

Who am I and Why this Class?

My name is Chris. "I am a Surrendered Believer in Jesus Christ with Free Will and I **CHOSE** Surrender (Intelligent Delegation) in my victory over, "Recreational Chemical Abuse, my weekend, "False Idols." I'm going to tell you a little about myself and how this class came to be.

I spent 10 years in College with a major in neurophysiology, studying the brain and spinal cord, the Central Nervous System; then I spent 44 years abusing my brain and spinal cord with drugs and alcohol. In grad school, I studied the molecules behind behavior in everything from protozoa to Chimpanzees.

Let me be clear, I'm not a Psychiatrist nor a psychologist. I'm just like all of you here. An imperfect person who wants to be a better person and understand themselves better. As Epictetus the Greek slave said, "No person is free until they have mastered themselves." In looking around tonight, my real expertise just might be the fact that I am the oldest and most experienced sinner in this crowd. 😊

So, what is addiction anyway? Addictions are nothing more than displaced or substitute behaviors for more direct behaviors. Let me explain. *All addictive behavior is caused by one underlying emotion: intolerable, overwhelming **helplessness**.* When one feels overwhelmed with helplessness, they feel trapped, powerless and out of control. In my case, I learned in High School that I could escape my anxiety and shyness with a quick fix or mood changer of alcohol or drugs. This would actually reverse my sense of helplessness and make me feel in control! This would be called a displaced behavior. Alternatively, I could have exercised a direct behavior to escape the trap of feeling helpless but it was just easier for me to go for the chemical quick fix. This is what we will be learning in this class. (another example is the anxiety I experience in preparing for this class..).

I came to CR in 2012. At that time, my wife and I were separated, and my son was fresh out of rehab from heroin addiction. One of the main reasons I came to CR was to find out why drinking and taking drugs every weekend for decades was so very important to me. I started reading books on addiction when my son became a heroin addict. Nate likes to joke that I have read 400 books on addiction and he has read one. Well, it is true that I have read over 400 books on addiction. The reason was that I was on a mission to discover why I had made my values and purpose in life, abusing substances. Here is what I learned: all these addiction experts basically said the same thing in different ways about addiction. I learned that with respect to Addiction the experts recognize that *values and purpose are the main navigational tools in life*. They emphasize personal values and how to manage those values; they acknowledge, motivation, life skills, community and relationships are human ingredients, necessary to behavioral change. They want us to manage our emotions, examine our thinking and change our corrupt behavior; to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. While reading the Bible, I realized that all these experts were saying the exact same thing that Jesus

Christ taught 2000 years ago!! In essence, **addictions science and the Bible were both teaching that values and purpose were the main navigational tools in life!**

*At CR I worked on my personal relationship with God, I found 7 core scriptures that synergized with addiction science. These scriptures which we will discuss in this class, talk about understanding our **emotions**, asking God for **help**, changing our **thinking**, **delegating** control to Christ, God **reciprocating** with a Helper that facilitates fruit or **values**, such as **self-control** and joy and our replacing our old selves and becoming **New Creations**.*

Understand that I have been a Christian all my life but consciously never gave Christ 100%. How could I party on weekends and give 100%? I could not! And after all, in my selfish thinking, I deserved to party.

God led me to one scripture that changed my life. 2 Corinthians 12-9-10: "My grace is sufficient for you, for there is power in weakness." This was an a- ha moment for me. I saw how I could swallow my pride and **NOT** try to be God and control everything my way and yet still be an empowered individual! It was at this point in time, 2 months into CR that I made an intellectual decision. I chose to, "**Delegate,**" **control to Christ**. I literally said to God, "Ok, lets try this your way for once. I'm self employed, so I said, I'm hiring you as my Chief Operations Officer (COO) on a part time basis. I'm still the Chief Executive Office with free will but I am giving you full control for now. I'm Surrendering my life to you. Prove Yourself! I made a baby step plan. I got on my knees twice a day, in the morning when I got out of bed and at night when I went to bed. (also Calendar appts)

I continued on my new journey with my new Chief Operations Officer and reading a book every week or two. One day I was sitting at my desk and I suddenly realized I was happy and liked the new me! I had a new sense of self worth. I realized the most important question to ask yourself is: What is your source of self esteem or self worth? I was getting my source from God. I said to God, "What have you done to me?" I don't want or need chemicals in my life. I opened my desk drawer and took out an 8 ball of cocaine that I had in my drawer that I refused to throw away. I threw it in the toilet and flushed it.

I said, Lord, I've read all these hundreds of books, I've seen a psychologist, I've been to NA and AA meetings, please make this simple for me. What have you done to me!

God said, it's not rocket science. It's real simple. **You gave me control and I returned that control to you through the Holy Spirit**. I was stunned at the simplicity and profundity of this statement. I thought this makes complete and total sense not only spiritually but psychologically and neurologically. When I surrendered my life to God, my **attention** was on Christ every day. I reflected on my neuroscience major. You may have heard the expression: Neurons that fire together wire together. I thought, where **attention goes** (God), neuro-firing **flows** and neuro-connections **grow!!!** This is exactly how learning takes place; how neural pathways grow with new synaptic junctions and neuroplasticity. I never wanted to forget this

so I immediately wrote down, "Intelligent Delegation + Reciprocal Innervation= Christ Driven Behavior! (the ID is surrendering my life to God and the Reciprocal Innervation is God reciprocating with the Holy Spirit)!"

But that's not the end of the story. Two weeks later I read the secular book, the **Heart of Addiction**. In this book Dodes explains addiction is caused by one underlying emotion: **helplessness**. When you feel helpless, you feel powerless, trapped, and lacking control. According to Dodes, every addictive act is preceded by a feeling of intolerable helplessness. The addictive behavior, called a displaced or substitute behavior, is an escape from the helplessness trap, although it doesn't solve the original problem of feeling trapped and ultimately makes matters worse. When you're feeling trapped any direct decisive action (especially if of high value to you) can be experienced as **empowering**. You no longer feel helpless because you have regained control, you have escaped the trap! I thought back to my conversation with God. God was telling me essentially the same thing as this addiction psychiatrist. God was saying to me *when circumstances in life leave you feeling emotionally overwhelmed, helpless, trapped, powerless and out of control, come to Him, transform your thinking, surrender control to Christ and he will send you a Helper that will **empower** you to regain control with new values, direct Christ Driven Behavior and you will be a new person!* At this point, I had my answers as to the cause of my substance abuse and the empowering remedy. I thought if I could get people to understand the secular psychology behind their behavior and combine this new understanding with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, people could master their lives from both a secular and spiritual aspect; there would be no white knuckling addiction, no fear and ignorance, no myth, hysteria and hype. Just a peaceful understanding of knowing yourself and knowing that when you act with the character, conversation and conduct of Jesus Christ you are acting with **direct** Christ Driven Behavior that honors God. *When we understand the psychology behind our thinking and our emotions we can learn to reverse our sense of helplessness and regain control of our lives with direct behaviors instead of substitute or displaced behaviors. This sounds like magic but it's nothing more than the marriage of behaviors science and the Holy Spirit working together! When our values and purpose are Christ Driven Behaviors (CDB) that honors God, there can be no hurts, no hangups, no habits, no addiction, there is a **new creation** with **transformed thinking**.* And that's the rest of the story and why we are here tonight. Oh yeah and one other minor detail, Nate said it was ok. 😊