



The Addictive Personality: Understanding the Addictive Process and Compulsive Behavior

Craig Nakken

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Craig Nakken brings new depth and dimension to our understanding of how an individual becomes an addict.

Since its publication in 1988, *The Addictive Personality* has helped people understand the process of addiction. Now, through this second edition, author Craig Nakken brings new depth and dimension to our understanding of how an individual becomes an addict. Going beyond the definition that limits dependency to the realm of alcohol and other drugs, Nakken uncovers the common denominator of all addiction and describes how the process is progressive.

Through research and practical experience, Nakken sheds new light on:

Genetic factors tied to addiction;

Cultural influences on addictive behavior;

The progressive nature of the disease; and

Steps to a successful recovery.

The author examines how addictions start, how society pushes people toward addiction, and what happens inside those who become addicted. This new edition will help anyone seeking a better understanding of the addictive process and its impact on our lives.

The Addictive Personality: Understanding the Addictive Process and Compulsive Behavior Details

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From Reader Review The Addictive Personality: Understanding the Addictive Process and Compulsive Behavior for online ebook

Kelsie Augustin says

I considered this a very good book because personally, I too have an addictive personality for affection.

Derick Kostrzewa says

I thought this self help book was very informative on addictions, how addicts become addicted, how they should address their situation, and come to terms that they have a problem. I liked the details on the Self and the Addict parts of a person who has an addiction, and it is generally how an addict is with two sides of the person's mind fighting for dominance, especially during the recovery process. It does stress how important it is for addicts to have healthy relationships with others so that they may recover from their addictions properly. I do recommend this book as a starting point for anyone who has an addiction or has a loved one who suffers from an addiction.

Jacob says

This book, which looks similar to Addictive Thinking: Understanding the Addictive Process and Compulsive Behavior, covers more of the behavioral side of addiction. The author's main idea is that an alternate personality, The Addict, develops for some people and addiction comes when that personality beats the original into submission and takes over. His advice for therapy is to bring the original back out and encourage the individual to act in ways that don't allow The Addict to reassert control. The approach seems serviceable to me. One of the biggest things I learned from this book is that, despite what some may think, my reading is not an addiction because a) it hasn't taken over and ruined my life and b) I don't have a non-reading personality that got squashed.

This book covers behavioral addictions in addition to chemical ones, which I appreciated. Both were sorted into "addictions about pleasure" and "addictions about power" buckets, although I'm not sure the division made sense for all the addictions. The idea that addictions develop as an attempt to control the normal vicissitudes of life feels accurate, as does the admonition that in order to fully recover a person must learn to develop and take pleasure from real relationships, and that bad things happen in life that feel bad and must be faced.

I must also note that although this seemed more comprehensive than Addictive Thinking, the writing was harder to get through. I would have appreciated more examples / stories like the other book had.

Jose says

Clear, to the point, good book. will use in school and therapy.

Angelina says

Not a fan of this book at all.. Feel like everything that is discussed is a common knowledge, especially if you are interested in psychology and read numerous books to similar behaviours as addicts experience. But it looks like it has a high rating so I am assuming this book is very helpful for some. As usual, study notes/take aways from a book bellow.

spoilers!

NOTES

- Understanding addiction -> abnormal relationship with an object, hoping to get their needs met/ acting out- getting support from their addiction, as it leads to a predictable mood change experience.
- Intensity vs Intimacy in the eyes of the addict

STAGES OF ADDICTION

STAGE 1: Internal Stage (changing addictive personality)

- Personality is altered/ mood is changed but its more intense feeling. This mistaken with a comfort -> compulsive behaviour; addiction occur if a person doesn't create family/friendship/ spiritual & communal relationships. -> addictive cycle begins; Shame created, restless, denial of self and reality, loss of control vs gain and illusion of control, ironically more pain is created, mood change..> the addictive delusion.

STAGE 2: Life style change

- A behavioural dependency - > behaviour withdrawal, secret world, lies to others, blames others, retualizatlon of your behaviour.
- Commitment and developing healthy rituals
- Inner struggle
- People problems -> treatment of others as objects, other concern seems noisy, not important.
- Mistrust is created
- Recommitment of nurturing life, spirit, self and connecting with others

STAGE 3: Life breakdown

- Paranoia develops that others on to them, addict starts to manipulate
- Withdrawal from others -solitude, lack of intimacy; push & clingy behaviour - fear develops
- Some may have financial problem
- Physical signs of breaking down
- Shame is high, "no one hates the addict more than the addict himself"
- Thoughts of suicide

PART 3: The why of recovery

- Drive for connection: drive for meaning, resistance, power & pleasure
- Pleasure sicking people -> constant monitor personal sensations, can't commit, dishonest, sick only own pleasure -> Lesson for recovery for addict personality
- Power person -> self confidence comes with power, gain control, more control = more self-confidence, but it is illusionary. Result they suffer from low self esteem, they engaged in lieing, manipulation. -> proving themselves that they are right , they argue, end justifies means power at all cost. Always need to show that he/she is right. Power centered in love- to protect themselves they control the relationship, other person. Tries to stay attached. Dependency, dominant relationship, the will pursue until the other person gives in. Love for this person is unstable. End result is fear-> narcissistic, paranoid lifestyle. Always on guard that someone will take the power.

Blame is essential, to keep power one can't be wrong.

- Meaning centered project: want to better the world, develop conscious life principles, sceptical about their impulsive, try to control them, have understanding that 2 ways to get power: by building or destroying; ethical power- stick to spiritual principles, honesty. Don't control the moment, they live in it, life is serious of struggle, learn to extract meaning for it, self- is not seen as a centre of the earth, power use creatively not abusively, one can learn from any relationship.

- Resistance:

- End of the endless cycle: admit addictive personality (helps to start relationship with oneself & others, builds trust); dealing with people outside is difficult (higher power); slowing down addictive space (use the recovery group); need to learn addictive process in them; honesty/ connection with oneself and others; guilt & shame in recovery; expecting others & supporting each other; reshaping rituals.

PART 4:

- Family And Addiction

- Having Parents Who Suffer Addictions -> codependents; language of addiction leads to picking up the same type of people; children experience emotional instability; family taught to lie and deny their healthy responses and coping skills.

- Growing up in abusive family -> intentional abuse -> children needs are not met, taught to reflect pain on others; think that your own needs are not important, you are there to satisfy others needs- attachment created?!

- Neglected family - > children take space, their self esteem is not fully developed, they are passive, dead inside, need to feel alive (acting out); followers, mood change - excited vs passiveness.

- Shaming families -> victims the members - victims, taught not to be vulnerable, be perfect, not to be caught in the middle, mistrust created , secret life and self can be created; involve in behaviour others not aware; act what they think is normal when in fact it isn't; often believe that they are the bad people, may become defensive; have deep anger and pain- they look for pain relief

- Inconsistent family: -child deprived of consistent relationship, no dept relationship, children usually not sure of their surroundings, peer-presure, loneliness, trust issues, have relationship with objects that has illusional fulfilment, not allowed to feel, only parents reality

ADVISED BOOK by the author: Facing Shame: Families in Recovery

horace dudley jr. says

Excellent

Much needed in recovery. Awesome take on the addictive personality. Much to think about. I recommend it. Quick read and straight to the point.

John Martindale says

It is truly refreshing to hear someone else eloquently voice many observations I've made concerning my own experience and those of others. Craig Nakken did an excellent job of explaining the addictive process and the horrible consequences, over and over again I thought he hit the nail square on the head. i liked for example how he pointed out that a terrible part of addiction is it results in one no longer seeing people as valuable individuals, but rather as objects, mere means to selfish ends.

As far as what He briefly wrote on the recovery process, my inner skeptic did cringe due to his heavy emphasis on the AA principle of needing the Higher Power. I suppose because I personally feel betrayed and let down by the Higher Power; abandoned and left the try and fail and fail again.

But yeah, all in all, this book was timely, for it seems the Dr Jackal in me was making peace with his Mr. Hyde, yeah I was surrendering, allowing the addictive personality to become more dominate, it just seemed to much easier. But this book reminded me to keep up the fight, to continue to pursue recovery. It sobered me up and reminded me of the crushing waterfall, that I was being carried towards by a strong current. I suppose its time to start looking for a branch to grab hold of.

Stacey Jean Smith says

Easy to read and concise in it's revelations surrounding the addictive process.

Heather Moselle says

What can I say. This is a must-read for anyone who is, or knows someone struggling with addiction. Perfectly clear and truthful; a concise read.

Catherine says

While I'm not big on most alcoholism/addiction/self-help books, this one was both fascinating and helpful to me in its central theses about personality types and the destructive quest for happiness. While my personal experience leads me to question the author's description of the "stages" of addiction, and what he includes in the realm of "addictions" seems positively comical, the basic thesis of the book is a brilliantly resonant speculation on the essential core of addictive behavior.

Erica says

This is a fantastic book. I learned so much! Huge help for me.

Rita Nunez says

This book offers so much more than the scientific script that books typically provide. I'm sorry I didn't come across it sooner. Very interesting and thought provoking.

Chelsea Jennings says

Excellent. Explains what addiction is and how it operates better than anything out there. Should be required reading for all people. Should be taught in middle school. Warning: do not judge this book by it's cover. It does NOT posit that there are certain people who are predisposed to addiction because they have the "personality" for it. Quite the opposite, it lays out clearly and systematically how addiction begins and can happen to anyone, and how the addictive personality is something that is FORMED through repetitive engaging in addictive behavior. Everyone should read this, but will be especially helpful to those struggling with addiction or who have loved ones that are addicted.

Havebooks Willread says

I thought this was an excellent book for any layperson desiring to have a better understanding of the process of addiction. A self-described addict recommended it to me with the comment "It's like the author knows me better than I know myself."

The author describes addiction as beginning with "an attempt to control and fulfill a desire for happiness" and fundamentally a relationship issue. My understanding is that an addict looks to an object or event to get his/her emotional needs met instead of to others, God, community, etc, which further isolates the addict, which creates more of a need for the addict to act out.

I was most fascinated with his depiction of the internal struggle going on between "the Self" and "the Addict", rather like the Jekyll and Hyde of Stevenson's classic novel.

I am glad to have read this one.

Steve Lee Sr says

There's so much I never knew...

Just when I think I'm getting out, they pull me back in! The many aspects of the addictive personality are complex and TRICKY. The chances of understanding how it all works, apart from an excellent book like this, are remote.

The addictive personality that develops within some of us, replaces the "true" self and will go to great lengths to survive, even giving-up one addiction for another, just to remain in control.

I am so glad I read this book. It gives a clear view of what the addict is up against in his efforts to regain control of his life. BONUS! Craig Nakken also discusses the tools that are available and necessary to put the addictive personality in it's place and keep it there.

This book covers a lot of technical information, but does so in a way that is easy to understand, yet still valuable for professional therapists or just folks who are struggling as an addict or someone who loves an addict.

There is so much incredible information in these 120 pages, it's not surprising that the book has sold over 100,000 copies. Truthfully, it deserves to be even more widely read.

