

Chapter 8: Treatment:

Lance Dodes, MD, Harvard Psychiatrist, author and addiction expert states, "True addiction (not physical dependence) is neither more nor less than **an emotional solution to manage feelings of intolerable helplessness**. When people feel utterly trapped they have to do something, and if they feel they can't act directly to get out of that trap, then they have to do something else. The "something else" is, therefore, a substitute action (technically called a "displacement"). When people repetitively perform a displaced action to try to manage overwhelming helplessness, we call this driven, compulsive behavior an addiction. But there's always something people can do at these overwhelming moments that is more direct! (even if not perfect). People find that when they take direct healthy action, the addictive urge almost always vanishes! This sounds like magic but it makes sense because having acted more directly, they no longer need a substitute behavior."

This direct healthy action, that Dr. Dodes refers to, could be simply facing your helpless circumstances, talking to another person or channeling your actions into a less destructive manner. Humans always attempt to regain control when they feel helpless and trapped! Exercise, talking to someone, music (praise music is a powerful mood changer), reading a book, going to a movie or doing something fun, do something you value that empowers you (besides drugs or other corrupt behaviors), and this direct action will change your mood and you will regain control! This is where Christ driven behavior excels! Christ Driven Behavior (CDB) is a direct behavior that honors God, a way to regain control over helpless feelings. When are we most vulnerable to an intolerable sense of helplessness, a complete lack of control, in our lives? From a Christian perspective, the answer, is when we are separated from God.

The optimal way to overcome any addiction, any hurt, habit or hangup, is to start with understanding yourself, the psychology of "Why." Why do you compulsively abuse substances or behave in certain ways? What is the root cause of your behavior? Addiction is simply a behavior used to regain control over intolerable helpless feelings. **Once you understand yourself (human behavior) and why you abuse, then you can understand how to overcome your helpless feelings and empower yourself in a direct healthy manner.**

Intelligent Delegation: aka Surrender

Every day we are controlled by something; the expectations of other people, fear, anger, guilt, resentment, bitterness. Maybe even a substance or a habit. Ironically, freedom comes when you choose what's going to control you. When you choose Jesus Christ to be in control of your life: when you Delegate Control to God. The optimal, empowering treatment, for any hurt, hangup or habit, in a single word is to, "**Surrender**." Surrendering in this case, is not tantamount to agreeing that one is incapable of managing one's own life or has no free will. It's humbling oneself enough to accept change and the admission that you can't control everything. Being a, "Believer," does not necessarily mean your behavior will change. For real and lasting change, you need to repent and genuinely, "Surrender." **In business and life, in order to grow, you have to let go of absolute control.** Pride is what keeps us from our best thinking and acting. Humility, is the door to inherit clear thinking. ("Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Mathew 5:5). Today, surrender typically has a negative connotation. With surrender we generally think in terms of capitulation, meekness, to give in and submit. What irony, for there can be genuine power in Surrender! With respect to God, "**Surrender, is simply delegating our thinking and circumstances to a more qualified entity!**" Consider for a moment, like it or not, you are the proactive Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of your life, with the ability to think and choose. Is it a weakness to hire a tax expert, a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or a Chief Operations Officer (COO) for your business? Of course not! You're simply delegating control to a more qualified person. Surrender is not a weakness or giving up, when you have a genuine, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Surrender is an intelligent decision! This personal relationship is absolutely essential for growth and lasting success. Ah, the cognitive dissonance of being in control, by relinquishing control! *Giving God control is absolutely empowering!* Change happens through conviction and commitment! Surrender is the most important decision of your life. Surrender is a decision, a binary choice of either yes or no. When you choose to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength, the decision is proactive and simple. Give God control! Simply stated, relinquish your pride and choose to **give God control and God returns that control to you with the empowering Holy Spirit!** "My grace is sufficient for you, for there is power in weakness." 2 Cor. 12:9-10.

This empowering biblical construct can be thought of as, "**Intelligent Delegation and Reciprocal Innervation.**" *Intelligent Delegation (ID) and Reciprocal Innervation (RI) equals Christ Driven Behavior (CDB). (ID+RI=CDB). There is no addiction with Christ Driven Behavior!*

How behavior science synergizes with scripture:

Christ Driven Behavior (CDB), is a Direct behavior that honors God, a direct way to regain control over helpless, trapped, powerless feelings! When we surrender to God, He empowers us with a mentor, that imparts motivation, conviction, purpose and the fruits of the Holy Spirit called values. Self-control is one of those fruits or values! When we execute self control, we act with direct healthy behavior and not with displaced behaviors. This is God's scriptural promise and makes Christian Behavior Therapy uniquely successful! Old displaced behaviors pass away to be replaced by new direct behaviors! 2 Corinthians 5:17. This is the marriage of behavioral science and scripture.

The purpose of addiction is to regain control over intolerably helpless-trapped-powerless feelings, an emotional state. We always have a binary choice. We can regain control of helpless feelings with displaced substitute behaviors (quick fixes or mood changers of drugs or other behaviors), or direct healthy behaviors that empower us.

We can choose DIRECT Healthy Behavior when we give God control; when we decide and commit to surrender or more specifically, "Intelligently Delegate," control to Christ, we become empowered! We become even stronger! Yes, God's grace is sufficient for you, there is actually power in weakness! 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. Simply stated, we regain control over our adversity our helpless feelings/emotions, with the help of a built in Mentor/Helper, that will be with us always, the Holy Spirit (John 14:16). This Helper, empowers, convicts, guides, and comforts all believers.

The Holy Spirit actually empowers us with values and Direct behavior that, "Honors God!" We conduct our lives with Christ Driven Behaviors (CDB) when get our values, motivation, purpose, behavior and self control from the Bible. [Galatians 5:22-23](#). When we change our *thinking* (repent or metanoia) we are not conformed to this world, but transformed by new *thinking*, when we let God change our life. [Romans 12:2](#). Always ask, what would Christ do? Does my behavior honor God? This type of thinking empowers, values, motivation and purpose. We can't always control our external circumstances, but we do have free will and we can change how we think about them and therefore change how we feel and behave! God wants our beliefs turned into direct behavior. *Direct behavior is having the wisdom to think according to God's perspective and the ability to respond or behave according to scriptural principles and values.*

Posit this: The feelings of intolerable helplessness and lack of control are key elements to causing addictive behavior. With Christ Driven Behavior, **when one surrenders their will to God, then the element of control is intellectually delegated absolving the addict from helplessness and lack of control.** When we fashion our lives after Jesus Christ, our thinking changes, our behavior changes, our actions change, we become *empowered* with the Holy Spirit and regain control! Remember, Christ Driven Behavior is not just praying or reading scripture! Direct healthy behavior can be, "Whatever you do, do in the name of Jesus our Lord." [Collosians 3:17](#). Remember, **there is no addiction when you behave in a direct healthy manner!**

These are the behavioral principles of Jesus Christ with respect to regaining control of helpless circumstances with Direct Christ Driven Behaviors instead of substitute displaced, quick fixes or mood changers of alcohol, drugs, porn, gambling, or any hurt, habit or hangup. **Empower yourself and choose to allow the philosophical values and principles of Jesus Christ to TRANSFORM your thinking and change the very essence of your life-forever.** When we have a relationship with Jesus Christ we learn Building and Maintaining Motivation, Coping with Urges, Managing Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviors, Living a Balanced Life. *Christ driven behavior is putting the values and virtues of Christ into habit.* When we retrain our brain with direct Christ Driven Behavior, (CDB) we learn to change our thinking (neural engrams), our motivation, our **values** and **purpose** and that changes our character and our lives. We don't react with displaced compulsive behavior but instead react with healthy direct behavior, that is Christ Driven Behavior based on a personal relationship that empowers us with the values and virtues of Jesus Christ. When we practice these values, we find motivation and purpose, joy, competence and connection. The best antidotes to addiction are joy, competence and connection—joy as the capacity to take pleasure in the people, things, and activities that are available to us; competence as the ability to master relevant parts of our environment and the confidence that our actions make a difference for ourselves and others. Connection is a reborn and surrendered, personal relationship with Jesus Christ, that empowers our thinking and consequently our behavior.

All addiction experts will agree that the main navigational tools in life are values and purpose. People overcome hurts, habits and hang-ups out of purpose-based motivation (based on values)-- they better themselves when they recognize how their habits, violate *who* they were, *what* they want to be, *where* they want to go in life. One fundamental question in life stands above all others. Who or what will have the final authority in your life? What sources will help you **determine your values, your purpose?**

The Bible is a book on values and purpose. The Bible is the book that contains this template for purpose based motivation, mindfulness, character, values and tenets for life ([Sermon on the Mount](#)). Bill O'Reilly, in his secular history book called, "Killing Jesus," notes that, "Jesus's [Sermon on the Mount](#) may be the most important speech in human history. The teachings of Jesus have shaped the entire world and continue to do so."

I submit to you. The Bible is the ultimate book on behavior therapy. Loving God and loving others is at the core of the Bible. When you love God and love others, you learn to love yourself, you learn to manage your thinking and emotions. Most importantly, you learn that *you have the capacity to see things from God's perspective and to respond according to scriptural principles.* Yielding control to the Holy Spirit allows God's will to be done and enables us to accept it. When you decide to give God control, God will return that control to you, with the Holy Spirit. This is our Designer's promise. *When you regain control of life with direct Christ Driven Behavior you will find purpose and inner peace. This is the synergy of behavioral science and scripture.*

Summary:

The common core element in any addiction or compulsive hurt, habit or hangup, is the emotional feeling of being powerless, trapped, and helpless. When these feelings become intolerable and overwhelming we feel loss of power and control. Humans always seek to regain control of helpless circumstances with either a displaced or a direct behavior. This is God's message to all of us. Understand and manage our emotions and delegate control to God, who will reciprocate and empower us with the Holy Spirit and in turn change our thinking and change our behavior, with the fruits or values of the Holy Spirit - not the least of which is self control. With self control we act directly and not with substitute displaced behaviors.

Recognize: Recognize the problem and understand why certain situations or relationships lead us to feel so overwhelmingly trapped, powerless and out of control. Recognize the feeling, the errant behavior; the key **emotional moment** of the overwhelming helpless circumstance, recognize the underlying emotional theme present in our lives, that will lead to feeling trapped and helpless. Look for this theme in your life that underlies all addictive episodes and leads to addictive thoughts. Look backward from the moment of doing an addictive behavior (or even thinking about it). Look for the emotional precipitants. Remember, thoughts and feelings, including urges to use substances or activities, are always temporary.

Reframe: Reframe the behavior. What are the problems associated with your displaced behavior? What are the benefits from your stopping? What are the **pros and cons** of regaining control with a displaced temporary quick fixes or mood changer, versus regaining control with a direct healthy behavior?

Replace: Replace your attempts to regain control of circumstances with displaced behaviors and instead, employ **high value, direct behaviors that empower yourself!** In other words, what more direct alternative actions can you take in place of the

addictive act, in order to regain control? Replace your old behavior with direct, empowering, Christ Driven Behavior, that honors God. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, old things have passed away; all things have become new." 2 [Corinthians 5:17](#)

Think and always ask yourself: Will my behavior honor God? **When your actions are Christ like in character, you have regained control. There is no addiction, there is inner peace,** you have regained control with direct Christ Driven Behavior.

Most addiction experts perceive that Science and Scripture are antithetical; this is a misconception. We need scientific explanation to understand nature. We need meaning to understand human behavior. We need God to give us the answers to both. Jesus Christ taught His personal psychotherapy, over 2000 years ago. He authored by proxy, 66 books on behavioral principles! Read the Bible to be wise, believe it to be saved and practice it to be holy and healthy.

*Spread the empirical evidence of direct Christ Driven Behavior (CDB),
while discouraging the dissemination of myth, hysteria and hype.
Change your thinking and change your life.*