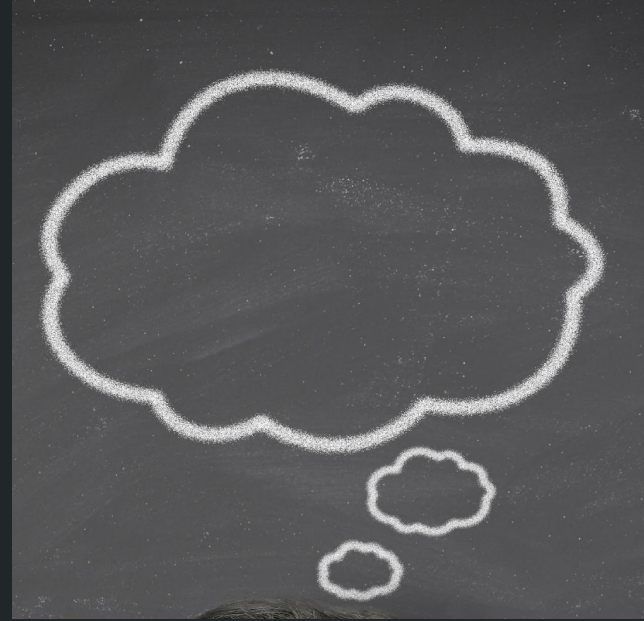


The Inner Voice of Addiction

Lisa Firestone, Ph.D.





Addiction:

Habitual psychological or physiologic dependence on a substance or practice that is beyond voluntary control. –

MediLexicon's Medical Dictionary

Substance dependence:

When an individual persists in use of alcohol or other drugs despite problems related to use of the substance, substance dependence may be diagnosed. Compulsive and repetitive use may result in tolerance to the effect of the drug and withdrawal symptoms when use is reduced or stopped. This, along with Substance Abuse are considered Substance Use Disorders. –

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)

Addiction During the Pandemic

- Survey of more than 1,000 Americans with substance use disorders (SUDs) found that 20 percent experienced an increase in their or a family member's substance use since the start of the pandemic.
- More than a third of respondents reported changes or disruptions in accessing treatment or recovery support services during COVID-19.
- An analysis of more than 500,000 urine drug test results showed significant increases in the use of non-prescribed fentanyl, cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine during COVID-19.



Source: <https://www.addictionpolicy.org/post/survey-covid-19-affecting-access-to-addiction-treatment-and-key-services>

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/millennium-healths-signals-report-covid-19-special-edition-reveals-significant-changes-in-drug-use-during-the-pandemic-301089684.html>

I was using the alcohol to distract myself—from the fear that loved ones would die; from the fear that I would lose my job and might not be able to get another one; from the fear that hospitals were going to run out of their limited supplies.

— **Maya Richard-Craven**

From the article “After 7 1/2 Months Sober, I Relapsed During Quarantine.”

Isolation and Addiction

Studies have shown feelings of loneliness to be stronger in drug abusers, which may increase their probability of “taking high-risk behaviors and abusing drugs.” In addition, social estrangement has been linked to increased instances of relapse in recovering addicts.



Anything can operate as an addiction if done for the purpose of fulfilling a need to be cut off or tolerably numb.



Three Parts to this Webinar:

Part 1

The Roots of
Addiction

Part 2

The Critical
Inner Voice
and Addiction

Part 3

Overcoming
Addiction

Part 1: The Roots of Addiction



Causes of Drug Addiction

From Mayo Clinic



Environment



- ## Genetics



Changes in the brain

Physical addiction appears to occur when repeated use of a drug changes the way your brain feels pleasure. The addicting drug causes physical changes to some nerve cells (neurons) in your brain. Neurons use chemicals called neurotransmitters to communicate. These changes can remain long after you stop using the drug.

Risk Factors

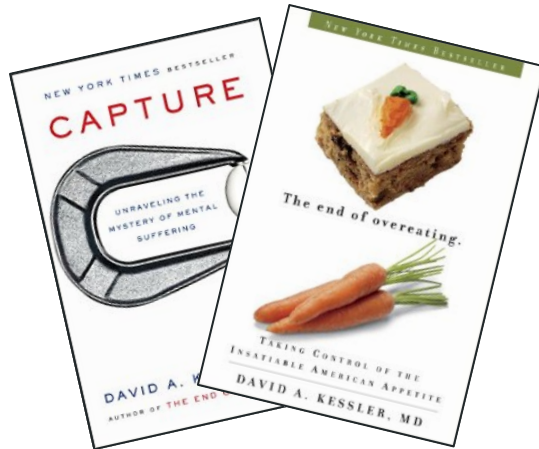
- Genetics (family history)
- Having a mental illness/condition
- Peer pressure
- Family behavior
- Loneliness
- The nature of the substance
- Age when substance was first consumed
- Stress
- How the body metabolizes (processes) the substance



Dr. David Kessler

Former FDA Commissioner

- The same neurological process that drives us to chain smoke or over-eat is responsible for many mental illnesses.
- “There is no better description of capture. Not food necessarily, not alcohol, but that self-doubt becomes the nature of capture.”



Letter from an individual in treatment:

The whole idea of addiction fascinates me not only as it relates to food and alcohol, but as it relates, in my case, to a relationship. I can describe it as a fear, a basic insecurity, that comes over me when I imagine myself without that relationship. It's as though I have to constantly quiet the internal hunger for closeness, for affirmation, for love, for acceptance, which I don't seem to be able to supply to myself. The fear of abandonment is so overwhelming that I drive myself deeper and deeper into depression. My ongoing struggle is to quiet the non-visible demons that drive me. Not to food or drink, but to self doubt and hunger for other's adoration.

Addiction as a Brain Disease

- Widely accepted in the neuroscience community
- Has become subject to acerbic criticism in recent years
- Criticisms state that the brain disease view is deterministic, fails to account for heterogeneity in remission and recovery, places too much emphasis on a compulsive dimension of addiction, and that a specific neural signature of addiction has not been identified.
- Some of these criticisms have merit, but assert that the foundational premise that addiction has a neurobiological basis is fundamentally sound.
- Denying that addiction is a brain disease is a harmful standpoint since it contributes to reducing access to healthcare and treatment, the consequences of which are catastrophic.
- The brain is the biological substrate from which both addiction and the capacity for behavior change arise, arguing for an intensified neuroscientific study of recovery. More broadly, we propose that these disagreements reveal the need for multidisciplinary research that integrates neuroscientific, behavioral, clinical, and sociocultural perspectives.

Source: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41386-020-00950-y>

From “America Has a Drinking Problem”

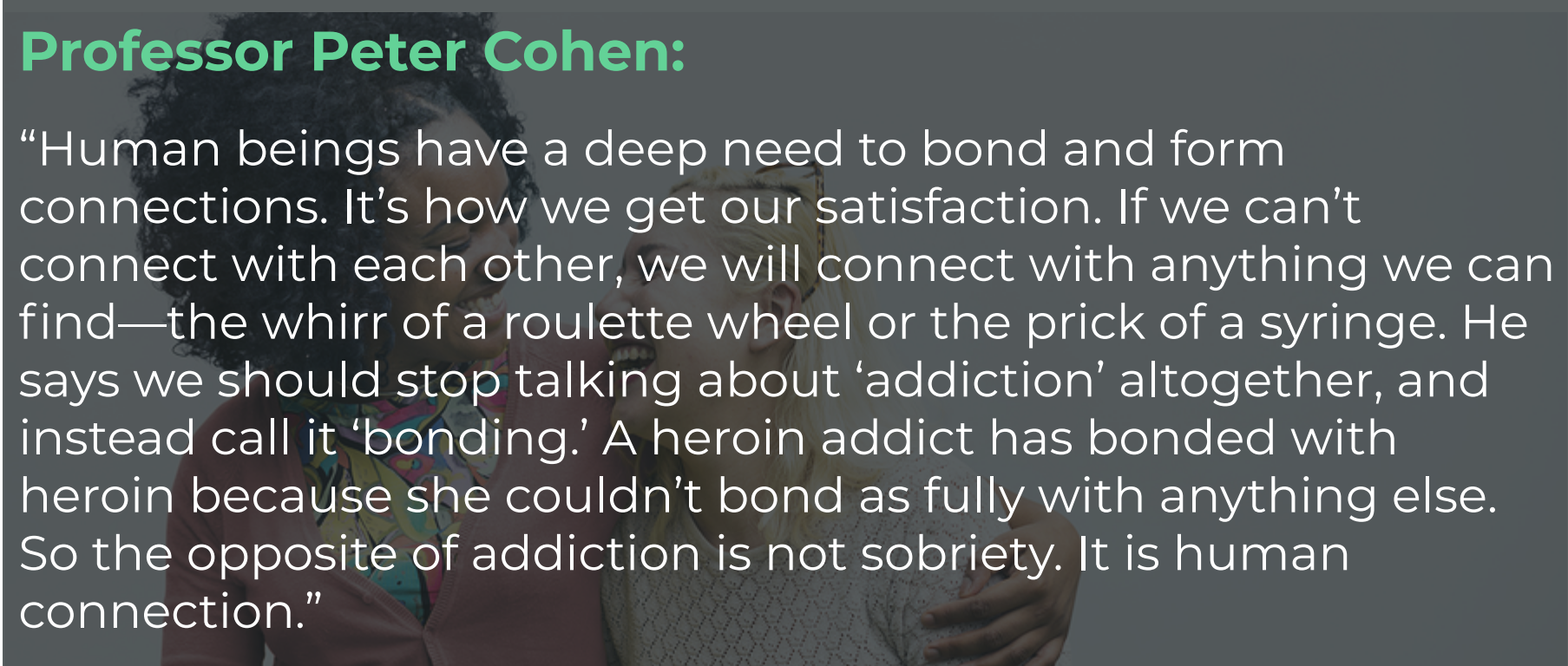
The Atlantic

July/August 2021

Even before COVID-19 arrived on our shores, the consequences of all this were catching up with us. From 1999 to 2017, the number of alcohol-related deaths in the U.S. doubled, to more than 70,000 a year—making alcohol one of the leading drivers of the decline in American life expectancy. These numbers are likely to get worse: During the pandemic, frequency of drinking rose, as did sales of hard liquor. By this February, nearly a quarter of Americans said they’d drunk more over the past year as a means of coping with stress.

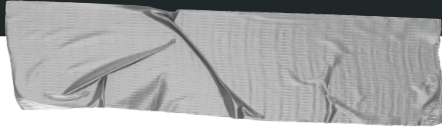
The Need to Bond

Professor Peter Cohen:



“Human beings have a deep need to bond and form connections. It’s how we get our satisfaction. If we can’t connect with each other, we will connect with anything we can find—the whirr of a roulette wheel or the prick of a syringe. He says we should stop talking about ‘addiction’ altogether, and instead call it ‘bonding.’ A heroin addict has bonded with heroin because she couldn’t bond as fully with anything else. So the opposite of addiction is not sobriety. It is human connection.”

Attachment History



Early attachment deficits have been shown to be correlated with many addictions, and it is thought that those with poorer emotional regulation use substances or addictive behaviors to help regulate themselves.

- *Addiction as an Attachment Disorder* Philip J. Flores





Lessons from Parents

How did they handle stress?

12 percent of children in the United States have at least one parent who has struggled with addiction and dependency in the last year. (Source: SAMHSA)



Research shows that children of addicts are twice as likely to become addicts and develop emotional or behavioral problems as other children.

Part 2: The Critical Inner Voice and Addiction



All addictive behaviors have at least these two things in common:

(1) They help people cut off painful feelings.

(2) They are strongly influenced by a destructive thought process.

These behaviors represent a direct assault against their physical health and emotional well-being and restrict the ability to pursue important goals and priorities in life.

Separation Theory

The Core Conflict...*to feel or not to feel*

Defended

VS

Undefended



The Core Conflict

Undefended

- Contending with emotional pain, both interpersonal and existential
- Live with the pain of awareness, feeling integrated
- Experiences all emotions, retaining the capacity to find happiness and joy in life
- Better able to tolerate intimacy
- More humane toward others

Defended

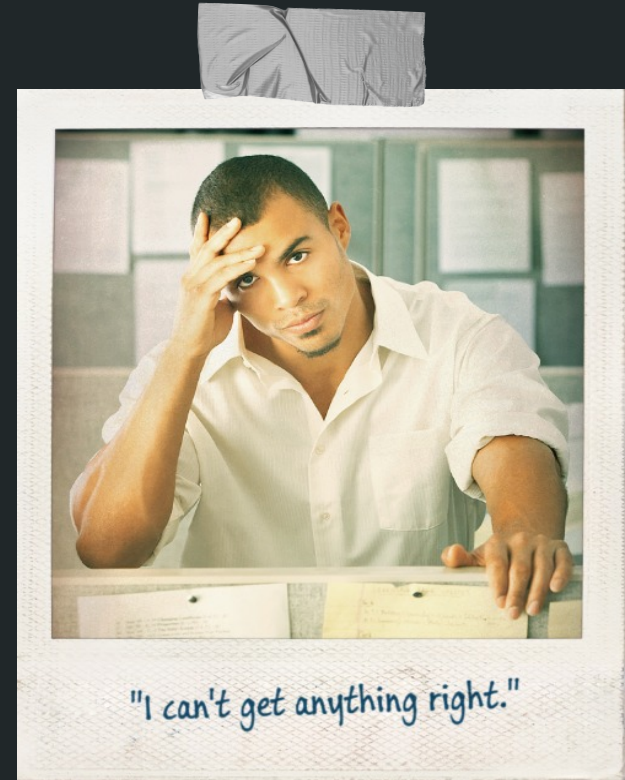
- Avoiding painful realities
 - Disengaging from self
 - Loss of personal identity, freedom and autonomy
 - Denial and escape to an unfeeling existence
 - More punitive toward others
-

I have absolutely no pleasure in the stimulants in which I sometimes so madly indulge. It has not been in the pursuit of pleasure that I have periled life and reputation and reason. It has been the desperate attempt to escape from torturing memories, from a sense of insupportable loneliness and a dread of some strange impending doom.

— **Edgar Allan Poe**

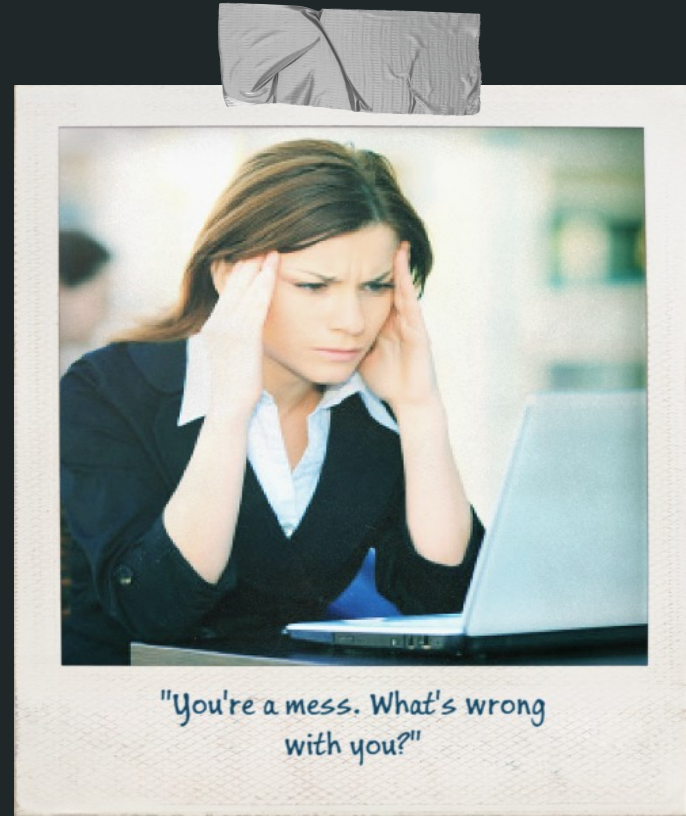
Critical Inner Voice

- The critical inner voice is a well-integrated pattern of destructive thoughts toward ourselves and others.
- The nagging “voices” that make up this internalized dialogue are at the root of much of our self-destructive and maladaptive behavior.



Critical Inner Voice

- The critical inner voice is not an auditory hallucination; it is experienced as thoughts within your head.
- This stream of destructive thoughts forms an anti-self that discourages individuals from acting in their best interest.



The Two Faces of the Critical Inner Voice

Self-Soothing

Self-Punishing



Anti-Self System

Self-Punishing Voice Process

Voice Process

1. Critical thoughts toward s



2. Micro-suicidal injunctions



3. Suicidal injunctions – suicidal ideation



Behaviors

Verbal self-attacks – a generally negative attitude toward self and others predisposing alienation

Addictive patterns

Self-punitive thoughts after indulging

Actions that jeopardize such as carelessness with one's body, physical attacks on the self, and actual suicide

Anti-Self System

Self-Soothing Voice Process

Voice Process

1. Self-soothing attitudes
2. Aggrandizing thoughts toward self
3. Suspicious paranoid thoughts toward others
4. Micro-suicidal injunctions
5. Overtly violent thoughts



Behaviors

Self-limiting or self-protective lifestyles - Inwardness

Verbal build up toward self

Alienation from others

Destructive behavior towards others

Addictive patterns

Thoughts luring the person into indulging aggressive actions

Actual violence

Self-Soothing Voices



You've been doing so well. One little piece of cake won't hurt.

Have a glass of wine. You can be like everyone else here. You have this under control.

It's been a tough week. You need to relax. Take a hit. You can quit tomorrow.

Self-Punishing Voices



You messed up again. You're such a pig! You'll never change.

You're disgusting. You have no control. You don't deserve to succeed.

You're weak. You're doomed to fail. I knew you couldn't do it.

- The critical inner voice perpetuates addictive behavior.
- People further engage in addictive behavior to escape this inner critic.

Part 3: Overcoming Addiction



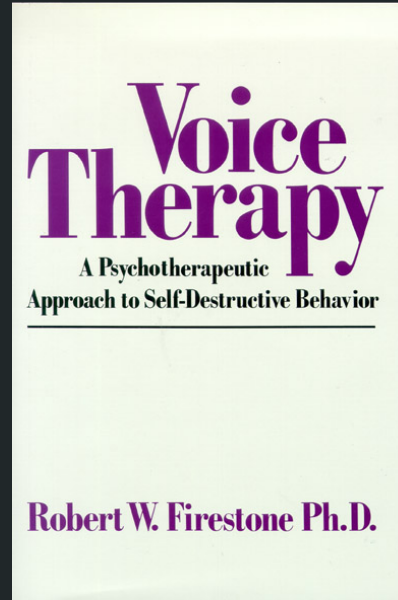
Emotion-Focused Therapy Study

Six Things That Were Helpful:

1. Struggling to separate from the critic
2. Recognizing the destructive impact of the critic
3. Recognizing the protective function of the critic
4. Accessing and accepting previously avoided feelings
5. Accepting my needs
6. Valuing the group

Voice Therapy

Cognitive/ Affective/ Behavioral Approach



The Therapeutic Process in Voice Therapy

Step 1

The person articulates his or her self-attacks in the second person and expresses any feelings that arise.



The Therapeutic Process in Voice Therapy

Step II

The person discusses reactions to saying their voices. The person tries to understand the relationship between these attacks and early life experiences.



The Therapeutic Process in Voice Therapy

Step III

The person answers back to the voice attacks.

The person makes a rational statement about how he or she really is.



The Therapeutic Process in Voice Therapy

Step IV

The person develops insight about how the voice attacks are influencing his or her present-day behaviors.



The Therapeutic Process in Voice Therapy

Step V

The person collaborates with the therapist to plan changes in behaviors. The person is encouraged to not engage in self-destructive behaviors and to increase the positive behaviors these negative thoughts discourage.



If you are interested in attending a voice therapy training or in getting training materials please contact jina@glendon.org or visit www.glendon.org

Self

Anti-Self



Additional Steps of Voice Therapy to Treat Addiction

- Journaling as an adjunct to counseling –
Helps to catch on to triggers
- Strengthening the real self

Journaling and Exercises



A REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM TO COUNTER NEGATIVE
THOUGHTS AND LIVE FREE FROM IMAGINED LIMITATIONS

conquer your
critical
inner
voice

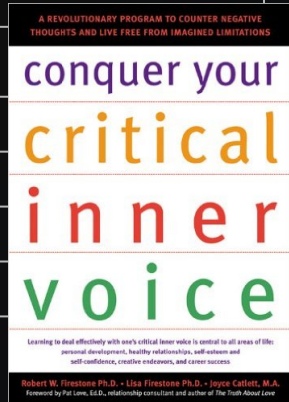
Learning to deal effectively with one's critical inner voice is central to all areas of life:
personal development, healthy relationships, well-being and
self-confidence, creative endeavors, and career success

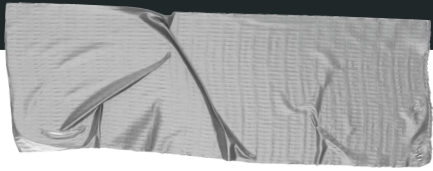
Robert W. Firestone Ph.D. • Lisa Firestone Ph.D. • Joyce Catlett, M.A.
Foreword by Pat Lame, Ed.D., relationship consultant and author of *The Truth About Love*

Exercise 6.2

Voices of Addiction Feelings and The Real You

My critical inner voices	How these voices make me feel	My realistic thoughts
<i>Seductive Voices:</i>		
<i>Punishing Voices:</i>		





When we break an addiction, the painful emotions we've tried to suppress start to rise to the surface. How do we deal with these emotions?



RAIN

Recognize what is going on

Allow, accept, acknowledge the experience to be there as it is

Investigate with kindness

Natural awareness, which comes from not identifying with the experience

From Dr. Daniel Siegel:

Curious

Open

Accepting

Loving



Self-Compassion

“Being touched by and not avoiding your suffering”

From Kristin Neff, Ph.D.:

Self-compassion is not based on self-evaluation. It is not a way of judging ourselves positively; it is a way of relating to ourselves kindly.

Three Elements:

- 1. Self-kindness** Vs. Self-judgment
- 2. Mindfulness** Vs. Over-identification with thoughts
- 3. Common humanity** Vs. Isolation

Benefits of Self-Compassion



- **Mechanism for change**
- **Lowers stress**
- **Buffers against negative social comparisons**

Source: <http://www.self-compassion.org/>

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy

DBT teaches clients four sets of behavioral skills:

- Mindfulness
- Distress tolerance
- Interpersonal effectiveness
- Emotion regulation



The Value of Mindfulness

- Healthy self-soothing strategy
- Teaches us to sit with feeling
- Widens our window of tolerance

Helping Others

Helps strengthen our real self



Create a Coherent Narrative

MAKING SENSE OF YOUR LIFE

Understanding Your Past
— to Liberate Your Present —
and Empower Your Future



An eCourse with
Drs. Dan Siegel
& Lisa Firestone

Differentiation

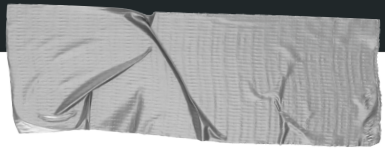
Step 1: Break with internalized thought processes (critical, hostile attitudes toward self and others)

Step 2: Separate from negative personality traits assimilated from one's parents

Step 3: Relinquish patterns of defense formed as an adaptation to painful events in one's childhood

Step 4: Develop one's own values, ideals, and beliefs rather than automatically accepting those one has grown up with





Categories of Relapse Triggers

- **Environmental triggers** often include social events or circumstances that were once associated with using the drug.
- **Re-exposure triggers** include circumstances that bring the user into proximity with a drug of abuse, and this can reinstate the drug-seeking behavior.
- **Stress triggers** typically include such emotions as anger, fear, anxiety, and sadness.

Source: [Recovery.org](https://www.recovery.org)

“It’s a concert. You’ll enjoy it so much more if you’re a little stoned.”

“What’s the big deal? Everyone else is drinking. Join the party.”

“You’re under too much pressure. One cigarette won’t matter.”

CBT and Relapse Prevention Therapy

In clinical practice, coping skills training forms the cornerstone of RPT, teaching clients strategies to:

1. Understand relapse as a process
2. Identify and cope effectively with high-risk situations
3. Cope with urges and craving
4. Implement damage control procedures during a lapse to minimize its negative consequences
5. Stay engaged in treatment even after a relapse learn how to create a more balanced lifestyle

Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention

“It’s a human tendency to want to have pleasure and want to avoid pain or discomfort.”

- Sarah Bowen, University of Washington researcher

- A tool to become aware of that inclination to want only pleasurable things and escape uncomfortable things
- Helps people learn to relate to discomfort differently - observe it with presence and compassion and choose how we respond, rather than defaulting to automatic behaviors

The Role of Self-Forgiveness

The interplay between resentment and forgiveness is a central component of the 12-Step model of addiction and recovery; however, little work has empirically examined this largely anecdotal assumption. That which has been done suggests that self-forgiveness may be critical in the process of addiction and recovery. Incorporating a stress-and-coping model of self-forgiveness to address the impact of self-condemnation on addiction and recovery, the authors provide an overview of the psychology of forgiveness in the context of addiction and recovery, an updated review of empirical evidence, and a discussion of self-forgiveness as a ready-made antidote to the negative consequences of addictive behavior.

I am developing the inner strength to bear my feelings: sit with them, not judge them, and verbalize them instead of acting them out in my eating disorder.

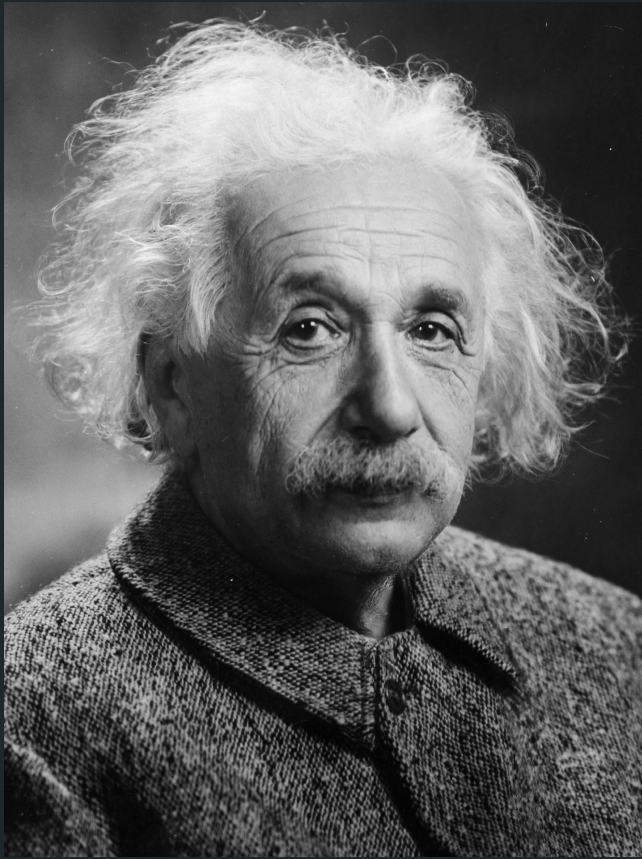
- "Healing from 38 Years of Food Addiction and Bulimia"

The Importance of Connections

Professor Peter Cohen:

- Portugal had one of the worst drug problems in Europe
- Resolved to decriminalize all drugs, transfer all money they used to spend on arresting and jailing addicts to spend instead on reconnecting them—to their own feelings and to the wider society
- They were helped, “in warm and welcoming clinics, to learn how to reconnect with their feelings, after years of trauma and stunning them into silence with drugs. Suddenly, they were a group, all bonded to each other, and to the society, and responsible for each other’s care.”
- An independent study by the *British Journal of Criminology*: Addiction has fallen, and injecting drug use is down by 50 percent. I’ll repeat that: injecting drug use is down by 50 percent.

From: The Greater Good – “Can Connection Cure Addiction?”



“A human being is part of a whole, called by us the ‘Universe’ —a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts, and feelings, as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circles of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”

- Albert Einstein

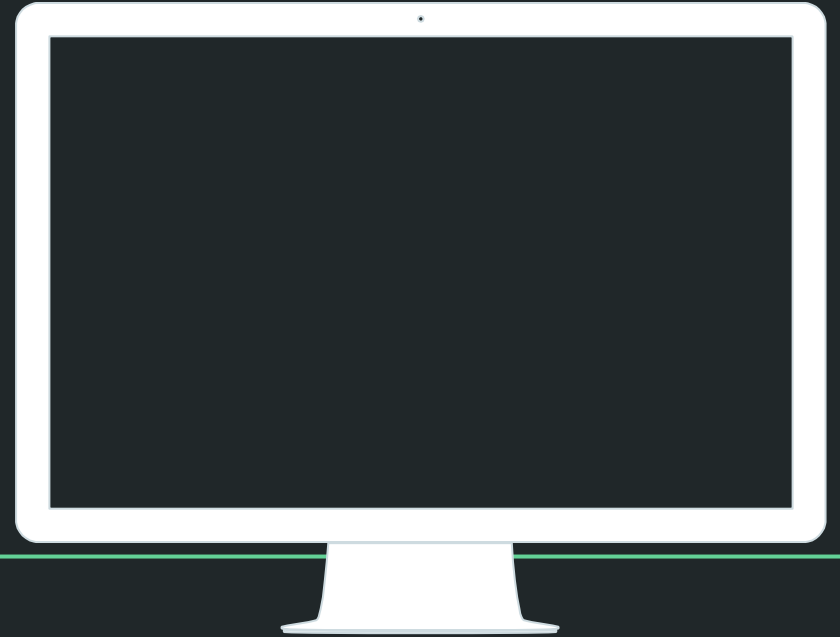
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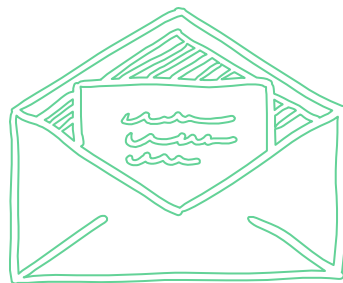
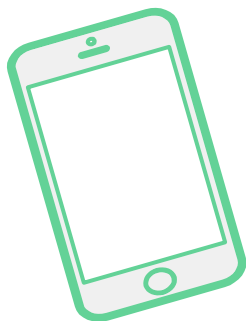
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Thank You!

Any questions?

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