

Journey To



LIFE

"You have shown me the path of life."
Psalms 16:11



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Editorial Perspective Something "Old" – Something "New"

Wikipedia states: "The history of smoking dates back to as early as 5,000 B.C." The Germans have a word for harmful practices that have a long history - such as smoking. The word is *genussmittel* which means "necessary means of enjoyment." We are also aware that problems with alcohol were known in the time of Noah (Genesis 9:20-28).

According to *Infoplease* (an on-line resource published by Pearson Education), drug addiction and drug abuse dates back to the use in Egypt of narcotics from 4,000 B.C. and "medicinal" use of marijuana in China dating to 2737 B.C. However, it wasn't until the 19th century that the addictive substances in plants (such as morphine and cocaine) were extracted. These were unregulated and freely prescribed by physicians, sold by traveling salesmen, in drugstores and through the mail.

A "new" potentially addictive phenomenon is professionally referred to as "Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response" (ASMR). People who find videos of activities associated with whispering, crinkling paper,

folding towels, hair cuts, doctor's visits and guided imagery to be soothing and sleep inducing are commonly referred to as "tingleheads." The name is derived from the sensation of feeling a "headtingle" or "brain tingle." Perhaps in a future issue, we can have a feature article on this topic.

Whether an "old" or a "new" addiction the same principles and practices which prevent or ameliorate addiction and its harmful impact mentioned by Dr. Duane McBride in his well-written article in this issue of the *Journey to Life* will prove to be valuable source of insight and help.

My hope is that you will be aware of your (whether "old" or "new") obsessive thinking, compulsive and addictive behaviors. With that awareness, I encourage you to find recovery help and/or continue recovering from the addictive, harmful habits that keep you from fully developing the character of Christ in your life.

Ray Nelson, MDiv, MSPH
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ARMin Mission and Vision

Our Mission:

Promote healing and freedom from harmful practices by providing resources and training to facilitate recovery.

Our Vision:

Healthy people growing in a relationship with Christ by using principles of God's Word and choosing healthful practices aimed at finding freedom from harmful habits and addictive behaviors.

Potential Objectives/Goals:

- Promote healing (individually and corporately) utilizing the healthy, balanced principles of God's Word
- Provide resources to churches and individuals in order to raise awareness and educate regarding the root of dysfunctions that create disunity within individuals, families, churches and communities through unresolved trials, troubles and tragedies
- Train individuals to facilitate ongoing support groups and mentoring in a safe, nurturing environment

We believe that as we heal from life's trials, troubles and tragedies, we become inspired and committed to reach out to others as a result of gratitude for our personal healing; to care for others because our lives are so enriched by Christ's forgiveness; and the blessing of the freedom we have experienced due to His unending grace and mercy.

The Healing Value of the 12 STEPS

Step 8—

“Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.”

Biblical Comparison

“So if you are standing before the altar in the Temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there beside the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person.” — Matthew 5:23-24 (NLT)

Steps to Christ

Chapter

The Test of Discipleship

Upcoming Events

Mental Health Month (May 1-31) For more information: www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/may

National Alcohol- and Other Drug-Related Birth Defects Awareness Week (May 10-16) For more information: www.ncadd.org

World No Tobacco Day (May 31) www.who.int/mediacentre/events/official_days/en/

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (June 15) www.un.org/en/events/elderabuse/

International Day Against Drug Abuse (June 26) www.un.org/en/events/drugabuseday/

ARMin training Schedule: SAVE THE DATE

- Atlantic Union (AUC), New York, NY (June 19-20, 2015)
- Trans-European Division (TED), Newbold, UK (July 31-Aug 2, 2015)
- Southwestern Union (SWUC), Dallas, TX (October 9-11, 2015)

For more information about the above trainings go to www.adventistrecovery.org or call 301-680-6733.

Summer Institute of Recovery Studies (July 20-24, 2015) Sponsored by the National Association of Christian Recovery (NACR)

Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California
For more information and to register:
<http://www.nacr.org/5224-2>

Emotional Wellness Summit (January 13-17, 2016)
SAVE THE DATE! More info at
www.EmotionalWellnessSummit.com



12 STEPS to Recovery STEP #8

Often times we think our addictions are a solitary acts. We reconcile in our minds that our coping mechanisms only affect ourselves. When we think this way, we mentally eliminate the possibility that our hang-ups hurt anyone in the past and won't hurt anyone in the future. When we list all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all, we begin to realize that our addiction affects more than just us. It affects everyone around us. It helps us realize the consequence of actions. But most importantly, it affects our relationship with God.

“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” Matthew 5:23-24 ESV. To have a solid relationship with God, we must first be right with those who we have wronged. In the verses surrounding this text, Matthew 5 talks about anger and the importance of coming to terms with the victims of our selfishness. It gives an example of two people traveling to court and it advises the accused to make amends with the accuser before he arrives at court. Otherwise, the accuser will hand him over to the judge and the judge will have him pay for his crimes in jail. Make amends with those who you have harmed or the judge of the universe will continue to hold you accountable.

Not only will you be both right with God and man, this challenge presented by step 8 will help you understand the true magnitude of your addiction. In the same way making a log of past failures over a period of time helps us understand the frequency of our wrongs, a list of those who we had harmed helps us understand the degree or severity of our cravings. Step 8 allows us to see a wider picture.

Randal Ulangca

Testimony

I am a woman, and I have been a church-attending Seventh-day Adventist since childhood. I introduce myself this way so you will be aware that pornography

is not just a man's issue, or a sin that does not touch those within our church.

Reading pornography was a gradual process for me, from accidental exposure within an un-tagged story to actively seeking it out. In high school, I started out reading fan-fiction online with no sexual content. Over time I stumbled upon stories with sexual content. Reading these took an escalating path from implied sexual content, to soft-core heterosexual content, to soft-core male homosexual content, to hard-core male homosexual content; which before I quit was to the point of hard-core, non-consensual dark and/or twisted and graphic male homosexual content. I probably read hard-core pornographic fan-fiction for a period of five years. During this time I felt guilty about, and knew it was wrong, to be reading these stories. However, I didn't conclude, until shortly before I quit, that I was reading what could be (and I believe should be) classified as pornography.

I openly admitted to myself shortly before I quit that I was addicted to reading pornographic fan-fiction. I now abstain from reading any fan-fiction to safe guard my mind (Phil 4:8; Col 3:1-5). It would be very easy for me to get back into reading it because I love reading the emotional impact for characters in response to psychologically intense situations they are placed in. I know every instance of sexual content is not tagged in the summaries, so before I knew it I could be back seeking out dark content again (Gal 5:1). I decided it was best for me that I remove the temptation by not reading any fan-fiction at all--abstinence to avoid relapse (Rom 6:12).

Deep down I unconsciously was reading fan-fiction to get the feeling of an emotional bond with another. Because I knew the intimate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of the characters in the stories, it gave me a false sense of intimacy. Through accountability work in a recovery group-setting I came to see that intimacy (the thing I most feared) is what I desired to have all along. However, with other people it got too messy because I had involvement in their lives, sacrifices, and choices I had to make. I felt unsafe relating on this level with real people, so in reading fan-fiction I was able to get my “emotional fix” from knowing the characters' thoughts and feelings without me having to give anything of myself back to them. It was “safe” because it was completely one-sided.

This was incredibly unhealthy. It has taken many years, but now I have authentic intimacy with real people and I am healthier and happier for it. (2 Tim 1:7; Ezk 36:26; Eph 2:22-24).

Erin



Ways to Prevent and Ameliorate the Impact of Addiction

The path to addiction to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is complex. It involves genetic factors, neuropsychology, and family systems, as well as micro, mezzo and macro policy environments. In other words the causes of addiction are very complex. Likewise the prevention of addiction is complex and multifaceted. We have seen tobacco use in much of the world cut in half in the last decade or so via a combination of public policy severely restricting where individuals can smoke and effective health education on the life threatening consequences of smoking tobacco. While some aspects of prevention are beyond individual efforts, there are many things that families, church members, teachers and community members can engage in that have scientifically been shown to prevent substance abuse.

Scientific research has identified some key prevention strategies we call can utilize in our daily lives. Among those findings is the protective impact of positive human relationships. I live in a rural area of Michigan. About this time of year I see many very young animals from deer to squirrels and turkeys running around the area pretty shortly after their birth. In contrast, human beings are dependent on others for all aspects of their existence for many years. Research suggests that we really benefit all of our lives from positive human relationships. Research suggests that our immune systems function better and we recover from many diseases faster if we have strong positive support. It has been suggested that it might be better to eat a candy bar with friends than broccoli alone.

In terms of the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse, positive human relationships have been shown to be consistently protective. First, parents should

be noted. Data consistently show that a positive relationship between children and their parents relates to lower levels of alcohol and other drug use. One of the best indicators of lower levels of substance use (as well as a lot of other lower health risk and more positive pro-social behavior) is frequency of family dinners. Youth who have four or more family dinners per week are significantly less likely to engage in substance use as well as be sexually promiscuous. What is going on at family dinners? Research suggests that parents role model best behavior, there is monitoring of youth behaviors, sharing of family standards/expectations and emotional bonding. It is important to note that if there is dysfunction in the family including fighting and yelling, it relates to higher substance abuse rates.

Other responsible adults also play a major role in prevention. A wide variety of research studies show that mentoring relationships between youth and other adults such as teachers, pastors and church/community youth leaders relates to significantly lower rates of substance abuse. If there are other adults that youth can turn to deal with the tough issues of life, it lowers their odds of substance abuse. At beginning of the year faculty meetings at Andrews University, I always remind faculty and staff that one of the best, empirically proven things we can do to prevent drug abuse is to just listen to, process and try to solve the issues that students come to us about. Another functional adults in a youth's life can help ameliorate the problems of dysfunctional families.

Another relationship that prevents involves service to others; helping others in the challenges they face in life. Researchers have consistently found that youth who engage in service to others are significantly

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Resources

Journey to Wholeness:



A series that can be used in support groups or small groups as a resource to facilitate recovery

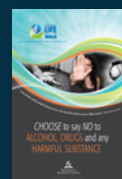
of breaking away from harmful practices and strengthening an intimate relationship with God in the Journey to an abundant life. Facilitator guides and participant guides can be purchased in our online store at www.AdventistRecovery.org

Journey to Life Newsletter:



This bi-monthly newsletter is available in English, Spanish, and soon in French as well. Print a free pdf copy, download, or register to subscribe and receive it via email at www.AdventistRecovery.org

Choose Full Life Resources:



These are posters, calendars/bookmarks, booklets that can be used to share with others 10

Ways to Choose a Full Life embarking on a Journey to Recovery. For more information and to place an order please go to www.NADHealthMinistry.org and check out the online store. The Choose Full Life theme song is also available for download.

Unhooked:



This is a 28 part series produced by ARMin and Hope Channel,

highlighting different type of addictive behaviors, real stories, and experts comments on effective treatment. The ultimate goal is to bring hope for recovery in Christ. You can watch the series weekly Hope Channel or direct TV channel 368. The complete DVD with all episodes will be available for purchase in October. For previous episodes and more information go to: www.hopetv.org/unhooked or www.adventistrecovery.org

Featured Article *continued from page 3*

NEWS

Southern Union Spartanburg SDA Church

The Spartanburg, South Carolina Seventh-day Adventist Church ARMin held an Awareness Day on April 25, 2015. Frank Sanchez, Southern Union ARMin Coordinator, spoke in the morning and the attendees were very receptive. An afternoon seminar was also held with good participation, including several friends from the community. The weekly Journey to Wholeness 12-step meetings facilitated by Sharon and her husband is going well with ten new members in attendance.



SEND US YOUR NEWS

Recovery related news, pictures (protect anonymity of individuals in meetings) and upcoming recovery and awareness events can be sent for future newsletters. Please send these to Ray Nelson, Journey to Life Editor – adventistrecovery@gmail.com and/or Katia Reinert, Adventist Recovery Ministries Director – recovery@nad.adventist.org

less likely to use alcohol and other drugs as well as less sexual activity and higher grades. Service can involve a wide variety of things from shoveling snow off of sidewalks and providing fire wood to tutoring in school. Youth who help others begin to think from cause to effect, be able to plan better, become less self-centered and more altruistic. Service also allows students to be positive actors and make a visible difference in the lives of others. This success appears to encourage them to act more responsibly in a wide variety of life areas from drugs to sex and long term planning.

Perhaps the most important positive protective relationship involves our relationship with God. One of the most consistent research findings is that those who believe in God, are involved in their faith community and have an active devotional life are much less likely to abuse alcohol and drugs. Recent data also suggest that for Adventists, acceptance of a core aspect of our Health Message, viewing our bodies as the Temple of God is highly protective. The importance of religion/faith has been found to be effective across all Christian denominations. Our relationship with God is crucial to prevention. Whatever parents, teachers and church member can do to foster our youth's relationship to God can be a strong act of prevention.

One of the key concepts we use in prevention is resilience. Resilience involves the capacity to overcome difficult circumstances in life; it involves the good kid in the bad neighborhood. And with the availability of the Internet, all of our youth live in bad neighborhoods. We are a click away from explicit pornography, instructions on how to make methamphetamine and how to grow the most potent form of marijuana. Resilience occurs when youth have the positive supportive relationships that have been noted.

It is also crucial to note that even with the best positive supportive relationships, substance abuse can occur. Sin emerged in the perfect supportive environment. However, a past of these positive relationships also relates to recovery from addictions. We never give up on our youth as God never gives up on us. A positive supportive relationship you have with a youth may not appear to have an effect now, but there is a good chance it will in the future. For each of the relationships noted we can be a part of. We can all be active in substance abuse prevention and in future recovery if abuse emerges.

*Duane McBride, PhD
Chair of Andrews University's Behavioral
Sciences Department and
Director of the Institute for the Prevention
of Addictions*

Director's Message

Refocusing on Mental Health



On April 15 I had the opportunity to attend my first meeting of the National Advisory Counsel for SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency). Together with seven other members of this Advisory I had the opportunity to hear about wonderful efforts by SAMHSA to facilitate recovery and improve mental health for millions of people.

I was first impressed by their 4-prong motto: Behavioral Health is Essential to Health, Prevention Works, Treatment is Effective, People Recover! Check, check, check, check!! They are very much in alignment with Adventist Recovery Ministries (ARMin) beliefs and values.

Then I learned of the overarching goals to advance the behavioral health of the nation from 2015-2018:

1. Increase awareness and understanding about mental and substance use disorders
2. Promote emotional health and wellness
3. Prevent addiction and mental illness
4. Increase access to effective treatment
5. Support recovery

It was refreshing to see many efforts being made to improve coordination and integration of behavioral health in health care, and to improve the health of patients with priority on prevention and wellness. Also, after the Affordable Care Act (ACA) we now see that mental health and substance abuse is included in the list of essential health benefits. That is all good. All the while, the role of faith communities in facilitating awareness, prevention and recovery remains critically important.

Recognizing that God's plan for us is to be whole (mind, body and spirit) and that as one of our founders put it, "9 of 10 diseases have its origin in the mind," the Adventist church is still committed to not only be part of the conversation on a national level, but also to use resources to an active voice and catalyst for improved mental health.

One of our efforts is the work of the Mental Health taskforce created in 2013 here in North America. As a result, an upcoming Emotional Health Summit is to be held in Orlando, FL on January 13-17, 2016. We will be equipping health professions, faith leaders and others as we discuss several aspects of Behavioral Health - including addiction prevention and recovery, trauma and emotional healing, the role of churches as centers for mental health and wellbeing, models of collaboration with other organizations and the integration of health care to improve mental health, and understanding the healing principles for whole person health. ARMin training will be also provided then.

Plan to be with us and become part of this united front, extending a Christ-centered approach to prevention, healing and recovery!

Katia Reinert

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