

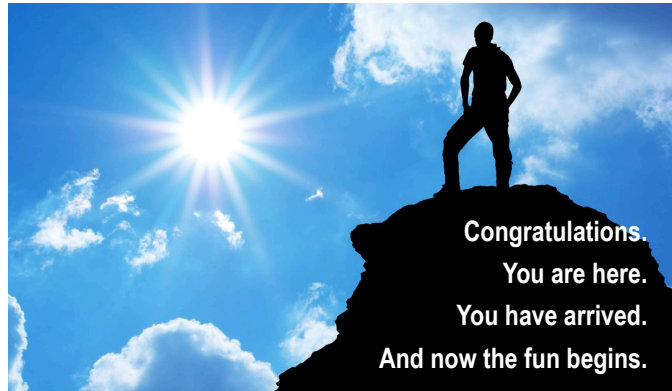


A New Beginning

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SECTION 1

Launch



Being at Cause

Over the next few weeks, you'll hear many references to being *at cause*. Exactly what does that mean? At cause means assuming responsibility for what you want in your life, and taking the action needed to get it. It's the opposite of being *at effect*. When you are *at effect*, you are at the whim of other people, situations and circumstances. There are always horrible bosses, an unexpected bill to pay, and chocolate cake for dessert on the day we start a low-carb diet. Should we eat the cake and blow our diet? We always have a choice in how we respond.

Being *at cause* is not the same as being *to blame*. When you are *at cause*, your life is in your control. You have ownership and responsibility for your life. Isn't that an empowering thought?

Do you...or do you not...want control over your life? Think about it. The alternative is to come up with reasons and excuses for what happens in your life. But, what if you simply refused to accept any reason or excuse? What if you decided that your life will be what you make of it?

How about your addiction? What would it be like for you to be *at cause* for your addiction? If you are not at cause for your addiction, then that means it is outside of your control or *at effect*.

Although being *at effect* may seem to alleviate any of the blame or shame you might feel, it also means that you are at the whim of your drug of choice. Being at cause makes you the most important factor in creating a life of meaning and purpose.

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Cause and Effect

What does being at cause mean to you? List one or two ways that you have been at effect (at the mercy of other people or circumstances) in the past? Pick one of the situations above. If you had been at cause, how would the outcome have changed?



Be Grateful

Observation Exercise

Today, each time you find yourself complaining or when you hear someone else complain, turn the grousing into a statement of gratitude. For example: “I’m grateful for my strong-willed teenager. She is learning to assert herself.”

Attitude of Gratitude

Gratitude is all about being thankful for the many good things in your life. Research proves that the more gratitude you feel, the happier you will be. In fact, a ten week study comparing participants who kept a daily log of things they felt grateful for with those who didn’t, found that happiness increased by 25% among the gratitude group.

When you show gratitude, you are less likely to take things for granted. There is so much to be grateful for when we’re living our lives mindfully. Perhaps one of the most important things to be grateful for in these coming days, weeks and months is how good you feel now that you are free from drugs or alcohol. Having an attitude of gratitude draws others to you, as well. Don’t you feel good when you are around others who are grateful? The sun just seems to shine a little brighter in the company of those who express gratitude.

Allow gratitude to play a significant role in your recovery. Appreciate the simple things and remember how good it feels each and every day to wake up fresh and clear...with the ability to live life on your own terms. Gratitude and a positive outlook go hand in hand. Life is more worthwhile when you see and appreciate the opportunities before you each and every day.

And there’s more. Remember those participants in the study mentioned above? In a follow-up study, it was found that in addition to being happier, the people in the gratitude group exercised more — and achieved more of their goals, overall. What more proof do you need?

It is true, however, that some people have difficulty feeling gratitude. For example, gifts may make them feel burdened. Gratitude requires us to be emotionally open and vulnerable in a

You...unlimited.

way that can be uncomfortable. If this describes you (and even if it doesn't)...well, you have a little work to do which should help you adapt to this new way of being.

Over the next 30 days, you will be asked to take time to journal at least three things for which you feel grateful. This is an ongoing part of your journaling assignment. Consider making it an ongoing part of your recovery, as well.



66 Gratitude, that very specific feeling of thankfulness in your heart, allows you to see and absorb all you have, forgetting for a moment all you may lack. It connects your brain with your heart, and gives you the grounds to be a more giving, effective, loving human. Being grateful allows generosity to flow. And...the more you love what you have, the more you get what you want.”

—Valerie Reiss, Editor, Beliefnet.com

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Grateful for My Future

Motivational speaker, Zig Ziglar, is said to have coined the phrase “attitude of gratitude.” According to Ziglar, “With gratitude, the odds for happiness go up dramatically.” We take many of the good things in our lives for granted.

Imagine yourself one year from now. Is there something that you will be even more grateful for in the future? How will your future be different if you live in an attitude of gratitude?



Moving Beyond

What Do You Believe About Addiction?

“You cannot fail without your consent. You cannot succeed without your participation.”

– Rob Thomas

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Goodbye to Addiction

Write a letter to your drug of choice as if it were an old lover. What promises did it make to you? How did the “relationship” go wrong? Why is this a good time to move on?

Addiction was not only what you used in the past to cope, it became your daily life and how you spent your time...planning when to have your next drink or fix, purchasing the goods, hiding the addiction from other people, shirking responsibilities, and breaking promises to yourself and others, feeling guilt, shame and blame, denying the problem, sleeping it off—or not—and starting all over again the very next day. There is a great deal of energy that goes into maintaining an addiction.

Moving Beyond Addiction

In the book, *“Recover! Stop Thinking like an Addict and Reclaim Your Life with the Perfect Program,”* the author, Stanton Peele, says: “The opposite of addiction is not abstinence. The opposite of addiction is intention and what you seek in your life.” Webster’s dictionary defines intention as “an aim or purpose.”

Most recovery programs teach abstinence. Although abstinence is a fine goal, it shouldn’t be your only goal. You could build your entire life around thinking and talking about what you no longer do, but what kind of life would that be? Building your life around the purpose of *not* abusing substances is certainly better than building your life around addiction. But, isn’t there more? Abstinence only *serves* your life; it is *not* your life. As you leave behind your addictive behaviors, you’ll want to build a life full of plans, growth, goals and dreams. If life is what you were avoiding with drugs or alcohol, perfect. That’s why you’re here. You’ve already made wonderful progress toward reclaiming your power, and in the next few weeks, you’ll easily make more.

Recover Me

Recovering Your Self Esteem

Drugs or alcohol are what you used in the past to numb yourself to the realities of life and to cope with people and situations that caused you stress or anxiety. But, the problem with that approach (well, one of the problems) is that your drug of choice increased your inability to cope. Now that you are sober, the problems are likely to still be there, as is your need to cope with them. The good news is that in your sober state, you are actually more able to resolve the issues and to accept and cherish your life.

It is a process. During the course of this month, you will not only have many sessions that are geared toward improving your coping skills, you will also acquire some self-help tools that allow you to work through your problems like the grown-up that you are. You will learn to stop undervaluing yourself and overvaluing other people. No amount of drugs or alcohol can help you truly love and accept yourself. But, then, you already know that, don't you?

Create 7 empowering statements about what it is you *do* want now. Make them strong and compelling. These are your personal identity statements.

Identity Statements

I am...

I feel...


I have...

I desire...

I will...

I can...

I manifest...



Power Up Your Identity Statements

Add a *because* clause.

I feel better every day because I love the positive ways in which my life is changing.

Say it three times.

Psychological studies have proven that repeating important statements three to five times makes them more persuasive. Even statements you hear twice are considered more credible than those you hear just once. Our brains equate familiarity with truth. So keep talking...your brain will get the message you intend.

Vote for who you say you are.

Huh? Well, our beliefs about ourselves are driven by our identity—the person we believe ourselves to be. Each time you do something that supports a belief about your identity, that identity gets stronger. It doesn't even have to be a sea change (a really big change). The small things that you do consistently count, too. So, let's say you want to be a person who loves vegetables. (Wouldn't it be easier to eat healthy if this is what you believed?) But, right now, unless you count the bell pepper on your pizza, it just isn't something you do.

Start today and add a small green salad to your dinner every night. Each time you do this, you're sending a message to your unconscious mind that supports the identity you would like to have. You will eventually believe that you love vegetables, and once you believe it, it's easier to acquire the eating habits you'd like.

Find examples that prove your belief.

We find what we look for. If you want to believe that you are strong and powerful, look for examples of when you've displayed these characteristics.

