

Function By Default

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PREFACE

I'm an addict—

And when my addictions reared their ugly head, I had no recourse, but to be swept into an eddy of self centered self-destruction, loathing and hatred. Not only was I swept away, I enjoyed the ride. It wasn't a terrifying journey; it was "The Hunt." I liked this detachment from reality. "It" was my life. I sought the feeling with everything that was in me. Time, people, places and things mattered little. I was on a run; I was consumed. Fear and ego are strange bedfellows. As Ross Perot Once said, "like a giant sucking sound—"

Thank you for reading this. It was not written to glorify me, or addiction of any kind. Let me take this moment to apologize to all the people who got hurt just being in my vicinity. Especially, let me never forget the children, wives, and the elderly whom I disregarded. To the people who ran with me, and those who understand this concept — you should have moved.

Life became a consequence. The life I chose was denial. Denial created a void. The void became a vacuum. To fill this vacuum I poured in drugs, money, women, adrenalin and fantasy. It became insatiable. It was addiction. When addiction became my reality, I had no control. As a kid I was grabbed by the nape of my neck by teachers, parents and cops on a regular basis. This type of control never worked. They could force me to go where they wanted me to be, but they couldn't make me stay. Addiction didn't grab me, it shackled, manacled, strait-jacketed and thumb screwed me. It plunged me into the depths of the deepest sea and dared me to breathe, flung me naked onto the arctic tundra and taunted my trembling. When it got bored of torturing me, it abandoned me helpless, broken and battered on the steps of a 12 step program — what a long strange trip it was.

Life has become a journey of discovery. I have often felt as though I was dropped into a parallel universe by mistake. Everything appears to be seen in a mirror; crystal clear, but in reverse. It only makes sense in hindsight, if at all. Whether it makes sense or not is irrelevant. It is reality. I'm here — so I may as well participate.

Keith Simpson

INTRODUCTION

Recovering from a dysfunctional lifestyle cannot occur while in a vacuum or holding pattern. Escaping a vacuum is difficult at least. Being drawn back into destructive relations or situations is very common. It may not feel good or right, it just feels familiar. Venturing into the unknown without an experienced guide is a fear few can overcome. A different living environment or relationship may be conducive to change but repeating behaviors in a new location or situation seldom changes the outcome. This is a holding pattern of dysfunction. Without an expansion of awareness we are destined to mirror our past pain. We become empowered to change our present beliefs, feelings, and values when we accept and begin to implement new truths. Without change, growth is doubtful.

Growth is progress, not maintenance or tolerance. The goal and gift of this modality is to provide to the participant a new road, a new road to a different and more functional destination. Understandable, visible, obtainable relief is made available. Those requiring, or seeking, these changes, need to take the actions. Presenting new information and assistance in its implementation requires knowledge of this action. The structure of this modality is such that there is measurable progress in each phase. As new information is understood and experimented with, a pattern of change emerges. As resources expand, so do the options for a more functional future. This progress is most apparent to the participant. It is their recovery, or change that is, after all, most important.

This program is a multi-level modality. Achieving change is done by the implementation of a six-phase program which is both progressive and measurable. The topics presented in each of the six phases are strategic to the corresponding level of growth or change. Some participants may proceed at a faster or slower rate than others. The program is not time sensitive or demanding. It is strictly

based on growth and development. The success of the program is in the hands of the participant, as is their future.

PHASE 1

Information

Information is the communication of facts and knowledge. This being the first of six phases is to expose facts that may have never been learned, taught or considered. This is an intelligence gathering phase where a person may learn new information. Consideration and investigation is hoped for. If this level of participation is accomplished, the choices are but three: 1) This information is accepted and implemented 2) It is rejected and any truth it contains is denied 3) Something presented here may be retained for future integration or sharing.

The intent of this phase is to clarify facts to oneself, not require compliance but rather to inspire change. It is hoped that the motivation for reading this is to glean some sort of insight into life, or that of another. If it's for your personal information, it is hoped that the current state of your life will be enhanced and expanded by this "new information" and that you may prosper and grow as a result of it.

The goal of the first phase is to encourage the participant to admit the current facts that are present in their life. Developing an understanding that, living is more than existing, growth is more than aging, and happiness is not continuous. In the course of doing the research of phase one, it is hoped that this new information will instill a desire to pursue even more new types of views and information to enhance life. A decision to proceed will be of benefit not only today, but for the rest of life.

PHASE 2

Implementation

Implementation is the performance of a task. This challenge is not to be an event, but rather a new outlook on life. To

implement this outlook into life requires practice. Life skills are developed through practice, much the same as destructive behaviors are developed over time. No one magically wakes up one morning and is someone other than who they fell asleep as, they develop into that person over a period of time. This development could have resulted from dedication and hard work with loving teachers and capable role models. It could also be a result of pain or fear and was developed as a means of survival. No matter how one becomes what they are is not so much fate, as conditioning and repetition.

Discovery is the core fundamental, or intent, of this phase. After knowledge is amassed, implementation is required to practice and hone the new information for one's benefit. Often major obstacles block the use of this information. "If nothing changes, nothing changes" was never truer than in recovery from chemical dependency. If things don't take on a new light or meaning, old behaviors and beliefs seem to remain. Some of what had worked in the past has to be evaluated to determine if it impedes future progress.

The goals of phase two are organization of facts leading up to the present, facing them in a manner that is understandable, validating our participation in the events as they occurred and the realization that bad choices do not make bad people. New information allows new choices which allow for new outcomes and consequences.

PHASE 3

Action

Action requires decision and effort. Without decision there is no commitment, and without commitment there can be no long standing change. Effort is required to break old habits both in behavior as well as thinking. Action is a choice. Change may be the result of the choice. A belief must develop in oneself that life may improve if these changes occur.

The intent of phase three is to instill a desire to change. "If" the choice is made to broaden one's base of knowledge by taking this action, improvement or at least change, will begin. Time is required to hone these new skills. Time was required to develop the problems we face today. It is hoped that at this phase in the program, one would be willing to accept their part in their own dysfunction. By doing so, they open the door to change and function. Functional boundaries are established and values are understood.

The goal of this course of action, or decision, is that it be willful. Coercion would defeat the purpose of holding one accountable to see the process through. Total implementation is necessary in order to overcome the obstacles which will surely present themselves. It is important at this time to present viable alternatives to old behaviors and attitudes.

PHASE 4

Re-Unification

Reunification implies a return to wholeness. At times everyone has felt incomplete. Some have never had the luxury of feeling whole. Others have lost it through events that may or may not be of their own doing. Wholeness is a key element in a human being. Balance is the key ingredient to wholeness. Honesty and personal responsibility are the means to achieving it.

Instilling a desire and willingness to proceed is the intent of this phase. Balance of the past, the present and the foreseeable future through information and acceptance are stressed. Fear, in its many forms, is explored and understood. Its history in a person's life is examined and faced. Freedom from the control of fear, guilt and shame are considered. Lines are drawn to separate fear from what it is and what we thought it was.

Goals in this phase are that the attendee begin to resolve past issues that are detrimental to the present by amending what "can be" righted and facing what cannot be. Personal re-

sponsibility allows a person to accept what they have done as bad decisions with bad consequences, rather than the only course of action available to a bad person. Commitment to this new freedom is instilled. “The light at the end of the tunnel” may not be a train after all.

PHASE 5

New Education

New education would be information that may have not been considered. At this point the program should have created the basis for exploration and growth. Basic life skills are addressed and refined. The future is planned with confidence in, instead of fear of, consequences.

Change is the essence of this phase. New attitudes, behaviors, feelings and dreams have been explored. Goals are set and boundaries are developing. Accomplishments are real and measurable. Mornings begin a journey without fear and evenings are spent in gratitude rather than regret.

Dedication is the main goal of this phase. With it comes the required decision to strive to do life today without the fear and pain of yesterday. The resolution of issues gives a sense of freedom to approach each new day expecting it to be achievable. If the new information received is implemented, a new life will emerge. Practice using the new information received will result in refinement of the skills associated. Many people have never consciously considered this maintenance concept. Many people don't require change in their life.

PHASE 6

Sponsorship

By sponsorship we mean the ability to guide or lead by example. In the process of moving forward in life, we have developed from what we were, to what we have become. The ability to share this information with another is the payback we owe

to the universe for the opportunity we have received. Someone who is new to this concept of change needs functional role models who can explain these concepts in basic terms.

Continued growth is the goal of this program. It is hoped that the information presented has been absorbed and has become a desire to grow. Completing this phase ultimately qualifies the participant to guide another through it. Continued involvement and implementation will enhance and strengthen their reserve to maintain these new ideas that have been presented.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Keith Simpson was born in Indiana on June 9, 1949. His family of origin is unknown. His adoption family taught him a code of moral conduct and responsibility, however knowing is not doing. Life is not always predictable, but change is inevitable. Time, experience and information sculpted the person writing this book. He embarked on this journey of discovery and change on May 5, 1982.

Keith's life, since 1992, has been focused on assisting others in the recovery process from substance abuse. He has been an alternative counselor to students found in violation of school substance rules and a transition advisor for the Arizona Department of Corrections.