

Chapter 3

The Addictive Thinkers Concept of Time

The addicts famous words are "I can stop anytime I want" but anyone who has observed an addict will know that such a thought is impossible. Only the addict doesn't see it. Others ask "How can an intelligent person not see the obvious; they can't stop"? The answer lies in understanding addictive thinking and their concept of time. For everyone, time is variable. Depending on the circumstances, a few moments may see like hours and at other times days may seem like minutes. The addict, however can abstain for a day or two, and has therefore, stopped for a "time". So in their mind, they can stop any "time".

For the addict, time may be measured in minutes or even seconds. Since the quest for chemical stimulation can come in seconds, he learns to measure time in seconds. Part of the addiction is the immediate high. Drug addicts have admitted that they would never buy the drug if it had a delayed reaction. The addict does think about the future, but only in terms of moments, not years. Addicts do think of consequences, but only in minutes or seconds and these few seconds or minutes are what make up "time".

We are part of a culture that values the delivery of service in seconds - e-mail, the Internet, and fast-food restaurants all provide nearly instant gratification. We all, in some ways, operate with the addictive concept of time. Recovering alcoholics know that one of the ways they must change their "stinkin thinkin" is to deal with their distorted concept of time. Most people are comfortable with the idea that one day is a manageable unit of time. However, people in recovery must take it five minutes at a time, eventually working up to longer periods. When addicts recognize that part of their downfall was intolerance of delay and become willing to wait for the rewards of sobriety, they are on their way to recovery. If they want instant sobriety, they get nowhere. One day at a time is not just a clever slogan. It is absolutely necessary for recovery from addiction.

Chapter 4

Confusing Cause and Effect

Many addictive thinkers come to their conclusions because they reverse ordinary cause and effect. Their judgment becomes distorted, and as a result taking chemicals becomes fully justified. As one recovering alcoholic put it, "I never in my life took a drink unless I had decided it was the right thing to do at the time." Although addictive thinkers turn logic around, they are absolutely convinced that their logic is valid. They not only resist rational arguments to the contrary, but also they cannot understand why others do not see the "obvious."

Addicted thinking is like dyslexia. Though the dyslexic sees the word *cat*, yet he may say *tac* knowing it is what he sees. The addict is the same. He may say he drinks because of the pressure of the household, yet it is the chemical use that causes the stress in the household in

the first place. The addict has confused cause and effect. Just as a dyslexic person has trouble reading until the problems with perception are addressed, an addicted person's perception of reality will continue to be distorted with or without active use of alcohol or other drugs until the addictive thinking process is corrected.

[Twerski, Abraham J. M.D. Addictive Thinking, Understanding Self-Deception: 2nd Ed. Hazelden: Center City, Minnesota, 1997 1990]