

The Opposite of Addiction is Connection

Submitted by Robert Gross - 8-27-2017

Near the end of his life, Bill Wilson said “emotional sobriety” was the next frontier for Recovery. Always a pioneer, he predicted the current consensus in the Recovery Community that the opposite of Addiction is not abstinence. The opposite of Addiction is connection. Solid medical research shows that the brain does not care whether it uses booze, dope, food, sex, gambling, shopping/hoarding, or what makes numb or distracts from pain, emptiness, trauma, alienation.*

The remedy for Addiction is not avoiding the substance or behavior destroying the soul. That’s the ticket in. We cannot become sane and healthy continuing behavior that makes us crazy and sick. Simple abstinence from self-destructive behavior leaves in place the original causes of Addiction, and relapse becomes likely. Even if there is no relapse, there is a notable lack of happy, joyful freedom to chose a life that is fulfilling for one’s self and the ones one loves and interacts with daily. I believe Self Sabotage Anonymous is a major advance toward “emotional sobriety” because it identifies and seeks to heal the true cause of Addiction: the avoidance of “living life on life’s terms” because of fear or the misguided belief that to avoid pain or the risk of pain is safe or satisfying.

With that in mind, I offer the list of self sabotaging habits I have identified in myself through observation and reflection on the text *When Misery Is Company* by Anne Katherine. This list is not complete for me and may not include habits that others find to be self destructive, or block life progress in some way. Not necessarily in order of destructiveness:

- Procrastination (includes failure to make a decision in addition to putting off necessary action)
- Confusion
- Incompletion (especially by a trifle)
- “Forgetting”

- Disorganization
- Careless time management
- Careless money management
- Failing to listen
- Argumentative/Defensive
- Too Much Information (giving or getting)
- Explaining/Excusing
- Lying, especially by omission
- Going Numb/unconscious/dissociation
- Fatigue (poor sleep hygiene, unmanaged depression)
- Clutter
- Set-ups/disaster waiting to happen
- “Buying” experience or knowledge without doing the work of integrating it into my life
- Haste (get it “done” or get to something else)
- “Turtle Pose” anti-yoga (chronic hunched shoulders in protective mode)

In addition, Anne Katherine makes the important distinction of “Tool Addictions” which may or may not be as easily identifiable as Addictions, but that enable avoidant behavior. For me, they include poor impulse control, “self-sacrificing,” busywork or appearing to be busy, not using tools of Recovery such as prayer, calling people, working a well defined program, lists, switching priorities, and others that may be entirely unconscious—sponsors or friends help identify these. If I am rigorously honest...

*This TED Talk provides an excellent model on how and why this is so

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PY9DclMGxMs>