

Channeling Your Life's Passion Can Eliminate Addictive Behaviors

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Recently, while doing some research, I stumbled upon an idea about the treatment of addictions that really opened my eyes. The idea has stuck with me ever since, and I feel compelled to share it with you, my readers. The fact is addictive behaviors are extremely widespread. I have no qualms in asserting, even, that every human being experiences some level of addiction throughout their lifetime. Addictive behaviors can include everything from nail biting to extreme risk-taking behaviors. Addictions can involve a wide variety of pleasurable as well as unpleasurable experiences, but they all have at least a couple things in common. Behaviors that become addictions create a temporary but desirable change in brain chemicals, and they typically begin as subconscious and misguided attempts to improve some aspect of one's life.

Very often, people experiencing addictive patterns are attempting to find something that is "missing," to fill the figurative empty spaces within themselves that can only truly be filled with intangible things such as love, unconditional acceptance, and self-esteem.

Addictions usually manifest themselves in false statements like, "If I buy a new outfit, everything will be all right," "If I am able to find a significant other, my life will be happy," "If I eat that piece of cheesecake, I'll feel so much better," or "If I have one more drink, I won't be stressed any more." Unfortunately, even when we see firsthand that the false promises of the behavior or action are lies, it doesn't stop us from trying again...and again...and again... In truth, there is only one way to overturn an addiction, and that is by uncovering the lies that perpetuate the behaviors, and finding truly effective ways of filling the holes left by what is actually missing in one's life.

All of this build-up brings me to that idea I mentioned at the beginning of this article...one way of combating addictive behaviors is by embracing, and actively pursuing, one's passions. We're all born with specific and unique passions in life, and if we're lucky, we discover what those are sooner rather than later. There are a million books and programs out there that are designed to tell us what our life passions and aptitudes are, but most of us already have some inkling of what makes us passionate. When we can imagine a perfect day with no responsibilities, obligations, or time

constraints, what do we picture doing or not doing? These are the things that guide our values and passions.

This idea sees addictive behaviors as mischanneled but passionate energy, and the aim thus becomes one of re-channelling passionate energy. Although this approach is not meant to take the place of rehabilitation in cases of serious addictions such as those involving substances, I feel it is yet another compelling reason to make space in our lives for what is important. If we don't conscientiously create and defend the time for the things that we value, our time has a way of filling up with other "things," including addictive behaviors. In the long run, addictions don't add anything of value to our own lives or those of broader society. Finding one's niche (or niches), on the other hand, and applying one's natural skills in that direction can make all the difference.

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