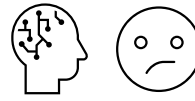


# MANAGING ADDICTIVE BEHAVIORS



## FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE: Show Integrity

**PONDER:** Why does the Lord love those with “integrity of heart” (D & C 124:15)?

**WATCH:** “What Shall a Man Give in Exchange for His Soul?”

**DISCUSS:** What does it mean to have integrity? What are some small ways people give away their souls to get things in this life?

## ACTIVITY

On your own, read the list below and rate how you’re doing on each one to see where you could be more honest.

How Often Do I Act This Way    1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = always

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I keep my promises.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I do not exaggerate to make things appear better than they are.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I tell the truth, even if I made the wrong choice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I give back what I borrow and do not take things that aren’t mine.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I am faithful to my family in my words and actions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I never cheat, even when I know I won’t be caught.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. When I find something that isn’t mine, I return it to the owner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I always pay back money I borrow.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I admit when I’ve made a mistake.

**READ:** “Integrity means always doing what is right and good, regardless of the immediate consequences. It means being righteous from the very depth of our soul, not only in our actions but, more importantly, in our thoughts and in our hearts. . . . A little lying, a little cheating, or taking a little unfair advantage are not acceptable to the Lord. . . . The consummate reward of integrity is the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. . . . When we do what is right, he can dwell with us and guide us in all we do” (Joseph Wirthlin)

**DISCUSS:** Why is being honest necessary to become more emotionally resilient?

**COMMIT:** I will strive to be more honest in one of the nine areas I rated above.

# LEARN

## 1. Levels of Addiction

**READ:** Agency is a divine gift from Heavenly Father. The adversary wants to distract us and limit our ability to make good choices. One way he does this is through addictions. Someone can become addicted to many different types of behaviors or substances. These include but are not limited to **alcohol, illicit drugs, pornography, sex, tobacco, food, technology, and gambling. OTHERS???**

## ACTIVITY

Some people may think they are addicted when they actually aren't. Others may feel that nothing is wrong even though they are trapped in an addictive behavior.

**READ AND DISCUSS** the three levels of addictive and compulsive behaviors below. Keep in mind that these levels apply to how frequently someone engages in the **addictive or compulsive pattern**. That means, for example, that these levels don't apply to something like a normal or healthy eating pattern, but they do apply to a pattern of over-eating.

- **Exposure.** This level is where one engages in a **behavior** or uses a **substance** either by accident or just to try it out. It is important to note that accidental behavior or substance use is considered a mistake, which calls for correction rather than repentance.
- **Occasional use.** While it may not happen daily, or even that often, the danger with any intentional use is that it always invites more. No matter how casual or infrequent the action, it will inevitably increase the desire to use the **substance** or engage in the **behavior**.
- **Intensive use.** Frequent intentional use can lead to a habit, which is a pattern of **behavior** that becomes difficult to control and almost automatic. With habitual use, individuals experience a need for more ways to have the same reaction in order to satisfy the urge or craving.

**READ:** "If behavior is incorrectly classified as an addiction, the user may think he or she has lost agency and the capacity to overcome the problem. This can weaken resolve to recover and repent. On the other hand, having a clearer understanding of the depth of a problem—that it may not be as ingrained or extreme as feared—can give hope and an increased capacity to exercise agency to discontinue and repent" President Oaks

**DISCUSS:** How can it be harmful to label a behavior as an addiction when it isn't? Or how could it be harmful if you thought you weren't addicted when you really were?

## 2.ADDICTION IS BOTH A SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL CHALLENGE

**Addictive and compulsive behaviors are not only a spiritual challenge but a physical one.**

**READ:** Elder M. Russell Ballard taught: “Researchers tell us there is a mechanism in our brain called the pleasure center. When activated by certain drugs or behaviors, it overpowers the part of our brain that governs our willpower, judgment, logic, and morality. This leads the addict to abandon what he or she knows is right”. While we may be doing all that is necessary to heal spiritually from an addiction, healing may still be necessary for our body, specifically our brain. As we work on our addictive behaviors, our brains can change and heal.

**DISCUSS:** Why is it important to understand that addiction is both a physical and emotional challenge?

## 3.DOING YOUR PART

**Read:** Although the recovery process can be difficult, the scriptures give hope that “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13).

Below are some general principles that can assist you, with the Lord’s help, to recover from an addictive behavior or habit.

- **Pray for help.** You can always ask God for His help. He is there and will answer your prayer.
- **Find hope.** Know that the Savior can heal you as you do your part.
- **Be honest.** Addiction gains power in secrecy, but it is weakened with honesty.
- **Connect with others.** Connection can fill needs that addiction often offsets.
- **Make a plan.** Prayerfully consider changes you need to make, avoid difficult situations, and learn from your mistakes. Think about Moroni and the many layers of protection against the Lamanites he and his people built Alma 49
- **Be accountable.** Ask for help from someone you trust, make a follow-up plan together with your trusted person, and regularly review your progress.
- **Get support.** You don’t have to do this alone. Speak with your family, bishop, leaders, or friends.
- **Remember that you are a child of God.** Don’t define yourself by your addiction. Have compassion for yourself and others.
- **DON’T GIVE UP.** Even if you slip up, no effort is wasted. It takes time to heal. Be patient with yourself.

**DISCUSS:** With a partner, discuss how the skills above could help someone change himself or herself.

Share your answers as a group

**\*\*\*\* Some individuals may need to take more significant steps to heal. This includes asking a doctor for help, attending a 12-step addiction recovery meeting, working with a therapist or treatment program, or a combination of approaches.**

## 4. PREVENTING ADDICTION

**Read:** Most addiction is preventable if you have a good understanding of yourself and the things that could entice you into addictive behaviors. For many people, addictive patterns often start in late teen years. The principles in the following chart can help prevent addiction.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION
1.Education	Educate yourself about what things are addictive and what addiction does to a person. Knowing how addiction can affect your body, mind, and spirit can be a useful deterrent
2.Moderation	Prophets throughout time have taught the importance of moderation. Setting limits on your behaviors and deciding what you will and won't do can protect you from falling into addiction.
3.Connection	Having a strong connection with the Savior and other people can be a major protective factor in avoiding addictive behaviors. Good people in your life can help you feel God's love and be more resilient.
4.Transparency	Being honest with someone about your actions can help you avoid behaviors often associated with addiction, including lying, deceiving, and justifying. Being transparent makes it harder for addictive behaviors to take root.
5.Monitoring	Know who your friends are and what activities they participate in. Talk with your parents about concerns you may have about you possibly being addicted or a friend you feel might be addicted.

**PONDER:** Think about yourself or someone you know. Which of the principles in the chart would you be willing to use/try in order to help with an addiction.

Individually think about what you have learned today and consider what God would have you do. Read the quote below and write your responses to the questions.

“Save for the exception of the very few who defect to perdition, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no apostasy, no crime exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness. That is the promise of the atonement of Christ” (Boyd K. Packer, “The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness,”

What are the most meaningful things I learned today?

What am I willing to commit to as a result of what I have learned today?

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