

SPARK 017

(Matrix Code: **SPARK017.00** for StartOver.xyz game.)

DISTINCTION: Addiction is not the problem. Addiction is the solution to the problem.

NOTES: If there is one thing common in our modern Western culture, it is the easy availability and widespread use of addictive substances. Consider this list: alcohol, tobacco, prescription and non-prescription drugs, caffeinated foods and beverages (coffee, tea, cola, chocolate), sugar, television, radio, videos, newspapers, fast driving (adrenaline), over-eating (endorphins), over-dieting, over exercising, over-shopping, over-emailing, being adaptive, fighting with your mate, gambling, internet sex, mobile telephony...

Be careful here to remember that SPARKs are a radical way of looking at things. SPARKs are not to be confused with moralizing or rule making. A Possibility Manager is interested in useful applications and valuable results, not in judging things as morally good or bad or in being confined to more rules. We are discussing addiction from a perspective that could create a new possibility for you.

While observing your own mind from moment to moment during the day you eventually start noticing persistent little Yes vs. No conversations that go on with regards to addictive behavior. Through these conversations addictions devour your attention and therefore your energy. How can you get your attention and energy back?

You have probably already tried “New Year’s resolutions” as a way to try to change some of your addictive behaviors. You are also probably jaded enough to know that when the moment comes to decide whether to do that behavior or not do it, you often wake up on the other side of an addictive binge asking yourself who makes those decisions anyway? You walk past a bakery telling yourself not to eat sweets and the next time you remember yourself you are throwing away an empty pastry bag and licking your lips.

EXPERIMENTS:

SPARK017.01 If addiction is not the problem - if addiction is actually the solution to the problem - then what is the problem? The experiment here is to consider that the problem is not the addictive substance itself. The problem is the quality of the experience that occurs if the addictive substance is not applied.

Before starting this experiment do some personal research. Use the Alice In Wonderland mirror. What is it like on the outside of the mirror? What is it like on the inside of the mirror? Outside the mirror objectively scrutinize your experience just before you use the addictive substance. For example, when you are forced to wait before you bring the addictive substance streaming through your bloodstream what happens to you? Inside the mirror, objectively scrutinize the quality of your physical experience when you bring the addictive substance in. Exactly what does that feel like? What is the difference between outside the mirror and inside the mirror?

What most people say and what you might also observe is that you feel something different without the addictive substance than you feel when using the addictive substance. Without the addictive substance you feel something that you do not want to feel. Each time you come around to this same condition you make the conscious or unconscious decision that you prefer to have the experience of the addictive substance rather than the experience of being yourself in the present without the addictive substance. The addictive substance takes you experientially away from how you are without the addictive substance.

What you have discovered is that the addictive substance is the solution to the problem of how it is for you without the addictive substance. The problem being solved by using the addictive substance is the intensity of feeling that comes with being yourself in the present, however you describe that unbearable lightness (or heaviness) of being you.

What happens when you do nothing to avoid it is you experience being present. The experience of presence is known to have two particularly intense experiential side effects. First, when you stay present then long repressed and incomplete emotions (e.g. terror, rage, grief) might arise with a compelling force that you fear is too intense for you to handle. You are right. You won't be able to handle it to stay the same. If you completely feel the old emotions you will be changed. Second, by getting present with things exactly as they are (e.g. your job, your mate, your true vision) those things could suddenly complete themselves and change into something else. Experiencing the change of conditions long maintained through nonacceptance could also feel too intense for you to handle.

You are now ready for the experiment. This experiment is perhaps best done gradually over a period of several months. The experiment begins by deciding to increase your tolerance of the intensity of being present.

Step One: Choose your favorite addiction. (Oh, alright! Choose your second favorite addiction...)

Step Two: Notice when the urge to do it comes around again. This may take anywhere from three minutes to three days.

Step Three: Keep paying attention to wanting to do it, but do not do it. Remember that the decision to not do it is only and ever made right NOW. You only have to do this experiment for as long as your NOW is. With a big NOW this can be a very long experiment and most people stop for fear of having to endure the experiment forever. If you wish to continue with the experiment it can be helpful to create for yourself a short cycle-time minimized NOW so the experiment is very short.

Step Four: Keep breathing. Try to relax.

Step Five: Notice the feeling or emotion that dwells below your normal level of awareness and that becomes ever more present the longer you do not use the addictive substance. Is the feeling anger? Is it grief? Is it terror? Interestingly, a feeling often avoided by the use of addictive substances is the intensity of the sense of well-

being, of joy, of overwhelming gladness. Your experiment is to pick a safe time and a safe place and allow yourself to experience whatever the feeling is more and more intensely. Try to get used to it. Stay with it as long as you can. Keep checking to see if you are okay, and then keep letting the feeling get bigger. Trust your feeling. The decision to numb the feeling may simply be an old decision made under circumstances where it was not safe to feel this intensely. The decision may no longer apply. As an adult you are designed to experience one hundred percent maximum intensity of all your feelings. Over and over again keep feeling your way all the way through to a new future for yourself.