to create an external, additional record of information.*
- *Taking pictures: This can also help someone "fact check" their memories and remind themselves that they are not imagining things.*

- *Keeping voice memos: Using a cell phone or device to describe events is a quick way for someone to record something that just happened in their own words. Always check state laws on recordings before using them in court.*

People can also create a safety plan, which includes ways to protect themselves from physical and emotional abuse before, during, and after leaving the relationship or situation. According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, a safety plan may include:

- *safe places and escape points*
- *the contact details of people someone can call upon for help*
- *self-care activities that help someone to cope*
- *a plan for safely leaving the abusive situation*

As you can see Narcissism and Gaslighting often intertwine. It causes you to question yourself, makes you feel crazy. I remember going to a therapist because I felt like I was losing my mind. I am thankful I did! I realized I was sane and had to change my thought processes and change some things in life to become healthy. It helped me to return to being Christ Focused and not People Focused which helped me get life back into the right perspective. Our heavenly Father wants us to be whole and healthy.



SIGNS OF VERBAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE

*Copyright 2001 Irene Matiatos, PhD web: <http://drirene.com> Permission granted.
(Make sure to visit Dr. Irene's website. It contains a wealth of knowledge and professional expertise that can help you with recovery issues of all types. I came across it in 2001 and it was a big help to me.)*

Do you wonder if your relationship may be abusive? Ask yourself the questions below. If you answer 'yes' to more than a few, you may want to take a closer look.

Does your partner?

- Ignore your feelings?*
- Disrespect you?*
- Ridicule or insult you and then tell you it is a joke or that you have no sense of humor.*
- Ridicule your beliefs, religion, race, heritage, or class?*
- Withhold approval, appreciation, or affection?*
- Give you the silent treatment?*
- Walk away without answering you?*
- Criticize you, call you names, and yell at you?*
- Humiliate you privately or in public?*
- Roll his or her eyes when you talk?*
- Give you a hard time about socializing with friend and family?*
- Make you socialize and keep up an appearance even when you don't feel like it?*
- Make sure exactly what you want is what you do not get?*
- Tell you, you are too sensitive?*
- Hurt you especially when you are down?*
- Seem energized while fighting, while fighting exhausts you?*
- Have unpredictable mood swings, alternating from good to bad for no apparent reason?*

- *Present a wonderful face to the world and is liked by outsiders?*
- *“Twist” your words, somehow turning what you said against you?*
- *Try to control decisions, money, even the way you style your hair, or wear your clothes?*
- *Complain about how badly you treat him or her?*
- *Threaten to leave or threaten to throw you out?*
- *Say things that make you feel good, but do things that make you feel bad?*
- *Ever left you stranded?*
- *Ever threaten to hurt you or your family?*
- *Ever hit or pushed you, even accidentally?*
- *Seem to stir up trouble just when you are getting closer to each other?*
- *Abuse something you love: a pet, a child, or your family?*
- *Compliment you enough to keep you happy but criticize you enough to keep you insecure.*
- *Promise never to do something hurtful again?*
- *Harass you about imagined affairs?*
- *Manipulate you with lies and contradictions?*
- *Destroy furniture, punch holes in walls, break appliances?*
- *Drive like a road-rage junkie?*
- *Act immature and selfish, yet accuse you of those behaviors?*
- *Question your every move and motive, somehow questioning your competence?*
- *Interrupt you; hear but not really listen?*
- *Make you feel like you cannot win?*
- *Use drugs and/or alcohol involved? Are things worse then?*
- *Incite you to rage, which is ‘proof’ that you are to blame?*

- *Try to convince you that he/she is right while you are wrong?*
- *Frequently says things that are later denied or accuse you of misunderstanding?*
- *Treat you like a sex object, as though sex should be provided on demand regardless of your feelings?*

Your situation is critical if the following applies to you:

- *You express your opinions less and less frequently.*
- *You find yourself walking on eggshells, careful of what & when to say something.*
- *You long for that softer, more vulnerable part of your partner to emerge.*
- *You find you make excuses for your partner's behavior.*
- *You feel emotionally unsafe.*
- *You feel somehow it is not okay to talk to others about your relationship.*
- *You hope things will change...especially through your love and understanding.*
- *You find yourself doubting your memory or sense of reality.*
- *You doubt your own judgment.*
- *You doubt your abilities.*
- *You feel vulnerable and insecure.*
- *You are becoming increasingly depressed.*
- *You feel increasingly trapped and powerless.*
- *You have been or are afraid of your partner?*
- *Your partner has physically hurt you, even once?*

If you feel your relationship may be verbally and emotionally abusive, talk to people you trust. Talk to clergy, call your local battered women's shelter, educate yourself, and seek professional help. Do not allow verbal and emotional abuse to escalate to battery? (End of article by Dr. Irene)



Anger Management

GUIDE FOR DIRECTING ANGER

- *You are responsible for your own anger. You have a choice to be calm or angry. No one can “Make you angry” unless you allow it.*
- *Be aware of your anger signs. If you see them rising in you, take a time out. If you are at home, take a walk or go into another room. If you are at work excuse yourself to the bathroom or take a break if you are able. Remove yourself from the situation until you can get it under control.*
- *Have a true and trusted friend you can trust to listen to you. Often, we can recompose ourselves after having someone to vent to. If you find yourself going to this friend constantly you may want to seek professional help. You can burn a friendship out if all they hear is complaining. People do not need to be around others who remain negative it affects their own attitude in many cases.*
- *Get yourself a journal. Sometimes it helps to write your feelings down. If you are worried about someone finding your journal, just write it down and throw it away. By doing this you were able to express yourself and by throwing it away no one will get it and sometimes it is like throwing the problem away. Also, if you throw it away you will not have to worry about the abuse getting it. Journals are best if writing down goals and positive happenings while problems are best to be written and tossed.*
- *When we are hurt and angry, we often go on a pity party and our self-esteem bottoms out. Learn to take negative thoughts and talk and turn those thoughts and words into positive ones.*

- *Learn to be patient and realistic, with patience comes virtue.*
- *Do you only see things in black and white? Can you see the gray areas? Do you view things your way or can you see the other person's point of view? When you are angry, and the other person is angry it is usually over fear and hurt? Can either of you see the underlying causes of this fear and hurt? What is your perception of the problems? Do you both see it as the same or a different problem? Try to see each other's point of view and talk this out calmly. Do not focus on your anger decide how you can change your thought process to help in resolution to the problem.*
- *Learn how not to be provoked by another person. Know your trigger points and when to step away. (An angry assailant knows where to push buttons and how to shift the blame of their anger to you.)*
- *Understand your trigger points. Remember with death, separation, or divorce there is a grieving process. (Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.) Please get counsel from your pastor or a Christian counselor if you cannot get past your grieving process. Do it first for yourself. Secondly do it for the ones that love you so that you can continue to love them without blurred emotions and thoughts.*
- *Do you get angry again and again over the same 'ole things? If so, you have an ongoing problem that needs to be dealt with. Identify the problem and find creative ways to resolve it. When you identify the problem go to God's word and seek counsel in the Bible. Do not take verses out of context to appease your anger. Look up how we are to love all our brothers and sisters, how Jesus loved unconditionally, and look up jealousy, forgiveness, etc. Whatever you have previously done did not work since you are still angry.*
- *If you continue to battle with anger, humble yourself and seek help from a professional! It is better to seek assistance, so you stop hurting yourself and others. Once you can identify your anger, source the root because you can learn how to deal with it and rebuild your self-esteem and begin to like and love yourself again. When you learn to work out your own anger you can start to love others and not abuse others due to your anger. Remember to ask forgiveness of the people you have hurt and to forgive yourself and make sure you have asked God's forgiveness.*

HOMEWORK:

- 1. List examples how you have overreacted to someone in the past.*
- 2. List ways you have under acted.*
- 3. List situations in your life over which you have been in denial.*
- 4. Make two lists. One list is what you like about yourself and the second is what you do not like about self. On the list of things, you do not like identify the things that you can change and the things that you feel you cannot change. The things you can change think about how you can change them and make a list.*

Read the following from your Bible.

- 1 Peter 5:10 God of all grace*
- Matthew 9: 10-13 They that are sick*
- Matthew 9: 21-22 Faith has made you whole...*

5. What goals have you set for your life? After you have set your goals the next step is to confront the aggressor. Remember to go in love and be firm while showing compassion. If you go in anger, you will not accomplish resolution or the begin the stages of healing. To do this:

- Have a plan. (Timing is everything!!! Do not approach when the aggressor is angry or tired.)*
- Know what you will accept and what you will not.*
- What will happen if abuse occurs?*

If you are in a life-threatening situation or physically abusive situation get professional and/or legal advice.

On making your plan: Do not set yourself up for failure. If your aggressor is drunk, high, just lost their job or had a fight with someone; or is with their friends, do not approach them. They will be more apt to carry out further abuse. Find a time when they are sober-minded and not tired.

You do not have to go by yourself if you are afraid. There are interventions that consists of a counselor, therapist, or other professional, a minister, family members and close friends who are not addicts or abusers and who care about their friend and you. Depending on age and maturity sometimes children are involved. The intervention can be done at home, at a relative's or you may involve their employer and meet in a private room at work. Many employers have programs to help fund rehabs. If you do not know whom you can trust, seek out help. There are many 800 numbers that will listen to your situation and guide you in the right direction.

I remember one situation when I realized how a person's upbringing can distort their perception on anger which led to abuse. They had abused someone and when I confronted this abuse, I was told they had not abused this person. They continued with what had happened to them growing up and that what they dealt with was abuse not what they had just done. This person's judgement of abuse was, it was not as bad as they dealt with. Often perceptions are perceived from wrong upbringing. People are often misguided.

There are services available to help addicts and abusers. There are groups to help victims recover. Many churches have support groups. A rehab does not mean a

person will necessarily conquer their problem and change but it is a step in the right direction. Every situation is different. If you feel you are in an unsafe situation please seek help.

Read:

- *John 15:22*
- *Ephesians 4:14-15*
- *Titus 3:10*
- *Galatians 2:11-14*

Daily Devotions:

- *Matthew 6:33*
- *Matthew 7:7*
- *Colossians 1: 9-14*

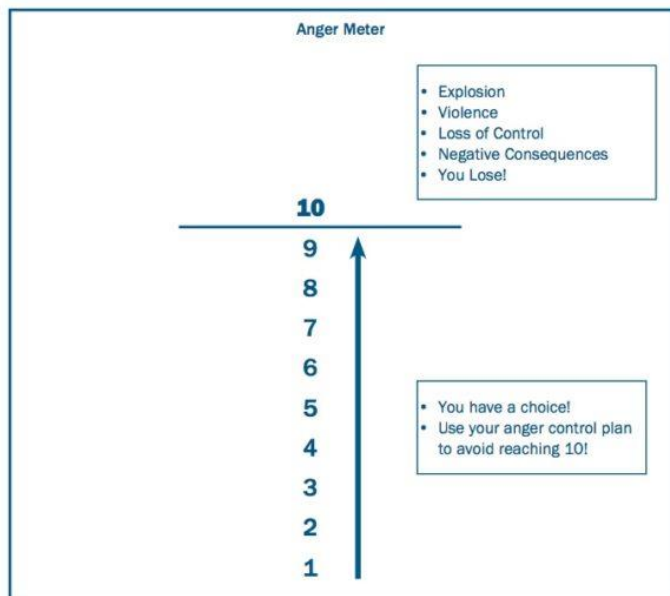
Pray for those who hurt us. Pray for strength and wisdom. If you are familiar with spiritual warfare, pray against the spirit that is lingering around. We do not have control over people. However, if you are a born-again believer, you have the spiritual authority over any spirit and can command it to leave. There are spirits and demons over sickness, anger, addictions, etc. Pray for wisdom and if you pray in the spirit, this will help you in discernment.

The following story holds true to life. It was sent to me over the internet. The author is unknown.

Once there was a little girl who had a bad temper. Her mother gave her a bag of nails and told her every time she lost her temper, she must hammer a nail into the back of

the fence. The first day the girl had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as she learned to control her anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. She discovered it was easier to hold her temper than drive those nails into the fence. Finally, the day came when the girl did not lose her temper at all. She told her mother about it. The mother now suggested that the girl pull out one nail for each day that she was able to hold her temper. The days passed and the young girl was finally able to tell her mother that the nails were all gone. The mother took her daughter and led her by her hand to the fence. She said, "You have done well, my daughter, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same again. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one." You can put a knife in a person and draw it out. It will not matter how many times you say I am sorry the wound is still there. A verbal wound is as bad as a physical wound and sometimes worse. Friends are rare jewels indeed. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed. They lend an ear; they share words of praise and they always want to open their hearts to us. Let your friends know how much you care about them.

A tool to use in helping with anger management is the anger meter. Whenever you get angry use the meter to see how angry you get. It is a tool to help you gauge your triggers.



ANGER MANAGEMENT

- **I don't have to hold on to my anger.**

2. I find ways to let it go
3. I talk about hurt and angry feelings.
4. I look for someone to discuss my anger.
5. I discuss my words and actions that hurt others.



ANGER MANAGEMENT

Common symptoms of Anger:

Physical	Mental	Behavioural	Cognitive
Muscle tension	Worry, Guilt	Tardiness	Personality Change
Vomiting/ Nausea	Nervousness	Serious Appearance	Become depressed
Headaches	Frustration	Increased frustration & irritable	Feel helpless/ hopeless
Jaw, Neck, Back Pain	Moodiness	Prone to accidents & addictions	Become explosive/ impulsive
Sleep disturbances	Nightmares	Overreacting	Exaggerated Fears
Dry Mouth/ Sweaty Palms	Diminished Concentration	Rushing & Tiredness	Develop Anxiety/ Panic
Upper respiratory infections, Appetite varies	Impaired Memory or forgetfulness	Nervous habits	Develop Physical Problems including CV disease, HBP, Ulcers, Migraine
Cold Hands		Reduce productivity	
Breathing changes (eg. Shallow, sighing)		Social withdrawal	

If you struggle with anger please get help. It is not healthy for you or others. Many Courses are out there. Samsha has a great Workbook for Anger Management!



Substance Abuse

Peter 5:8 "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith....."
NIV

Alcohol and Drugs devour and kill.

Resist: trust in God that you may not be devoured!

Psalm 9:9-10 "The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. Those who know your name will put their trust in You; for You, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you."

Is your life full of struggles? Are you feeling the pain of heartbreak? Does your heart break each time you watch a loved one take another drink or every time you see that glaze and haze in their eyes? Or pop another pill? Look up to the heavens and call upon God. Trust God to meet you right where your need is. Keep the faith! Your breakthrough is at hand!

The following story was sent to me via email. I am not sure who the author is. It was sent as a story to get signatures for a MADD petition.

WENT TO A PARTY MOM

I went to a party and remembered what you said. You told me not to drink mom, so I had sprite instead. I felt proud of myself the way you said I would, that I did not drink and drive though some friends said I should. I made a healthy choice. Your advice to me was right. The party finally ended, and the kids drove far out of sight. I got into my car, sure to make it home in one piece. I never knew what was coming, Mom. Something I expected least. Now I am lying on the pavement, and I hear the policeman say, the kid that caused the wreck was drunk. Mom, his voice seems far away. My own blood is all around me, as I try hard not to cry. I can hear the paramedic say, this girl is going to die. I am sure the guy had no idea, while he was flying high, because he chose to drink and drive. Now I would have to die. So why do people do it, Mom, knowing that it ruins lives? Now the pain is cutting me, like a hundred stabbing! Knives. Tell sister not to be afraid, Mom. Tell daddy to be brave. When I go to heaven, put Daddy's Girl on my grave. Someone should have taught him that it is wrong to drink and drive. Maybe if his parents had, I would still be alive. My breath is getting shorter, Mom, as I lie here and die. I wish that I could say, "I love you, Mom!" So, I love you and good-bye.

I am going to start this section on substance abuse with a dying mans wish. It was a man's dream for his story to be told that others may be helped through it. He especially wanted youth to hear it. Also, before I tell his story I will include situations I have seen or that has happened to friends I have known.

- At 16 years old I chatted with a friend at the mall. The next day I heard he was dead. Sniffing chemicals was fatal.*
- 16-year-old male dead - thrown into a tree: drinking and racing*
- 16-year-old twin dead - racing his friends and twin brother, car wrapped around a tree, body so mangled could not even view. (Besides the needless loss of life think of the pain carried on by the survivors.)*

- *16-year-old decapitated - drinking and racing*
- *18-year-old drowned - went surfing high*
- *21-year-old high on meth and mushrooms slices his throat*

*Alcohol and drugs have taken too many of our children and friends, and family!
Three of these cases were racing and drinking. How many lives were affected?*

- *Parents*
- *Siblings*
- *Friends*
- *A bad memory to those involved.*

Alcohol and drugs can create foolishness, which is death! I watched a young father almost take his life. He had been sniffing glue after he found out his wife was unfaithful. He held a knife to take his life. God had other plans. He is alive.

A guy I used to party with when I was 19 years old, died when he was 31. He had jaundice from liver failure. A pint of hard liquor a day, Kills! I had not seen him since I was 21, until I walked into an intensive care unit and saw him almost comatose, unable to respond. Alcohol Kills!

A 41-year-old man in a nursing home strapped to a bed and in a wheelchair at mealtime. He had to be fed. He took a trip and never came back. What a waste!

These are only a few short cases; I could tell of many more as you probably could too. My heart breaks at the lost lives because of drugs and alcohol. I visited the Outer Banks to see family (years ago now) and, on my way, home was a huge billboard with 4 beautiful teen-age girls who lost their lives. Why???? A drunken driver. So, who becomes the real victim of alcohol and drugs? It could be anyone that the user encounters.

And nowadays overdoses are rampant due to products laced with fentanyl.

Suicides are on the uprise partially due to stress from Covid. Dually diagnosed people who suffer mental illness and substance abuse are at high risk. Many have relapsed due to seclusion, unable to attend meetings, loss of jobs and more.

If you are an abuser of drugs or alcohol, there is help. First, you must admit you have a problem and be willing to seek help. Addictions can be broken. If you have a loved one with an addiction, try an intervention.

Next is a story on "Choices," I hope this chapter to follow will help open your eyes to the harm of alcohol and drugs abuse. There is deliverance and hope through the mercy and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God can restore what Satan has stolen. It is time to take control back of your life and to live the prosperous and rewarding life God intended. It is a lie and deception of Satan to think drunkenness and being high is okay. It is not. IT KILLS!!!

"Choices"

God has given us freedom of choice since "The Garden of Eden". Adam and Eve's choice changed life for all generations to come. Thank God for his redemptive plan at Calvary. We now have life restored unto us if we will ask forgiveness of our sins and accept Jesus as our Savior and put God in charge of our lives.

Today we continue to have choices. These choices can decide life or death. These choices can put us on a collision course with disaster or lead us to a fruitful and full life.

Following is a true story continuing many wrong choices - wrong choices by an individual and wrong choices made by others. In the end the ultimate choice was made, the choice that gives eternal life or death.

There was a baby boy born September of 1963. This child grew up with a father and mother and three sisters. He loved music. He was creative with his own style of music, which he played on his guitar. He had a kind heart and loved animals. He was not a fighter growing up. As he was older it became necessary for him to learn karate for defense because of the choices he was making. As this child entered teen-age years, he became involved with drugs. He remained on drugs until a short time before his death.

As a young man, he was married and had a child. Because of his choice of alcohol and drugs his wife left with their child. (2006 family reunites with grandchild and nephew

and cousin. Praise God for miracles.) He lost his best friend. His friend chose drugs and was stabbed and died from them.

This handsome strong young man picked up a trade as a brick mason. He was the best around. People would contact him from all over the state to do artistic masonry. He was a master brick mason and could lay 2000 bricks a day when he was challenged. He made a choice to excel at his work. Then came the wrong choice, he would spend every cent he earned on drugs. His drug choice was crack cocaine. Once he had \$6000 and blew it all on his addiction. He almost died from that. He would disappear for days on end. His family would worry for his safety and wellbeing.

This man continued with his drug of choice throughout his life. His lifestyle and addiction landed him in jail quite often. At 38 years old he had a lung to collapse while he was working. He went to the hospital. As soon as he was released, he had to serve a jail sentence for breaking probation. While he was in jail, he kept showing signs of further health complications. He was coughing severely, spitting up blood, and becoming very weak. When his family visited him, they could hardly communicate, since he was coughing so badly. His choices affected his health, landed him in jail, and brought heartache to his family.

At this point of his jail sentence other wrong choices that would affect his wellbeing were being made. He suffered ridicule from the staff. The staff accused him of faking his illness. They said he only had a cold. (Remember he was spitting up blood.) A jail guard went to him reaching out in kindness and told him to come with him. The guard told him they were going to re-evaluate him. This man thought he was going to receive medical attention. Instead, this cold-hearted jail guard threw him in an empty cell and told him that he would evaluate him. What a wrong choice was made by this guard. He may feel he got away with this, but as Christians, we know sin does not go unpunished. The family has struggled over the years for the mistreatment of their loved one. They have thought about going to the guard, going to the court system, or getting an attorney. They have not been sure how to handle this. This guard's abuse was unnecessary. He was deceitful. We need guards who know how to be firm and not bend the rules, but also have compassion when medical attention is needed. This guard should have taken him for a medical evaluation. The jailed man did go to the hospital soon. This man's life could have been prolonged with proper medical attention. The family hopes by sharing this portion of their son's life that a

closer look will be taken at jail and prison policies. They do not want the treatment their son received to happen to others.

The jail nurse knew this man had just come out of the hospital for his lung. His father had told her, but she would say it was a cold. (The family did not know about the guard's actions until a later date.)

While at this jail his parents went to visit him and found out they had moved him without any notification. The nurse said the doctor across the street had seen the x-rays and sent their son to a prison hospital. The nurse said they did not have room for him at that jail; the family was lied too again. They had moved their son to a prison with a hospital, but he was in the prison sector. He was not receiving any medical attention. The family asked for medical records from the doctor across the street and no one could come up with them. This man's mother posted an exceptionally large bail within the week to have him released. In two days, he underwent surgery. They found he had cancer. They completely removed one lung. They found cancer the size of an orange. For the next two years he would undergo chemotherapy and radiation treatment.

From December 2003 until March 2004 this man's life started changing. He had gone from a strong handsome man to a tall thin man. His choices were physically showing on him. That December as the cancer spread, he was hospitalized again. During this hospital stay he had a terrible accident. The medications he was given at this facility along with the drugs he already had in his system, made him unaware of his surroundings. He went out a hospital window and fell 2 stories but survived. Thank God!!!!

He received stitches in his head and had a broken foot. He took a turn for the worse and was air-lifted to another hospital. During flight, the oxygen to his brain was cut off. They put him on life support and the family had a decision to make. The decision no family wants to make, leave the life support on or take it off.

There are a lot of Christians in this man's family. The prayer warriors were in motion all over the United States. Before this day, continuous prayers were being lifted to God Almighty. At this time a chaplain and a couple other people went in his room as God was already in action! They laid hands on this loved one and began to pray. As they prayed signs of deliverance were visible. He screamed, "Get out!" & "Get out of this room!" and then he screamed "snakes leave me, get out of my legs." (Prior to

this a close friend had a dream about him. He had snakes leaving him in this dream.) After he screamed this, he was delivered, he was free from bondage! Praise God! This man finally made the right choice to go in the right direction. He took authority back over his life; satan would have him no more. He decided it was time to rid those demons that had controlled his life. Thank God for obedient saints who listened to His voice and prayed with their loved one. "Spiritual Warfare" at its best!

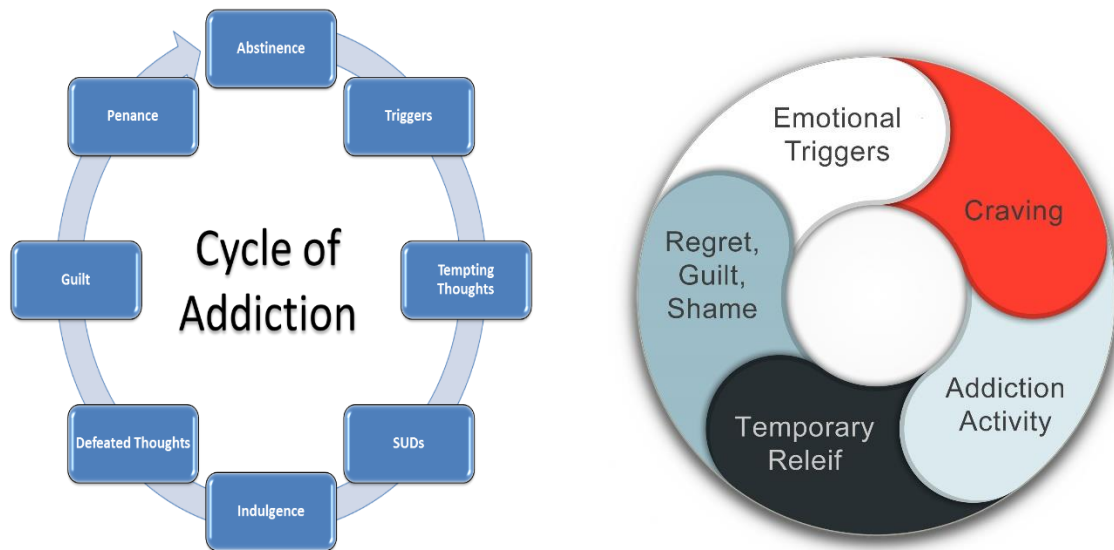
The Life support was taken off after he was prayed over. He did not need artificial means of life as God was his new lifeline. In his last three months of life, he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. He was delivered and sanctified. The negative attitude about his life turned positive. When he asked for forgiveness, he asked God to forgive him for abusing his body. Any anger he had held towards his family turned to love. Through his suffering he did not complain, and he never blamed God. He looked forward to his new home in heaven. He witnessed to his family. He would minister to them about their own lives.

This man had a dream at the end of his days. He wanted to take his story to youth groups, to high schools, or anyplace he could show youth what drugs had done to him. He wanted to share what God had done for him. He wanted them to make a right choice at a young age and not when they were at death's door. He Wanted to warn them that the cancer he had was a form that came from the use of cocaine and crack over the years. He passed on to be with our Lord and Savior March of 2004. He was unable to carry his story on in person. His story will carry on though, through books, magazines, at recovery meetings, and by word of mouth, his story will be told. Others will be told it is not too late to make a new choice in life.

His family hopes and prays that you may be touched in a special way by their son's life story. They hope someone will be reached and encouraged and have strength to endure whatever situation they may be in.

It is time to face your demon. It is time to stop allowing satan to devour you. It is time to take authority back of your life and let God be your refuge, not drugs or alcohol!

What will your choice be?



Rick Gilbert's Story

Blessed by Addiction and Born Again

I am often amazed to hear so many of my AA friends explain that at the heart of their addiction was this feeling of not belonging – of being on the outside of everything and everyone else. This was not my experience growing up at all. I liked people and they liked me. My family moved around quite a bit and I never had trouble finding and making friends – lots of them. I was a popular kid. Unlike many of my friends in

recovery, I was also a happy kid and had every reason to be. Things came easy to me. I excelled at sports, music, and student politics. I was loved and happy at home and almost everything I tried turned out well for me.

At fifteen, I remember going down to the Potomac River with a group of friends one night. I had three malt liquors, laid down and watched the stars twinkle and had an epiphany. I loved being high. I felt like I had just discovered another one of life's big gift – another bonus. To me, getting loaded was just another way of grabbing more of the great thing's life had to offer – something else to enjoy. I did not call or go home at all that night. I called my mother from a pay phone the next morning and told her I had spent the night at a friend's house and was sorry I forgot to call. I told her I had been having such a good time, that I just forgot – a partial truth. Lying and getting high became partners that night and they went hand in hand for the next thirty years.

My friends and I could drink beer at my home during high school but not to excess. My folks were the 'cool parents' and even helped me to throw an annual student/faculty Christmas party complete with champagne punch. I loved bending the rules like that and stretching the boundaries of acceptability. Using my likeability and popularity to do just that became one of my specialties. I remember waltzing a case of booze openly right past a reception line of parents and faculty at the senior prom. Maybe it was because I was president of this and winner of that or maybe just because I was full of myself; I guess they just did not have the heart to stop me, and I loved it. I was creating my own standards of acceptability and right and wrong and other people were buying it. I loved getting away with things – what fun!

Then I went off to college and was introduced to narcotics. I had the same feeling about drugs that I had had with alcohol. I liked to be high, and it just seemed natural to get that way – one of the things that I was just entitled to have along with pretty much everything else I wanted. The real seduction had begun. But at this point I was no longer a big man on campus and when things stopped falling in my lap so easily, I found that getting high was a decent substitute. I got lost in that whole hippie drug thing for a while until I realized that being poor was no fun and I needed to grow up and produce in order to live the lifestyle I wanted including lots and lots of partying.

Making money seemed like the cool thing to do and I found the same sort of acceptance and admiration in doing so that I had enjoyed during high school for being

popular. I moved to southern California to find my fame and fortune and within a year and a half was making more than my father ever had. Along with the money came a lot of awfully hard work and large amounts of stress but I found that the right drugs helped me to cope with those things. Since I had so much financial success at such an early age, I felt entitled to do drugs. They helped me to be super man and I felt like I was smart enough to see the advantage they gave me. The seduction was now well under way. Spending the money made on a lavish lifestyle and partying with lots of alcohol and cocaine seemed to me to be the proof that I had made it. It was not just the fancy BMW. It was the lines of cocaine that made me feel special. With all the drugs I was doing, I was bound to feel something, and I felt like it was my right to 'have it all' and make myself feel just as good as I could.

It was at this point that I remember noticing vaguely at times that I really was not comfortable in my own skin. Somehow, it was not a warning sign to me that I out of control that I had to be high on something virtually all the time. It was just reality. There were pharmaceuticals to increase my endurance and ability to work and others to help me stay loose and feel relaxed. There was marijuana to help me get thru tedious, boring days and cocaine for the inevitable celebrations.

I reasoned that there was the right combination of drugs for every occasion and the only thing that became foreign to me was the concept of being totally straight for any period. But I never, ever forgot my first friend alcohol. I purposefully intensified the effects of drugs with alcohol and reduced the effect of alcohol with drugs.

The inevitability of alcoholism and addiction had never really occurred to me. I just did not allow that thought to enter my mind and, of course, I dismissed any mention of that sort of thing. Sobriety might be for some people – poor unenlightened saps that they were – but they were not fooling me into it. I was special and feeling giddy and like King Kong at the same time was my birth right.

To me, sobriety was sort of lumped in there with religion – something for the less aware, weak people who needed to believe in something because they couldn't really handle reality. My father raised me to believe that things like hope and faith were certainly not real and only concepts used by weaklings - people who had to believe stuff like that because they couldn't actually make things happen in the real world. I was taught that I would create my own results and that, by my efforts I would either

make things happen in my life or I would not. I believed that things like hope and faith certainly had nothing to do with it.

I certainly considered myself lucky and I was always very appreciative of my good fortune. But it was just that – good fortune. I was loved and loved several people and almost never met anyone I disliked. I have only hated once or twice in my life and, in those days, I just crushed those people and removed them from my life. Everything seemed right so long as I had the requisite money and drugs. I could even handle it when things were not perfect so long as I had my drugs and alcohol. Looking back, I hurt and disappointed a lot of people but, in my selfishness, I figured they deserved it because, after all, they had let it happen to them and that was what happened when people were not in control of their own results. The huge irony of course is that I was anything but in control. If it really bothered me, I would go to extra lengths to be nice to them or get them to like me anyway. If that did not work, I just did enough drugs and drank enough to get over it.

I had some vague sense that ‘god’ was a spirit that lived in all of us and, since some people were evil and misguided, we had evil in the world. But that was just a very vague sense.

It is often talked about in recovery that alcoholics do not assimilate alcohol the way other people do. I believe this is true. The affect that one drink has on me is to render me incapable of saying no to the next one...or ten in addition to causing other physiological changes that do not occur in a nonalcoholic drinker. But I have heard very little about a similar effect of drugs on an addict. When I did the drugs of my choice in the quantities and with the frequency I chose, I experienced a type of euphoria that was not just induced by the narcotics themselves. It gave me a feeling of power over my circumstances – over people and places and things – a sense of controlling my own destiny. Accordingly, when I was running out of the right drug, I felt my power slipping away until I could stock up enough for the foreseeable future. That became my reality – all powerful when I had enough and powerless when I did not. What a reality! I think that casual drug users only experience the immediate affects and are not given this unrealistic sense that they have control over all the things that affect them in the world.

Over time, these things began to fail me. Money came and went and even when I had plenty, it did not make me happy. I had meaningful relationships, but they didn’t

last. I was too selfish and too concerned with my own comfort to be loved deeply for very long. My allegiance was to substances, and I loved what made me feel good and little else. Into my forties I built successful businesses and lost them. I went in and out of addictions to cocaine and opiates and became a full-blown alcoholic. I finally married a strong and very straight woman thinking that would surely cure me. As that failed to work, we had a beautiful child, and I was sure that would cure me. I stopped drinking for a while but just got more deceptive about using drugs. I stayed high on pain medication and valium for a few years without my loved ones being the wiser, but it was a struggle. I could not live without drugs and alcohol, and I could not live with them.

When my loving sister forced me, I went into rehab but, after thirty days, I checked myself into a hotel and got drunk for two days. I pretended to be sober so I could see my child for the next few months but lived with some heavy drinkers and drowned my feelings in alcohol at every opportunity. I drank well beyond the bounds of even my heavy drinking buddies.

The failures and disappointments were beginning to add up and take their toll of regret and guilt. I started to wonder occasionally if maybe I'd be better off to stop drinking and drugging altogether. That thought never lasted more than a day or two. Even if I concluded that being straight might be for the best, I had no idea how to get that way much less how to live that way. I had lost and forgotten any sense of being comfortable in my own skin and I began to really dislike myself. That dislike would soon become hatred.

Looking back, I realize that satan must have seen that his work was just about complete with me. This person who once felt that being high was just another one of life's bonuses to which he was entitled had become enslaved to what I once thought I had mastered. For most of my life I had bought all the drugs I wanted. Now they owned me. Spiritually bankrupt, physically weak, lost, alone and beyond miserable, I was extremely far gone.

About that time, I got my second DUI. A trooper passed me and turned around to come get me. I was just making the turn onto a cut thru road when I saw his lights moving fast up behind me. Unlike other times, a calm came over me. I did not know it at the time, but it was God's hand over me, leading me to Him.

That night, in His infinite Wisdom, He tricked the enemy and began to bring me home. That arrest seemed like the end of the world to me at the time, but it was the beginning of a new life – a real life. I was about to be born again. Even though, I did not believe in God at that time, He was rescuing me from the enemy and bringing me to his way of life. That is why I felt a calm about things as this was happening.

I was far from happy and, over the next twelve days in jail, I went thru detox the hard way. I had lost my job, my car and soon my place to live. But by the time I was bailed out by the one remaining person in my life who thought I was worth another chance; I had been both straight and sober for longer than I had been in thirty years. As my x mother-in-law drove me to her house that night, she made it clear that, if I stayed sober and went to AA, she would give me a place to live and get back on my feet. If I were to drink again, I would be on my own. I already knew that if I continued drinking, I would die soon. There would be no life for me with alcohol in it any longer.

I began going to AA meetings the next night. Step one had become easy for me – a no brainer. I had become powerless over alcohol and my life had clearly become unmanageable.

My pain was huge and getting larger almost daily. I can only thank God for giving me the strength to do something different. For a change, no matter how bad it got, I did not pick up the bottle. I did know that a drink would not fix anything – only make matters worse and I had learned about the second step in AA. Although I really was not at all sure that it would work, I had nothing to lose. I came to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. Without my old friend alcohol to numb my pain, the regret, guilt, self-loathing and pain just got worse and worse. One night I finally had nowhere else to turn. In tears, I got on my knees and asked Him to relieve this horrible pain that I could not bear. And that is what He did. He immediately comforted me. I was amazed.

The next few weeks were nothing short of miraculous to me. This was the very first time I had prayed in my entire life. Prior to this, I had not even made deal prayers – you know, 'get me out of this and I'll never do it again' It was not that I was above that sort of thing. I just had so little faith that to do so seemed like a stupid waste of time to me. Having been given results from my very first attempt at prayer, I was encouraged to continue and over the next few days and nights, I was rewarded with a

calm sense of peace. I asked our Father to remove from me this horrible compulsion to drink alcohol and He did – just like that. That is not to say that I never thought of a drink again, but the horrible, compulsion was gone.

I was greatly encouraged and continued with the third step of AA. I surrendered my will and my life to the care of God as I understood Him. I memorized the third step prayer and then let it come from my heart every morning and night: 'I offer myself to You to do with me and to build with me as you will. Relieve me of the bondage of myself so that I can better do your will. And take away my difficulties so that victory over them will bear witness to the others I will help come to Your love, Your power and Your way of life. Your will be done – not mine.' During that time, I asked Him to forgive me and accepted Him as my Lord and Savior. All alone with Him in that bedroom I accepted Christ. I was reborn and given new life.

I continued going to AA almost every night until I had to go to jail for the DUI. Although I am not recommending it, jail was a good experience for me. I was put in a pod with a man of God serving time on a non-DUI driving charge. Together we had Bible study almost every day and he opened my eyes to the Word. I know that this man was one in a series of people who God put in my life to help me along my walk. Soon after I met this man, I was feeling a lot of remorse for the life I had led. Noticing I was down and feeling guilty one day, he asked me if I was actually saved. He asked me if I had accepted the Lord, Jesus Christ as my Savior and asked Him to forgive my sins. When I told him I had, he told me that I had to let go of this guilt and remorse, that I had been forgiven by the Almighty himself and who was I to carry around that guilt if God had forgiven me. His words hit me like a ton of bricks, and I have not allowed myself that grimy luxury of wallowing in guilt since that day.

In His infinite wisdom, God knew that tangible results would help me along my walk with Christ.

I had not seen my little girl for three months at that time and this was the heaviest thing on my heart. I had not even told her goodbye or where I was going. Her mother is an attorney and had found out about my DUI when she saw me being moved into court in handcuffs and shackles. She had forbidden me to see my daughter since that time. While I was out on work release one day, I called her, and she was happy to hear from me knowing thru the grapevine that I had been sober for a few months. She explained that she had never wanted to keep me apart from our

daughter but that she just did not want me coming in and out of her life. Now that I was sober, she would not withhold her from me, and plans were made for me to walk alongside our daughter while she tumbled in the local Christmas parade. What a wonderful night that was. I had only let my daughter see me drunk one time, but I had often pretended to be super dad, strengthened, of course, by pharmaceuticals. This time I was the real deal and my heart swelled with the love of a father – not a drug addict father. I built a clean, new, faith-based relationship with my daughter.

A few months later, God blessed me again by putting Sandie in my life. I became even more convinced that God knew what I needed by bringing me this wonderful Christian woman with a heart for the Lord. About that same time, our Father started to send me original praise music. With His aid, I have now completed twelve songs and been blessed by being able to perform them in local churches and with wonderful people. They are always well received by Christian audiences and stand as testimony to what God can and will do in our lives if we will just get out of the way and allow Him.

These results have helped strengthen my faith and helped me to grow along my walk with our Father. He loved me so much that He used my addictions to bring me to Him. Once I finally acknowledged Him and accepted that love He has for me, my life began to change in wonderful ways. Your life will change that way too if you accept His Love, His Power and His Way of Life. You certainly do not need to be addicted as I was. But you will need to accept that your way only works so well for so long. I was blessed by my addiction because it finally put me on my knees and brought me to the Lord.

In the end, we all need what we have already been offered through Jesus Christ – a personal relationship with God Almighty, the Creator of the Universe and our Loving Father. I have gone from acknowledging Him, to loving Him, to trusting Him. I do not know what is next, but I can honestly tell you that I trust it all to Him and, even if there are hard times or dues to pay, I know that His plan for me is more wonderful than any I could have dreamed of much less achieved on my own. 2010

Go to www.ncadd.com (National Commission Against Drunk Drivers). Take notes on what makes the greatest impact on you as you read.

- Research the effects of drugs and alcohol on your body:*
- On your mental wellbeing:*
- On family and friends:*
- On innocent bystanders:*

In the previous stories we have read of the effects drug and alcohol have taken on lives. These were true stories. If you are an alcoholic or your children are growing up in an alcoholic home, please read the following. Growing up in this environment may cause lifelong issues for children subjected to this lifestyle.

- These children often end up in relationships with someone that has an addiction problem.*
- They have trouble in an intimate relationship, trouble starting a relationship and often have trouble maintaining a healthy one. They have grown up without affection, so often they do not know how to show it.*
- They run a high risk of becoming chemically dependent on drugs or alcohol.*
- They often have low self-esteem and suffer depression. They are often raised under a great deal of criticism. They are very critical of themselves as they have been told they are low lives or worthless.*
- They often have trust issues. They lie to themselves. They grow up in lies, deceit and cover-ups. They are often embarrassed by their parents' drunkenness, rage episodes, and behaviors. This becomes a learned behavior growing up in it. Remember children are what they learn.*
- These children may have trouble having fun. Many have grown up in abusive homes. The home has not shown love and mercy or stability. So, the child has no concept of this until they visit a friend's home and see that it is different. The child sees laughter and playfulness at another home and wonders why their home is full of anger, rage, hate, violence, and why they have experienced some form of abuse.*

We need to pray to God for these cycles to be broken. We need to pray that the sins of generation to generation will be broken. We need to pray for healing in our

homes. I have worked with children on and off for 25 years all over the United States. I have worked with church children, and inner-city youth of all races and nationalities. Alcohol and drugs are found in any group. Abuse, alcohol, and drug addiction take place in a variety of environments. It is sad to see what issues many of these children have. It is amazing and heart breaking to listen to a five-year-old tell you about guns held at people, their mother taking money from men, and that they have been beat so badly they do not feel physical pain. Teens in metro areas fear for their lives at school, in the streets, and at home. These children become victims.

It is time to turn our homes back to Christ. It is time to put morals and values in our homes, schools, and yes, even churches. I get fired up when children are abused. I thank God for foster parents and children's homes that show love, forgiveness, and guidance. It is time for homes to mend. It is time for alcohol, drugs, hate and abuse to leave homes! It is time for husbands and fathers to take responsibility for their children and extended families and the same for mothers. If you bring a blended family together you are to love that whole family. If you cannot love all of them, then don't become a family. Both sides will suffer. If you are already married and have problems loving all your family, pray to God to change your own heart. God has called us to love others, not to hate them. Carrying God's love into the world should start from home.

The true key to deliverance from drugs, alcohol, abuse or hate is God Almighty!!!

Notes:



FORGIVENESS

God forgives us when we ask. After God has forgiven us, we need to learn how to forgive ourselves. Do not let satan keep you under bondage. He will put you on guilt trips about your past. You cannot change your past, but you can change today and each day you are blessed with. Whether you have been the abuser or the victim, remember one thing, this was satan's plan of destruction for your life. It is time for family and friends to forgive one another and let God's redemptive plan work in your lives. As God has shown mercy and grace to us, let us show one another. Remember on the cross Jesus said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Verses on forgiveness:

1. God's Forgiveness

- *Isaiah 41:34 - Remember, sin no more. NKJV*
- *Isaiah 43:25 - God forgives us. NKJV*
- *Colossians 1:21-23 - You are holy and blameless. NKJV*
- *Psalms 103 - Your sins are forgiven, your diseases healed, and sins removed as far as the east from the west. NIV*

2. Forgiving self

- *Romans 8: 31-39 - Christ does not condemn you. (So, stop condemning yourself.) NKJV*

• *John 8: 36 - Jesus makes you free of sin. NKJV (Forgive yourself, Jesus set you free, so free yourself and forgive yourself.*

• *Romans 6: 20-23 - Set free from sin. NKJV*

3. Forgiving others that have wronged you.

• *Mark 11:25 -You need to forgive others, so God may forgive you. NKJV*

• *Luke 6: 35-42 - Judge not, condemn not, forgive and be forgiven. NKJV*

• *Ephesians 4:31-32 - "...Forgive as Christ hath forgiven you..." NKJV*

Forgiveness

Compassion

Healing

Restoration

What does the above four words mean to you?

It is time to start the healing process. Remember, God died on the cross, so that we may be forgiven and healed. The above 4 words are major steps in the healing process.

Forgiveness Assignment:

1. Take a long look at your life. Are there things for which you have not forgiven yourself or others? Take your journal and write down the current date. After that, write the things you are carrying guilt for and have not forgiven yourself for. It is time to rid these things. Take each thing on your list and ask forgiveness and then throw the list away because that is what Jesus just did with that sin.

2. Make a list of people you are holding grudges against. Start praying to God to help you let go of those bad feelings. It is hard to hate someone that you pray for. As you can let these grudges off your list, mark that person off your list and work on the rest. Thank God he does not hold grudges on us and forgives us.

Remember we need to forgive as God has forgiven us. That is easier said than done. Take it from me, it took me 25 years to let go of a grudge. Thank God I can forgive easier now, but I still need to work in that area. God has taught me to pray for those who persecute me. I have seen God working in many of the lives of these people upon who I had held grudges. Praise God. He loves us unconditionally. My desire is one day to love like he does.

Compassion Assignment:

Compassion means: Deep awareness of another person's suffering and wishing to relieve it...to make it better (The Free Dictionary by Farlax online)

Take a real look at yourself. How much compassion do you have? Are you self-centered and into the MEMEME-MEMEME syndrome? How much do you have compassion for others without being a codependent? In what ways over the last month have you shown compassion? In what ways has compassion been shown to you???

Healing Assignment: What areas do you need healing in???

Give one way for each area that you will do to start a healing process.

Restoration Assignment: The following is found in the free dictionary by Farlax online.

Restoration is:

- *The act of restoring something or someone to original state*
- *The act of putting something in working order again*

So originally God intended for you to be complete and whole. He did not intend for you to live a life of heartache or addiction.

What areas of your life do you need in working order again???

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

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Allison Chambers Coxsey

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A treasure to be cherished, a gift from God above; is the beauty of friendship, touched by unconditional love. A love that asks no questions, believes in all the best; never doubting, ever trusting, withstanding any test. A love that weathers any storm, and yet that love still stands; through the darkest hour, it still reaches out a hand. There in the hand the sweetest gift that you can give a friend; a heart that cares, a love that shares, that will be there till end. A treasure to be cherished, a gift from God above; is what I share with you my friend. AN UNCONDITIONAL LOVE.



Look at a diamond. Diamonds in the raw are not dazzling. They start out as a lump of coal and as pressure is applied a diamond starts to form. After a long process of time the diamond is formed. Then someone digs it out of the earth and stone and chips away the impurities, then it goes through a cleaning process and at the end it shines. Then you see commercials, "diamonds are a girl's best friend." That diamond goes through a lot before it is a best friend. You see we are like that lump of coal. Daily we have the struggles of life that confront us. As the pressure is applied, we start to gain a little insight, a little wisdom as we learn how to handle the pressure applied or challenge. As a diamond is not formed overnight, remember you will not change overnight. The number one step is to accept Jesus as Lord and ask forgiveness of sins, but then you go through refining fires as silver does to rid the imperfections that you have acquired over time. Salvation happens as soon as you ask and believe for it. Now it is time to change behaviors. With Jesus by your side and The Holy Spirit as a teacher guiding you from the instructions of God our Father you will shine as His light reflects off you and through you. God, Jesus, and The Holy Spirit are one. This is an example how the trinity works in your life. When we pray Jesus makes intercession to God our Father. Jesus is the only one that can make our intercession as he took all our sins and infirmities upon himself to hell, so we could have a changed life. Believe, accept and confess.

Joel 2:25-26 "So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten. The crawling locust, and the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people, shall never be put to shame."

Assignment: What does Joel mean in this verse? (Clue: Restoration)

Verses to read for morale boost.

- *Romans 6:6* *Old self is gone*
- *2 Corinthians 5:17* *You are a new creation, the old is passed away*
- *Colossians 1:22* *Holy and blameless*
- *1 Peter 2:9* *New nature*
- *Ephesians 2:10* *Gods' handiwork*
- *Ephesians 4:24* *Righteous and Holy*

Assignment: Do a study on self-esteem. Read the above information again. After this write down in your journal the reasons you have low self-esteem. Otherwise, why you have been so negative and down on yourself. After you make this list find Bible verses that will help you overcome these negative thoughts and turn negative to positive. Write down ways you can change your thought process. If you do not know how to change the thought process, write down things that you would like to learn how to change your thoughts about. Bring these to group meeting and we will help one another. If it gets to complex, we will seek wisdom from God for the direction to deal with this. It may be a time of prayer; it may be a professional counselor is needed or your pastor may be able to help.

Notes:

ENCOURAGEMENT

We need to encourage one another, not criticize and tear one another apart. Are you an encourager or an all-time critic? It seems so easy with society and families to find fault with each other and everything. Everyone is so busy pointing out other's faults; they do not see their own. People are prideful and forget humility. Jesus patterned a humble life. People forget their own short comings. To build up themselves they put down others by judging their appearances, ideas, their family, work ethics, etc. etc.

People who do not encourage others and tear them down in front of others, have own pride issues, and are often characterized by their own underlying low self-esteem. Usually, these same people will participate in gossip. Remember they are helped to feel better about themselves by tearing others down. I share the following in hope of helping you to see the failure and short coming of not encouraging others, with the prayer that we all may be less critical of others and be an encourager for Christ.

First, there has only been one man to walk this earth that never sinned. That is Jesus Christ. I have often heard people say I do not sin, I do not lie, I do not gossip, etc. I will be the first to admit I am a sinner. Thank God he has forgiven me and continues to forgive me as I repent. I am thankful that Jesus died for me. He never deserved what He went through. We deserved that, but He loved us enough to die for us and accept our punishment. Thank God for His continuous grace.

Until the day I die I will never be perfect. Until the day I go home to meet my Heavenly Father and have Jesus take me by the hand, I will strive to have a humble heart, to pray, and ask God to show me my short comings so I can be less critical of others so that I may show more compassion and encouragement. Ask yourself with all honesty, how humble am I? How critical am I? Do I encourage others? At home do you encourage your children? When they have trouble with their grades do you tell them how dumb they are or ask why they are struggling with this subject and how you may assist them to help them learn? Help them set goals. At church when the pastor doesn't follow through with a ministry he promised to start, what is your reaction? In most cases people feel cheated and lied to. Most do not ask what

happened, they assume and leave the church or start another church, because they are mad, not because God ordained it. Did you ever think to go to the Pastor and ask how we may obtain this goal? If he says he changed his mind, then in love and humility ask him to let the church know the plans have changed and why. By handling it this way you have gone straight to the source, you are avoiding gossip and you are not tearing down the body of Christ. In this manner you made your pastor aware of the problem, given him chance to respond, and to act upon his decision one way or the other. The two of you have encouraged one another by working this out among you.

As couples, do you encourage and complement one another? Do you throw insults instead? Usually when you are dating, everything is so sweet; you look forward to the time you spend together. Then you get married, and the hate syndrome starts, I hate sports, I hate this meal, I hate you, I hate your kids. What a change from all the prior love. The point is to be real when you encourage. Phonies come a dime a dozen.

It you cannot say something nice or speak in a constructive manner, don't say it at all.

On the job, managers should take corrective action in private. (Do not scream and yell at your staff in front of anyone!) I was a manager for years and made mistakes like anyone. As I got older, I learned better ways to handle situations. My pet peeve is managers who discipline staff in front of other staff or customers. Some minor corrections are okay but not belittling anyone. Managers need to encourage their team, not talk down to them. Too many bosses treat staff like idiots. What kind of training did the manager set up for them? Just the same, staff needs to speak with their bosses one on one. I have been guilty of doing this wrong in both ways. Trust me, do it the right way one on one. As an employee remember your chain of command. When there are serious matters, speak in person. Email is a way to track meetings, communicate job details and follow up, but discipline needs to be in person. I was shocked when a friend was fired through the company email.

I have apologized to staff as a manager and to bosses as an employee when I have had a wrong attitude. It is not a sign of weakness. We are all human. Forgive and forget. Encourage one another. Managers, your employees enjoy encouragement, a pat on the back, a small gift, a deserved raise when the time comes. You are a team together and should not set yourself apart. Your team is only as good as you make it.

When you feel a critical spirit coming on you, just picture your life on the movie screen with every detail shown. How many people do you want to see it? Think of this and stop casting stones, stop provoking each other, stop being hateful. Learn to love and encourage one another. We all have different personalities. We all have our view of things. Use your difference to enhance each other as a team whether at home, church, or work. Nothing would get accomplished if we all thought exactly alike. Each of us is uniquely made and designed by God to carry out HIS purpose in life. So, ease up on each other and let God do His work. Encourage each other to succeed.

Assignment:

Look up the following scriptures and list ways to encourage one another.

- 1. James 1:19*
- 2. 1 John 18:13*
- 3. Ephesians 4:29*
- 4. Romans 15:1-2*
- 5. 1 Peter 4:9-10*
- 6. Galatians 6:10*

The best way to be an encourager is to pray for that person, listen to them, and speak uplifting words to them. Leave little care notes to your spouse, children, family or co-workers and church family. In your kids and spouses' lunches is a great place for special messages or on the bathroom on the mirror. For church and work, give little encouragement cards. Leave a note with a rose on your spouse's pillow. If someone quits, smoking, drinking or doing drugs give them a card of encouragement and tell them how proud you are of them. Youth and college students leave notes of encouragement or thanks on your teacher's desk and don't sign it.

If you do need to approach someone on a touchy subject, remember to:

- 1. Compliment them.*
- 2. Address the problem or issue.*
- 3. Find a resolution and a plan of action.*
- 4. Leave the conversation on a positive note.*

*TO ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER IS ONE OF YOUR BIGGEST TASKS IN
LIFE!!!!*

NOTES:



Sex: Healthy, Addiction, or Abusive

Sex is a topic that is widely discussed almost everywhere. However, the conversation stops when it comes to sexual addiction or sexual abuse in most churches. This section of Hope Life Recovery will touch on a few basics of sexual addiction and abuse. If you notice that the sexual tendencies or traits below sound like you, please follow up with "How to have victory over sexual sins." If you have problems with sexual abuse seek counsel from a licensed therapist.

Following are some questions to ask yourself that will help you access if you have a problem with sexual addiction.

- Do your sexual activities or romantic relationships interfere with your spiritual beliefs?*
- Do you have sexual practices that you hide from your partner or spouse?*
- Do you find yourself reading and looking at sexually arousing articles in magazines, papers, books, movies, television or on the web?*
- Do you feel shame after sexual encounters with another?*
- Do you keep leaving relationships over guilt to sexual encounters?*
- Are you faithful to your spouse?*
- Do your sexual behaviors ever alienate you from others?*
- Do you find yourself going to new partners often?*
- Do your sexual activities leave you at risk for disease, abuse, or pregnancy?*
- Do you find yourself paying for sexual favors?*

- *When you are in a relationship do you constantly fantasize about others?*
- *Do you question your sexuality?*
- *Does it take more variety and frequency of sexual encounters to bring you to the same levels of excitement and relief?*
- *Have you ever been arrested for indecent exposure, phone calls, or sex with minors, prostitutes, or other sex crimes?*
- *If you are married, are you frequently isolated where your spouse doesn't know how or where to find you?*
- *Are you demanding of sex? Do you turn angry or violent when you do not get your way?*
- *Do you get mad when someone shows concern over you viewing pornography?*
- *Are you able to be intimate with love making or is it just a sex thing? Just do this and be over with it?*
- *Do you find yourself calling sex lines, dating connections, or in chat rooms having sexual fantasies met through this means?*
- *Do you seem to be preoccupied in public with everything around you?*
- *Do you deal with depression or dishonesty or do you use sexual humor often?*

If you answered yes to more than a couple of the above questions you may have a problem with sexual addiction.

Controlled by Desire

By Carol J. Ross, MA, CADAC

Published in February 1998 Issue of

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Judy always felt different. Much like her childhood friends, men would be pleased and amazed by her sexual desires, but they would quickly leave her, physically or emotionally. Judy blamed the men. They simply could not handle her unquenchable desires. They could not keep up with her. They used her. She also blamed herself. If she just kept trying harder to intrigue and please men sexually, she thought, eventually she would find the right mate—one as "sexually mature" as herself.

After finding that mate, her fantasy life with her husband soon crumbled into terror at his rage and his physical brutality toward her. Her depression, suicidal plans, and an uncharacteristic lack of sexual desire began to overshadow her life. In therapy, she talked about her perfect family—perfect, except for her. She divulged that when she was 5 years old and asked her father where babies come from, he gave her a detailed description of sex. She talked of hearing her parents' arguments about sex and infidelity. She talked of her mother's rages and physical abuse. While she could not remember any overt sexual abuse, she did remember "playing this game with an older girl." It soon became obvious that Judy was talking about having been molested by a 12-year-old girl. She blamed her 6-year-old self. The concept of being molested was unfathomable to her. She recalled the sex play as an enjoyable, exciting, naughty experience, and, therefore, her own fault. To add to her shame, she repeated the scenario with her friends to show them what she had learned. So, began a self-image that fueled her sexual compulsion into her 30's. Like many other sexually addicted women, Judy had sought professional help before. However, her sexual compulsion was never addressed. In one case, her therapist did not believe the stories of her sexual relationships.

Sexual Addiction Victims

Sexual addiction is commonly overlooked in clinical assessments of women. History seems to be repeating itself—society once believed women could not be alcoholics. Both men and women in our culture are taught that women are nurturers who specialize in loving but are not as interested in sex as are men. For this reason, a woman's sexual behaviors often become victim-based as she learns to fulfill her sexual needs through demure, coy, or subtle seduction. Women tend to influence others in these indirect ways.

The same socialization and expectation add to the extraordinary shame involved for a woman to admit to being "sex addicted" or even "sex-and-love addicted." The idea of being "love addicted" is preferred by most sex-addicted women because it fits into the romantic, victim-based nurturer model of women. The term "sex addict," however, connotes an image of a "hussy, nymphomaniac, slut, or whore."

The "love" to which these women say they are addicted is really an addiction to feeling overwhelmed by emotions such as yearning, or the "high" of romance—it has little to do with love. For the purposes of this article, the term "sex addict" refers to both sex addiction and sex-and-love addiction. A clear view of the symptoms of sexual addiction is difficult to obtain through the veil intricately woven by the language of romance and understanding. Most simply, one is looking for the same symptoms as in any addiction—obsessive thought and unsuccessful attempts to control or limit use despite negative consequences. Attempts to control or limit a sexual addiction can look like marrying or divorcing in an attempt to control sexual fantasies and/or behaviors; the inception of a new relationship, started to divert the addict from the sexual problems of a current or previous relationship; or swearing off relationships, only to give into the next persistent lover. Other attempts involve broken promises made to self or others to stop abusive fantasy, compulsive masturbation or other sexual behaviors, switching to caretaking of others, workaholism, overeating, over-indulging in romance novels, or other mood-altering behaviors or substances to take the place of a sexual relationship.

Negative consequences might include unplanned pregnancies, abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, terror resulting from unprotected sex, or shame about behaviors that conflict with individual values. Additional red flags are tension or decreased productivity at work due to sexual behaviors with co-workers, complications or dramas due to secret relationships, depression or despair about inability to change sexual patterns, or violence in relationships. Other consequential problems may include unhealthy weight gains and losses, chemical addiction or other behavioral addictions aimed at medicating feelings associated with sexual behaviors or relationships, diverting from the therapeutic process by beginning a relationship, or sexual occupation or avocation such as stripping, exotic dancing, phone sex, or cybersex.

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Obsessive Thoughts

With many women who are addicted to sex, obsessive thought begins with planning how to attract a sexual partner. For example, Sandy spends inordinate amounts of time envisioning or fantasizing about attracting a partner. Her rituals include hours of shopping for seductive outfits, putting together outfits from her closet, meticulous bathing and shaving in anticipation of being sexual, cleaning her house and preparing coffee for the morning after, and even excluding thoughts of other matters, such as her bills or her child's school problems. Her patterns of obsessive thought circle around trying to judge, interpret, and analyze any responses to her, then carefully planning a reaction to the perceived responses.

From an external view, these behaviors are all very much within the societal norms of female behavior. What cannot be seen by society or by the therapist, however, is the internal focus on thoughts of being sexual. Sometimes even the client herself cannot detect this obsessive focus, due to her inability to see through her own defenses. Many sexually addicted women fantasize about sexual abuse, including being physically forced in some way to have sex, forcing someone else to have sex, or watching someone else being forced to have sex. Mary's fantasies include degradation or objectification, such as prostitution or being watched by someone while having sex. At first, these fantasies seem to portray a loss of the woman's power, but many times the arousal is associated with the power of being so irresistible or innocent that

rapists, gangs, or authority figures cannot control themselves around the seductive powers of the woman.

Another common scenario is obsession with a past partner or with an ideal fantasy partner, making reality boring, if not miserable, by comparison. Many sex-addicted women talk about their obsessions with current relationships, then switching the object of the obsession to someone else when they lose interest or pleasure in the current relationship. Most women sex addicts have fantasies about both genders, often co-workers or employers. These fantasies are often accompanied by masturbation and sometimes are used while having sex with their partners.

Observable Behaviors

A mood-altering level of excitement occurs for female sex addicts in seductive behaviors involving flirting, dancing, dressing, or otherwise personally grooming to be seductive. Some have several affairs going on at the same time, while others are monogamous but need a new relationship to get out of, or deal with, the loss of the prior relationship. Seduction is the key to the addictive cycle, even in preparation for sex with self, i.e., using flirtation, pornography, or sugary foods in preparation for masturbation. Pornography is only one of the commonly used printed materials that women sex addicts use. Others are sexual stories, sex manuals, or clothing catalogs that show swim wear, underwear, or lingerie. Videos and cable television are also used to achieve the mood-altering sexual high through visual stimulation.

Exhibitionism is commonly an aspect of sexually addicted behaviors in women. This is a more blatant display than the subtle seductive behaviors described above: wearing no bra; having sex in a car or other visible place; sex with self or another in front of a partner; stripping at parties; or taking or posing for nude photos. Some sex-addicted women's exhibitionism seems to stem from behaviors modeled in their families of origin, while others seem to be in direct contrast to strict, rigid family rules about nudity or sex.

When women sex addicts intrude on others' sexual boundaries, it is usually through begging or pressuring. This might involve not only pressuring a reluctant partner to have sex, but also to be sexual in a certain way, such as bondage. A subtler form of

inflicting sexuality is sexual joking in nonsexual situations, such as at work. These boundary intrusions become exploitive when they include making sexual advances to younger siblings, students, clients, and others in subordinate power positions. Some sex-addicted women consider themselves exploitive in seeking out ethically challenged professionals, such as sexually addicted doctors or clergy. Of course, this abuse of power is reversed when a woman has sex with her physician, minister, professor, or therapist, as many sex-addicted women have. But it is almost always seen by the woman as her use of her own power versus being used at a vulnerable time by an unethical professional. For some, it is a response to being led to believe that the professional loves her. For others, it is a conscious trade for drugs, help, or affection. A behavior women sex addicts report having the most shame about is trading sex for money, drugs, social access, power, or other favors. Less shame is reported about trading sex for friendship, approval, or security; most mistake these for love.

Although anonymous sex is common for women sex addicts, they do not usually call it that, nor do they often identify with the term on a questionnaire. Women tend to identify more with the scenario of having sex with someone they just met at a party or a bar, rather than the label of "anonymous sex." Women who engage in this behavior often respond negatively to the term when answering questions in an assessment. Technological advances such as computer e-mail, chat rooms, and online pornography have increased the otherwise low financial consequences incurred by sex addicts. Kim's partner believed that she had been faithful and devoted to their 13-year lesbian relationship, until she began noticing unexplained amounts of money missing. When her partner became suspicious of Kim's explanations, she found Kim's hidden credit-card bills for trips around the country. Kim had been having online relationships with men via her home computer, and even traveled to meet a few at various rendezvous. Other costs are sometimes incurred in paying for hotel rooms, meals, lingerie, personal ads, and pornography in print, on cable TV, or on videos.

A few women sex addicts report paying for phone sex. A fair amount of women sex addicts report having exchanged sex for pain. Fusing sex with pain heightens the sexual excitement for these women, whether through anal sex, hot wax, burning matches, sadism, masochism, or bondage. For most people, having sexual relationships, fantasies, and behaviors would be normal human behavior, but for the sex addict, they cause problems. As in Judy's story, most women who are sex-addicted

do not have role modeling from their mothers and/or fathers for how to have emotional intimacy on nonsexual ways.

Research has shown that there is often a combination of rigidity of some kind and a lack of emotional support in the sex addict's family of origin. Also, there is a high incidence of sexual abuse (with and without touch) in the histories of women sex addicts. In a study I conducted on female sex addicts, 78 percent were sexually abused. Not knowing how to change, they keep repeating the same basic dysfunctional behavior, with maybe a few surface differences, expecting different results. In that study, 50 percent were chemically addicted, and 32 percent were eating-disordered. Because it is common for sex addicts to switch or add addictions, progression of this disease is not always evident and can have long periods of inactivity. However, without recovery it can return, or as in Judy's case, it can mutate into the opposite end of the spectrum—sexual anorexia.

The 12-Step support group of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous has been the first to address this, and in some areas has special focus meetings for sexual anorexia. In these cases, although the chief behavioral characteristic is the avoidance of sex, the underlying sexual shame is still very much.

Recovery begins by educating the sex addict about sex addiction, while contracting for abstinence from sexual behavior to allow a decrease in defenses and an increase of sobriety. Because in many cases the female sex addict often does not consciously plan to be sexual when she is, more women than men will tend to agree with the idea of planned abstinence. However, ingrained patterns of seduction make it more difficult for a woman to adhere to an abstinence contract than a man. She may verbalize a goal of abstinence but send loud, conflicting non-verbal messages.

Specific trigger situations, with a planned set of boundaries, must be discussed to make it even possible for her to honor any kind of abstinence contract. Identifying exactly how she consciously and unconsciously uses the above behavior types to medicate her feelings needs to be a collaborative effort between therapist and the female sex addict, with alternative methods planned to address the feeling states behind each behavior. As she attends more 12-Step mutual support groups specifically

for sex addiction and/or sex-and-love addiction, her awareness of both her addictive behaviors and new recovery behaviors will grow.

While therapy can help deal with the underlying feelings, a female sponsor from her Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Sex Addicts Anonymous, Sexaholics Anonymous, Sexual Recovery Anonymous, or Sexual Compulsives Anonymous meetings can help her learn how to manage periods of abstinence and how to slowly incorporate sexual behavior back into her life. The goal is not to be forever nonsexual, but to learn how to be sexual in ways that honor her body, mind, and spirit.

I mentioned in my life story that I had been through multiple relationships, marriages and had a sexual addiction. I didn't know I had a sexual addiction until I was in my late 40's. In my early 50's I realized this and took it to the Lord and asked Him to heal me of this. I was! It does not mean you lose interest; it means you learn healthy intimacy. There is a difference in addiction and healthy sex! I went through the wild younger years and the parties and some sexual encounters were out of the addiction, some were looking for love the wrong way with the thought if they sleep with me they'll love me...that is stinkin thinkin! There was real love and intimacy too.

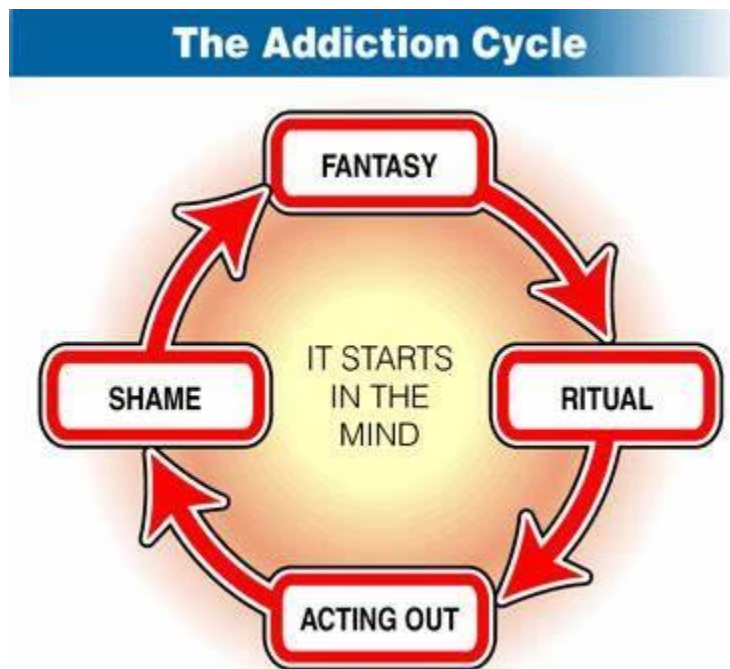
Through different decades I got away from the actual encounters physically and there was phone sex and cybersex. It all leaves you feeling great at the very moment and right after is the guilt and shame and what have I done! I dealt with this on and off for 35 years. When studying neuroscience of the brain we learn our brain is sexual. Our feel-good center is the Amygdala. The same way our body can get addicted to drugs or alcohol it can be addicted to sex as our thought processes get rewired. Your Neurotransmitters can be reprogrammed to being healthy. As I said when I realized I was dealing with an addiction I prayed for healing and I changed the way I processed my thoughts. For different people, the healing can be different ways. Either way the Brain needs Healing or retraining!

Have you read this in the Bible or ever heard this saying?

I do not understand
what I do.
For what I want to do
I do not do,
but what I hate
I do.

Romans 7:15 NIV

That verse was me for a long time. This verse is also for anyone with any kind of addiction. God can heal you. You must want it bad enough. You must pursue it with passion.





NOTES:

Assignment: Provide a written definition of sexual abuse. We will discuss your findings at group discussion.

*The following information on rape is used by permission of Broken Spirits.
www.brokensprits.com (This Website was active when I wrote Mold Me like
Clay...No Longer Active)*

RAPE

The self-centered or ego rapist (primarily men): see women as objects to exploit. They see no as a challenge and as part of a game. Be alert to sudden changes in conversation intensity, lowered voice, or a glazed look in a person's eyes. The anger rapist's motivation is rage and they may strike suddenly.

RAPE PREVENTION

Learning the basics of rape prevention can be useful in many settings. At home, on the street, and in the car are three quite common places for an attempted rape to take place. Following is a list of ways to protect you. These tips are made for your awareness, not to keep you living in fear. There are many steps you can take to reduce your risk of attack.

Prevention tips at home:

- Keep entrances as well as outside storage and parking area well lit.*
- Be aware of places people could hide between buildings, between cars, behind fences and hedges.*
- Install locks on doors and windows. Dead bolts are best for doors. Slide bolts can be used with sliding doors or windows.*
- If possible, have the locks changed when moving into a new house or apartment. You never know who has a duplicate key.*
- Always Keep doors locked.*
- Install a peep hole.*
- Never leave an extra key by the door. Leave an extra key with a "trusted" neighbor or family member.*

- *Keep keys in hand to unlock doors. Do not linger at the door esp. car doors.*
- *Never allow strangers to enter your home without proper identification.*
- *If a stranger wants to use your phone, take the number and make the call for him / her.*
- *Do not let small children answer the door.*
- *List only your first initial and last name on your mailbox and in the phone book. You do not want to advertise that you live alone.*
- *Start a buddy system with your neighbors. Keep an eye on their home and ask them to do the same for you.*
- *Keep all emergency numbers by the phone.*
- *Avoid riding the elevator with people you feel are suspicious.*
- *Do not tell anyone over the phone you are home alone.*
- *Hang up on obscene phone callers. Report frequent callers to the police and phone company.*

Prevention tips while on the street:

- *Be aware of the people around you. Make sure you are not followed.*
- *Dress comfortable; try to avoid clothes that can be easily removed such as overalls and short skirts. Try to wear shoes that would allow running if necessary.*
- *Try to style hair in a way that it does not allow an attacker to grab you easily. Long ponytails and braids are 2 ways an attacker can grab you easier.*
- *Try to avoid walking alone, especially at night and in strange places.*
- *If you feel someone is following you, cross the street and make sure to stay in a well-lit and populated place.*
- *Do not walk too close to buildings, alleys. Or bushes. Try to stay closer to the street side of the sidewalk.*

- *Do not overload yourself with heavy packages or books. Carry your purse in front of you or around your body.*
- *Keep your keys in your hand and a whistle on your key ring.*
- *Do not hitchhike.*

Prevention tips while in your car:

- *Always keep doors locked while driving. Lock the doors when leaving the car. Check the back seat before getting in. Keep keys in hand to lock the door. (If you have a remote have it set to open the driver's door only so no one can enter from the other side. If your back seats fold down, make sure they are not open as you check your back seat.)*
- *Keep the windows rolled up while driving.*
- *Keep as much gas in the tank as possible, at least half full.*
- *Try to follow well-traveled, well-lit areas. Know where you are going ahead of time.*
- *If someone is following you go to the nearest police station or fire station - DO NOT DRIVE HOME – You do not want them to know where you live.*
- *If your car breaks down, pull over, turn on the emergency lights, and stay in your car. If someone stops to help you, remain in the car and give them a phone number to call help. (If you are able try to have a cell phone.)*
- *If someone signals that something is wrong with your car, do not stop. Drive to the nearest gas station.*
- *Do not pick up hitchhikers.*

(notes in “()” were added to the information provided by Broken Spirits.)

Ladies: If you can make the time, take a class in basic self-defense. Karate classes can help or call your local law enforcement and ask where defense classes are available.

Assignment: Research additional ways to take preventive steps against rape and bring them to group discussion.

The following information is used by permission of Pastor Evangelist: Dale P. Kruse. Visit his website at <http://www.layevangelism.com> This article was found under the spiritual warfare category. (2004)

How to Have Victory Over Sexual Sins

How do we get victory over sexual sin? Jesus said in Matthew 5:27-28 "You have heard that it was said 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say unto you, that everyone who looks on a woman and lusts for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart." God tells us in His word if we think it, in His eyes we have done it, we have committed fornication or adultery. The writer of Proverbs states "The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking heart; he who would destroy his soul does it" (Proverbs 6:32). Adultery binds the will so that you cannot focus or succeed in other matters. A person who yields his will to this is a slave of his lustful passion and if not repented of will prevent him or her from developing their soul potential.

How then do we get control over sexual thoughts and masturbation? The sex organ is not the zipper but the mind. The battle is in the mind. The zipper only carries out what the mind commands it to do. The key to victory is controlling your thought life. Starve the dog and it will go away. When you fill your mind with sexual thoughts, you are going to sin. The Bible states: "Let no one say when he is tempted. 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." (James 1:13-15) How then do we control our thought life? First, by confessing any known sin in this area to Jesus and then asking Him to cleanse you with His blood of all filthy fantasies and unclean spirits related.

The Bible states: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; neither is His ear dull that it cannot hear. Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that he does not hear." (Isaiah 59:1-2) "He who sows iniquity will reap vanity, and the rod of his fury will perish." (Proverbs 22:8) "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion." (Proverbs 28:13) "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us from our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

Second, get rid of anything which incites lustful desires: magazines, pictures, music, TC, and Radio shows and websites. The Bible states about man: "For as he thinks within his soul, so he is: (Proverbs 23:7) "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything is worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you." (Phil 4:8-9) "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lust." (Romans 13:14)

You have heard the saying: "Out of sight, out of mind." The saying is true. To win the battle you must starve the dog.

Third, anoint your home and workplace and bind the unclean spirits. The Bible tells us: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12) "Behold, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy and to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and nothing shall injure you." (Luke 10:19)

When you sin, you open a doorway to related demonic spirits to attach themselves to you. Once they do this, they make sure you stay in bondage to this sin. So, after confessing this sin to Jesus and getting rid of anything which incited you to sin in this first place, the next thing you need to do is cleanse yourself and your home of unclean spirits.

Fourth, pray and ask the Lord for Holy Spirit strength to avoid temptations in this area and say no to your flesh. The Bible teaches us that the flesh never did obey God's law and it never will. Paul wrote in Romans 8:6-8: "For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mindset on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

For this reason, we cannot gain victory over this sin through trying to muster up enough will power. We need Jesus' grace, strength, and power to have victory over this sin and to stay clean of this sin. God's word commands us: "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might." (Eph6:10)

James wrote: "Submit therefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, and purify your hearts, you double-souled. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you." (James 4:7-10)

When I am hit with temptation or fall into temptation, after doing all the other steps above, I get on my knees and cry out to Jesus for deliverance.

"I can do all things through Him that strengthens me." (Phil 4:13)

Fifth, to have victory over sexual sin, Paul wrote "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16) "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Ephesians 5:15-17) You are walking in the Holy Spirit when you are using your time each day during the week according to God's will.

This was the basics of Pastor Kruse's article to read in detail visit www.layevangelism.com.

Take time to examine your life. The above is dealing with lust and temptation, but the scriptures pertain to anything that the flesh is lusting after and how to have victory and walk in the Spirit. Look around you at work, in your locker, in your desk, on your walls, and at home your magazines, movies etc. etc. and ask yourself is there anything that is keeping you from experiencing the fullness of Christ and to be able to walk in the Spirit. This is between you and God. If you are not sure, pray and ask God to guide you by His Spirit and show you what needs changing in your lives.

I want to speak to Husbands and Fathers. You are the headship of the home and God is your headship. Is your home in line with His word? If Jesus were to visit your home and take inventory, are there things you would be avoid showing him? This is a great way to start lining up your home. If you have children, teach them spiritual purity, not just sexual purity, but spiritual purity.

Assignment: Write an article on what spiritual purity is. Next take inventory of your home and line it up with God's word.



MARRIAGE

To be happy in a relationship one must first learn: “how to love yourself.” So, you say I am not lovable, it would be conceited to love myself, etc. etc. To love self does not mean looking in a mirror and saying I am the most beautiful man or woman that walks this earth. (Remember satan was the most beautiful angel and was cast out of heaven for his pride and rebellion.) It really means to care for yourself - to use good hygiene, to eat properly, to exercise, and to properly groom yourself are the best ways to practice self-love. It is especially important to learn how and why God loves you so that you may find your special purpose in this life.

Here is a list of things to do to love you:

- Take care of your body. Proper nutrition and exercise.*
- Stop criticism. Have a positive outlook about yourself, not a negative one.*
- Be patient and gentle with yourself. Pamper yourself.*
- Remind yourself of how well you are doing.*
- Forgive yourself, God has.*
- Leave your past behind. Stop torturing yourself over it. When satan reminds you of your past, remind him of his future! Get rid of stinkin thinkin!*
- Remember everyone is tempted. Change your thought process.*
- Keep a strong support system. Reach out to your friends and let them help you.*

- *Learn to rid yourself of negative thought patterns, many of which you have acquired as coping mechanisms. Learn healthy and positive thought patterns.*
- *Read your Bible and pray daily.*
- *Love Yourself Now!!! Stop putting it off! Pamper yourself, get the haircut you want, buy the outfit you want, start a weight loss program you have put off. Join an exercise club or gym. If you can't afford this, walk with friends and exercise in your homes or start an exercise program at your church. If you are not happy with your work, seek out a job that uses the gifts that God blessed you with. Ladies put on a little make-up. There are many ways to boost your self-image.*

Now that you are taking care of yourself it will be easier to take care of your spouse and marriage. You must know how to take care of yourself first.

Four Elements of Marital Intimacy

- 1. Develop unconditional security – be committed to a lifetime of caring for someone.*
- 2. Establish open, honest, and meaningful communication. Share your feelings, needs, hopes, and dreams. Make sure you really listen as your spouse speaks.*
- 3. Schedule romantic times together. Do not let the romance and intimacy die. Still date your spouse.*
- 4. Eight to ten loving touches to your spouse a day keeps the marriage counselor away.*

Assignment:

Read the following scriptures and write down how they relate to marriage.

- *I Corinthians 7:1-17*
- *Mark 10: 6-9*
- *Ephesians 5:21-23*

Something you need to remember in your marriage is to put God first. Visualize a triangle. It is made up of three sides. A marriage has three sides. Each side is especially important. Each side is vital to hold up the other side. One side is physical, one side emotional, and one side is spiritual. The physical side is man, which represents the strength in the home. Man is to be the provider for the home. There are too many homes being supported by women with men sitting at home and not attempting to work. This was not God's plan.

In today's world it often takes two to make ends meet, or a husband may get laid off in job cuts. I am not talking about these scenarios. I am speaking of dysfunctional homes where the husband cannot keep a job due to addictions or just plain laziness. I have known many cases where the guy works a few weeks at a time and quits. They hold the record on excuses. Man is supposed to take care of his wife and children. The Family structure unit needs to be put back in line.

The emotional side is woman. Men, if she cries, let her! It is normal! Do not belittle her. It would not hurt you to show compassion and hug her unless she needs quiet time. A woman needs emotions to care for you and care for your children. God made woman to be emotional so she would have compassion and be caring.

So, we have man as strength and woman as emotional. Therefore, God made you physically and mentally different. Mentally most men focus on one thing at a time while women focus on many things. Therefore, women are planners. This is God's design. Therefore, when you tell your partner I do not understand you, you are correct. You are made differently to complete the triangle, but we must learn to live in an understanding way. Pray to God to show you how to appreciate and love and build your relationship based on each other's strengths.

The third side of the triangle is the Spiritual side. This side is God. It takes God to complete a marriage. There will be tough times. You will need to pray together in those times. If your spouse does not, make sure you do. You need to ask God for direction and to live in an understanding way with one another. Ask God to help you respect your differences as a couple and use your differences to complement each other instead of create friction.



TO LOVE IS A DECISION, IT IS NOT A FEELING!!!!

ASSIGNMENT: Gentleman and Ladies, it is research time. Remember to love is a decision, not a feeling.

Men what does a woman need in a relationship?

Women what do men need in a relationship?

Bring your answers to group so we can share and learn together.

Marriage Homework:

- 1. What do I expect of my spouse?*

- 2. How do I express my love for my spouse?*

3. *What are my spouse's expectations of me?*

4. *How does my spouse express love for me?*

Have your spouse to answer the same questions and compare your answers. You will find ways to improve your marriage. Remember to set realistic expectations.

Lastly, make a list of how you and your spouse need to be more supportive of one another in a crisis and have your spouse make a list. Join with your spouse and pray first, then share your list and be supportive of each other's ideas.

If you are struggling in your marriage, try this assignment. For 21 days write one good thing about your spouse in your Journal per day. At the end of 21 days see what has changed.

NOTES:

CONCLUSION

This book was created to help you get your life headed back in the right direction. I have used life experiences, information from seminars, Bible study, and college courses for research. Articles with copyright permissions are labeled by their articles. All Bible Scripture, except that which was used in articles by other writers, doctors, and pastors came from the New King James Version or The New International Version or The New Living Translation.

This book is not intended to replace professional counseling. It is a tool to use in self-assessment and spiritual growth. We are not responsible for anyone's actions. There are awesome Christian counselors who are licensed to help you with severe issues. If you cannot afford counseling often your local pastor will meet with you.

I have been blessed to learn and grow within several different churches; I would like to give special thanks to:

- *Packwood Bible Church—Packwood, WA, ---Pastor Bill Martin*
- *Peninsula Christian Fellowship—San Bruno, CA---Pastor Stuart Gregor*
- *Redemption World Outreach --Greenville, SC--Apostle Ron Carpenter*
- *Family Worship Center--Elizabeth City, NC (Weeksville)--Pastor Leon Overman (Church is no longer there)*
- *Liberty Christian Fellowship—Kill Devil Hills, NC—Pastor John Hobbs*

I also would like to thank Sheryl B, Judy S, and Genita M for the influence you have had on my life. I thank you for true friendship and spiritual guidance and loving me through it all! Teresa B and Judy N you both are special in my heart you were both there in those days at FWC and still. Thank You Steve and Sharon for mentorship, prayers and guidance over the years. I love all of you!

If you need a Great College, you can do from home at your own pace go to Light University. They are associated with the American Association of Christian Counselors.

The information in this book has been compiled over 30 years. Since I have been through some more refining fires over the years, along with my loved ones, God has blessed me with more knowledge and understanding which needed to be added. I thank God for His Holy Word "The Holy Bible" as a guideline for our lives.

I give Praise & Glory & Honor to our Most High God and Father. Thank You Jesus for giving your life for an undeserving soul. Thank You for continued Grace and Mercy. Thank You Father for sending Your Holy Spirit to guide us, convict us, to comfort us, to humble us, to teach us and keep our paths facing in Your direction.

Many Thanks to my husband for editing this book. It is with great appreciation that I thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule.

Special thanks to the following people for their copyright permissions:

Kay Marie Porterfield

"Codependency Symptoms and Myths"

www.kporterfield.com

The Broken Spirits Network

"Domestic Violence, Profile of an Abuser, Victims of Abuse, Victim Survivor Rights, & Sexual Abuse and assault."

www.brokenspirits.com

Irene Matiatos PhD:

"Signs of Verbal and Emotional Abuse"

www.drirene.com

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center

"Teen Dating Violence"

www.safeyouth.org

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

"Statistics & 21-31-year-old adults & Alcohol"

www.ncadd.com

Many thanks to the family that shared their son's last wishes to carry on his testimony. Thank You and May God Bless You!!! Be at peace as you know your loved one is in heaven and his message will carry on! "Choices"

Allison Chambers Coxsey

"Unconditional Love"

www.allisonsheart.com

Pastor / Evangelist Dale P. Kruse

"How to have Victory Over Sexual Sins."

www.layevangelism.com

Carol J. Ross, MA, CADAC

"Controlled by Desire"

Published in Feb 1998 Professional Counselor Magazine

I pray that God would bring a special blessing to all the above people who have shared their knowledge and heartfelt Life Stories as their messages are carried on. I pray that many will be blessed as they start their road to recovery and rebuild their lives.

Web Addresses & Phone Numbers for Emergencies Nationwide

AA Alcohol Anonymous

[Alcoholics Anonymous \(aa.org\)](http://Alcoholics Anonymous (aa.org))

Pregnancy Resource

Pregnancy – Christian Life Resources.com

National Right to Life

www.nrlc.org

Suicide Hotline

www.suicidehotlines.com

National Domestic Violence/Abuse Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE

1-800-799-7223

Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN)

1-800-656-HOPE

STOP IT NOW!

1-888-PREVENT

1-888-773-8368 Mon-Fri 1-5 PM

Line for sexually abused and sexual abusers

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Youth Ministry

Certified Awana Leader

Certified Missionette Leader

Previous Houseparent

Life Recovery Ministry 2003-Current

Online Ministry 20 years

Ordained March 18, 2003

Member of American Association of Christian Counselors

Member National Association of Christian Ministers

Destiny Bible College

Roanoke Bible College

Light University

Thank You for taking time to go through this study.

My prayer is that you know Jesus. He loves you. I pray that you may know freedom in life. That you may experience true Joy! I pray that strongholds are broken, and you have a fresh breath of life.

If you are interested in starting this program in your church or community or wherever God lays on your heart, feel free to email with questions. This Workbook / Study is easy for anyone to use and follow.

If you are close to the Elizabeth City, NC or within 3 hours...I will travel to hold a class on teaching this Life-Building Program.

May God Shine Brightly in Your Life!

You are Special!!! You are loved!!

