

1) **ADDICTION** - May

Addiction is self-defeating force that abuses our freedom and make us do things we really do not want to do.

While repression stifles (질식시키다. 억제하다. 억압하다) desire, addiction attaches desire, bonds and enslaves the energy of desire to certain specific behaviors, things or people. These objects of attachment then become preoccupations and obsessions; they come to rule our lives.¹

The same processes that are responsible for addiction to alcohol and narcotics are also responsible for addictions to ideas, work, relationships, power, moods, fantasies and an endless variety of other things. We are all addicted every sense of the word.²

I realized that for both myself and other people, addictions are not limited to substances. I was also addicted to work, performance, responsibility, intimacy, being like, helping others, and an almost endless list of other behaviors.³

I also learned that all people are addicts, and that addiction to alcohol and other drugs are simply more obvious and tragic addictions than others have. To be alive is to be addicted.⁴

Addiction is a *state* of compulsion, obsession, or preoccupation that enslaves a persons' will and desire. Addiction sidetracks and eclipses the energy of our deepest, truest desire for love and goodness. We succumb because the energy of our desire becomes attached, nailed, to specific behaviors, objects, or people. Attachment, then, is the process that enslaves desire and creates the state of addiction. Whatever it wishes to get, it purchases at the cost of soul.⁵

Aren't there some good addictions?

Are all addictions must be seen as negative? Couldn't some of them be beneficial? What about a mother's "addiction" to her children? A husband's "attachment" to his wife? Or, for that matter, the spiritual person's "attachment" to God? Might it not be constructive to be attractively addicted to some of the good things in life and aversionally addicted to the bad? After all, aren't there good habits as well as bad ones?⁶

No addiction is good; no attachment is beneficial. To be sure, some are more destructive than others; alcoholism cannot be compared with chocolate addiction in degrees of destructiveness, and fear of spiders pales in comparison to racial bigotry. But if we accept that there are differences in the degree of tragedy imposed upon us by our addictions, we must also recognize what they have in common; they impede human freedom and diminish the human spirit. It is surely good for parents to care for their children and for people to be kind to one another and to seek God. It would be wonderful if we could make a habit of such activities. But there is a vast difference between doing these things because we freely choose and doing them because we are compelled. In the first case, the motivation is love; in the second, slavery.⁷

¹ Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 3.

² Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 3.

³ Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 9.

⁴ Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 11.

⁵ Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 14.

⁶ Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 38.

⁷ Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 39-40.

The only goodness in addiction is that they can defeat our pride and lead us to more openness to grace. It may also help to remember that the destructiveness of addiction does not lie in the things to which we are attached, nor even in our simple desires for them. They things themselves are simply part of creation, and God made them inherently good. The destructiveness of addiction lies in our slavery to these things, turning desire into compulsion, with ugly and loveless consequences for ourselves and our world.⁸

Addiction attacks every part of our "mental apparatus." Subjectively, however, the attacks seem focused on two primary areas: the will, which is our capacity to choose and direct our behavior, and self-esteem, which is the respect and value with which we view ourselves. Addiction splits the will in two, one part desiring freedom and the other desiring only to continue the addictive behavior. This internal inconsistency begins to erode self-esteem. The greatest damage to self-esteem, however, comes from repeated failures at trying to change addictive behavior.⁹

But all of our addictions, even our non-substance addictions, share similar dynamics. Addictions to power, money, or relationships can drive people to distort just as much as can addiction to alcohol or narcotics.¹⁰

Addictions are contagious. Addiction is never a completely individual thing. From the very first stages of the attachment process, other people are involved. Friends, family, coworkers, and even professional helpers affect and are affected by the changes happening within the addicted person. Nearly always, some of their involvement helps to support the addiction. This is called codependency. Professional medical or psychological helpers are by no means immune to this problem. Physicians may prescribe other drugs to help people quit the primary chemical, thus producing multiple chemical addictions. Psychotherapeutic help may prolong the addictive behavior while therapist and client spend months or years trying to uncover nonexistent childhood experiences to explain the addiction. There is only one dedicated action that really counteracts addiction, and that is to stop the addictive behavior. When the community surrounding an addicted person tries to help any way that does not support ending the addiction, it will wind up supporting the addiction instead. [must stop]¹¹

The Myth of Addictive Personality

Usually blame for early life experience and bad relationship with parents. It only delay quitting addiction. But some people had become addicted as a result of seeking chemical relief from anxiety, depression, or other physical and emotional distress. Most seemed to have led relatively normal lives before the addiction started. They had been capable of authentic respect for themselves, and in their dealings with others they had demonstrated compassion, honesty, and straightforwardness. The symptoms of addictive personality were caused by the addiction, not the cause of it.¹²

The same kind of cellular (세포의) dynamics (역학, 성장형, 원동력) to nonsubstance addictions; addiction to money, power, relationships, images of ourselves, or of God. The patterns of feedback, habituation, and adaptation would be essentially the same.¹³ Apparently "minor" addictions often influence so many other systems that they wind up involving more cells than some chemical

⁸ Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 40-41.

⁹ Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 42.

¹⁰ Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 49-50.

¹¹ Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 50-51.

¹² Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 54 -55.

¹³ Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 83.

addictions do. Therefore, a person who becomes temporarily addicted to narcotic painkillers in the hospital may be able to withdraw from the drug more quickly and with much greater serenity than another person can withdraw from the loss of a job, or a loved one. The first person's addiction has not had time to influence such larger systems of cells as those having to do with the meaning of life, self-image, and basic security. In the case of losing a job or a loved one, great existential systems are deeply affected by withdrawal, even though the direct impact on any given synapse may not be so great. Thus the brief chemical addiction [such as pain pills after surgery] can be seen as a temporary and primarily physical discomfort, but the nonsubstance addiction digs deeply into the ground of the person's sense of meaning and selfhood.¹⁴

One aspect of addiction is permanent. Thus we never completely overcome our attachments. Because staying away from addictive behavior is an ongoing business, people in AA call themselves "recovering alcoholics" rather than "recovered alcoholics." We may control our behavior in response to our addictions, and we may, with grace, be delivered from bondage to them. Then, as time passes, their pull becomes less intense. But throughout our lives, their potential for reactivation continues to exist within us. The brain does not forget.

From the standpoint of psychology, this means we can never become so well adjusted that we can stop being vigilant (방심). From the neurological viewpoint, it means the cells of our best-intentioned systems can never eradicate (박멸) the countless other systems that have been addicted. From a spiritual perspective, it means that no matter how much grace God has blessed us with, we forever remain dependent upon its continuing flow.¹⁵

¹⁴ Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 84.

¹⁵ Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1988), 90.