

What do Addicts really want?

Just last night I saw a client with a spending addiction. His wife just discovered that he secretly racked up over \$40,000 of credit card debt, in her name. What does he want? He wants to be able to keep spending with no consequence. He wants a lifestyle that affords him an expensive car and luxury home. Since he cannot afford it, two years ago he married a woman with excellent credit and income. He does not understand why today she is so upset that her perfect credit is destroyed and their home is in foreclosure. He can't believe that she is considering filing fraud charges against him. How dare she consider that consequence! He loves her, right?

This is just one real life scenario of hundreds that I have heard over the years. All addiction stories have a similar ending...destruction. Whether the addict is destroying their credit or their relationship or their own body.

When we are participating with something to a level that is causing negative or destructive consequences, it is likely to be an addiction. Food, gambling, alcohol, internet, drugs, shopping and cigarettes are among some of the most popular addictions in America.

Not all addicts want to stop their addiction or destructive habits, because of the initial pleasure benefit they receive from participating with their vice of choice.

As my new book, Good Things Addiction, Emotional Healing Journal gets closer to the publication date, I have been thinking about what value I can bring to the addiction population. After counseling thousands of people with all different types of addictions, here are some of the things they have shared that they do want:

- * Relief or a break from life's stressors.
- * Pleasure without consequences.
- * To feel in control.
- * To not get caught when they relapse.
- * For people to accept and love them with all their imperfections.
- * To know that they can quit if they want to.
- * To know what to do QUICKLY when a craving hits. Effective life skills.

The two important truths I share with addicts are:

1. Addiction is treatable and recovery is achievable.
2. You have something of value to offer each day, even when you are addicted.

For 15 effective strategies to help manage addiction, look for my Good Things Addiction, Emotional Healing Journal scheduled for publication in 2010.