

# ADDICTION

We all desire some sort of pleasure in our life. When we participate in something we find pleasurable, like eating, bonding or sex, our brain releases a chemical called dopamine. Our brain remembers this pleasurable feeling and wants more. Because life's unexpected challenges and difficulties can elicit pain or discomfort for us, we may be tempted to participate with a repeated behavior, or substance as a way to create relief or distraction. This repeated behavior can become an addiction. Addiction is quite prevalent in America. Even children can be affected by it. Many parents are seeing their children's grades at school decline, due to the amount of hours their children spend playing video games.

What about us as adults? The newest addiction that we are seeing in America is our dependency to the internet. We can lose hours of production time, surfing the web.

How do we know if we are addicted to something or not? If we are participating with a substance or habit to a level that is causing negative consequences, we may be addicted. These consequences can include: disconnect in our our relationships, inability to meet our financial responsibilities, reprimands at work, health problems, legal problems, etc. About one in ten people are addicted to alcohol in this country. About one in four of us are addicted to something other than alcohol.

Some common addictions include:

- FOOD- over 68 million Americans are obese from overeating.
- WORK-the typical American employee works an extra 350 hours of overtime per year.
- SHOPPING/SPENDING- close to 1.5 million Americans filed bankruptcy in 2008, due to buying and spending money on things they could not afford.
- TELEVISION -over 50 percent of adults and 70 percent of children in America watch more than several hours of television per day.

If we were raised in a family that lacked healthy coping skills such as good communication, positive self-esteem, safety, support and consistent boundaries, we may have more of a tendency to turn to an addictive habit as a coping strategy to deal with life's painful, uncomfortable challenges.

As we acquire more effective life skills, it can weaken our tendency to participate with substances and habits, that are causing negative consequences in our life.

To begin acquiring more healthy skills in dealing with life's unexpected challenges, you may want to try:

- Reading a book or article on the topic you are having difficulty with.
- Scheduling an appointment with a Life Coach or Counselor who specializes with your difficulty.
- Building a support system, by joining a group that addresses your difficulty.
- Asking for feedback from supportive friends or trusted spiritual advisors, regarding your difficulty.

The most beneficial thing you can do, when going through a challenging life situation, is to reach out and get more information and get more support.

Participating with an addictive habit or substance, is NOT an effective problem solving strategy.

For more information about addiction, contact Elisabeth Davies, MC. Life Coach and Founder of Bright Alternatives Inc. [www.brightalternatives.com](http://www.brightalternatives.com)

look for Elisabeth's new book, GOOD THINGS EMOTIONAL HEALING JOURNAL; ADDICTION. scheduled for publication in 2009.

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