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Addiction

- Center for Alcohol and Drug Research
Department of Psychology and Behavioural Sciences.
Aarhus University.
- The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) - the leading authority on illicit drugs in the European Union.

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Hedonism and/or addiction?

- All humans need to achieve personal pleasure, forget their worries or optimize their performance
- Hedonism is the doctrine that pleasure is the highest good and that man ultimately acts only to obtain pleasure
- Pleasure could be defined as the absence of restlessness in the soul and pain in the body and also recommended moderation as a recipe for a happy life.

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Addiction

- How do you understand the concept of addiction and abuse?
- When is it about use and when is it about abuse?

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Definition of addiction and abuse

- Addiction and abuse can be defined as behavior that is characterized by a pattern legal or illegal drug use that causes physical, psychological or social harm
- Addiction and abuse can be defined as a socially, culturally and politically determined diagnosis
- Being regarded as a drug addict is conditioned by the social and cultural structures of the surrounding society, and the meaning of the term addict varies from country to country

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Effects of drugs

- **Narcotics** make the user calm, relaxed and distant. This happens because the central nervous system goes into slow motion
- **Stimulants** have an invigorating effect because they make the entire central nervous system work at full pressure
- **Psychedelics** produce sensory impressions in the central nervous system that do not correspond to the influences that come from outside. You might be able to see things and hear sounds that do not exist in immediate reality. Psychedelics can expand and change our consciousness, which has been known and used far back in time and research is once again carried out in the area of treatment of depression, anxiety (affective disorders), PTSD and substance abuse

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Other 'drugs' than drugs



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What is the cause of addiction

- No clear explanation can be given. It is an interaction of several factors
- Recent research indicates that traumatic experiences can be linked to problematic use of alcohol and drugs

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Explanatory models

- Addiction and abuse is a **disease**
- Addiction and abuse is a **symptom** of something else
- Addiction and abuse is a **way of life**

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Disease model

- Hereditary poor/different tolerance of drugs
- Predisposition to develop addiction and/or predisposition to be able to control drug intake
- Physical harm caused by drugs – long-term drug use causes long-term, perhaps chronic, dysfunction in the brain's reward center

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Symptom model

- Expression of an underlying social problem or underlying mental disorder, where the abuse becomes a way of dealing with the psychological discomfort
- Insecure/ambivalent **attachment** and lack of care in childhood can lead to a so-called deficit state
- Pathological regulation of self-esteem - the user's solution to some completely different problems

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Life form model

- Abusive behavior is, like all other human behavior, learned
- Some people learn to use drugs in one way, e.g. little or not at all, and others learn to use drugs in a different and more inappropriate way.

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The best treatment model

- There is no 'one truth' about good treatment
- There is no scientific evidence for a treatment method that works for all drug addicts
- There is also no proven effect of certain treatment methods matching addicts with a specific addiction
- But there are studies that show a positive effect of matching special efforts with the problems of drug addicts

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The best treatment model

- The best results are achieved when a holistic and individual effort is provided with various treatment services from healthcare, social work and psychotherapeutic professionals, based on the needs of the individual addict
- This requires a transversal/cross-sector and interdisciplinary collaboration

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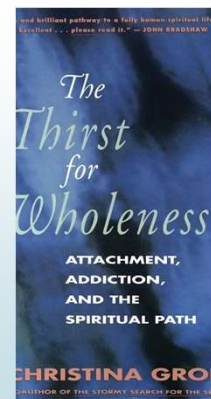
The best treatment model

- Points to the need for a holistic approach but does not really address the spiritual part of us humans trying to avoid pain and discomfort and the ways in which we do this through attachment and dependence in our lives
- Instead, there seems to be a dichotomous division in relation to those who are addicts and then the rest of us, rather than seeing the shared humanity in this
- Recovery is considered from a treatment paradigm, rather than from a wellness paradigm, where the latter includes own responsibility in relation to empowerment

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Christina Grof

- Christina Grof focuses precisely on the more spiritual part in connection with the treatment of addiction
- The Thirst for Wholeness – Attachment, Addiction, and the Spiritual Path



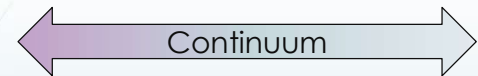
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The Thirst for Wholeness

- The addict as a spiritual seeker
- Thirst, hunger and our impulse to know our true selves are essential drives within us
- This yearning for wholeness can take us into destructive or self-destructive relationships, activities, or substance use that may seem temporarily to provide the missing piece

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Addiction and Attachment



- The root of suffering is attachment
- All of us have attachments, but not everyone can be identified as a true addict
- If we all have problems with attachments, then we can understand addiction as an extreme version of attachment
- Attachments have the potential to become addictions if we follow them too far, but not all attachments are addictions

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Why do we become attached and/or addicted?

- In attempt to satisfy our genuine unfulfilled need to be loved and accepted, we attach ourselves to other people, to animals, or to social and professional roles that promise to bring us what we long for
- Perhaps we are filled with shame and constantly look outside ourselves for something to make us feel better
- Or perhaps we try to create a sense of security and meaning by defining ourselves in terms of our points of view or opinions

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Why do we become attached and/or addicted?

- Sometimes we hang on out of fear or to try to escape the pain in our lives
- Attachments are very closely linked to our attempts to control a transitory and unpredictable world
- A myriad of potential attachments faces us every day and we seek fulfillment
- But within a short time, the thirst begins again – our pleasure is time-limited and our satisfaction does not last
- Our cravings combined with the transitory nature of our lives lead to pain

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Afraid of letting go

- When we seek to deny or repress the drive towards our true potential, it is often because allowing our divine nature to express itself, involves the change that comes with growth and expansion
- We feel that if we change, we might lose control of our familiar secure belief systems
- Our attachments becomes restrictions if we are afraid of losing them
- But the future is only a promise that might not be kept
- The only thing we can depend on is change - and the fact that we are all dying

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Attachments and the lessons of mortality

- The reality that we will eventually die can be extremely frightening to someone who has not come to terms with death as a chapter of life
- Much of our society has sanitized and hidden the notion of death – individuals often die in institutions separated and concealed from the living
- Many native cultures treat death as a part of the life circle - they acknowledge it as a passage from one state to another
- We can die when we are still alive and be reborn into a spiritually oriented way of being

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Attachments and surrender

- During experiential psychotherapy, meditation and other approaches to selfexploration, we can confront the reality of our mortality, our fear of death and our cravings – in this proces we discover we have defined ourselves by our attachments, thereby restricting our understanding of our nature
- As we surrender our attachments, we let go of our limitations and open ourselves to our spiritual possibilities
- Emotionally surrendering our clinging does not mean that we automatically turn our backs on the relationships, roles, opinions, or material objects in life – it means we release our need to hang on to them

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The hero's journey

- Attachment, addiction and surrender are closely linked
- Just as recovery from addiction demand a first step of surrender, so freedom from attachments requires surrender
- The Twelve-Steps program describe the attitude of surrender and acceptance that is essential for spiritual growth in general and in recovery in particular
- By letting go of our attachments, we relinquish the restrictions of the small self and increase our access to the deeper self

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Exercise: Surrender and let go

- 1. Take a piece of paper and **write down as many attachments as you can think of, in order of value**
- 2. It is about your **possessions, roles and relationships** – and could be butter on bread, cigarettes, wine, a favorite book, your flower garden, sunsets, your pc / mobile, your job, your dog, your sight, friends, your children, your partner, your life
- 3. **Imagine yourself during your own dying process letting them go, one by one.**
- 4. **Share your experience in groups of 3- 4 people**