

# Why Do I Do What I Don't Want to Do?

By David Nowack, RN and JoAnne Nowack, RN

## Part One: Sin or Addiction?

Why do I do what I don't want to do? Who among us hasn't asked this question at some time or another? We've grown up hearing about sin and its consequences. I know that as a child I (JoAnne) thought of sin much as a monster hiding in the closet waiting to ambush me at some unsuspecting moment. I wasn't quite sure what caused it or what I had to do with its appearance.

Then, in adulthood, as I learned about addictive behavior, I began to see a lot of similarity between being "ambushed" by sin and being "ambushed" by my addictions. In the beginning of my healing process, I understood very little about where these "ambushes" were coming from. It just felt as if I had very little control over them and how they impacted my life. As a Christian, I felt like the worst of failures. I knew what I wanted to be like but couldn't seem to get there to save my soul. Does the sound of this dilemma have a familiar ring to you, too?

If so, let's do some exploring together of some concepts that just might shed some light on the subject. We'll start with some definitions.

## A Clinical Definition of Addiction

**Addiction (Webster's):** Habitual inclination; devoted or given up to a habit.

**Addiction (Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary):** Enslavement to a habit. (i.e.: a drug habit)

**Addiction (counseling definition):** Compulsive behavior developed to serve as a distraction from deep inner pain resulting from emotional wounds inflicted during the formative years. (conception to 7 or 8 years old)

Here is a list of some of the substances, attitudes, and behaviors that most commonly become addictions (remember that anything can become an addiction if it is used to compulsively anesthetize and distract from the pain of unresolved emotional wounds):

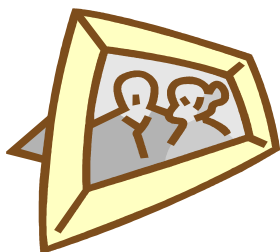
Work	Drugs (illegal and legal, including nicotine and caffeine)	Religious Activity
Perfectionism	Misery (negaholism)	Food
Control	Gossip	Gambling
Sex	Alcohol	Criticism
Intellectualization	"Rescuing" Others	Rage
Relationships		Adrenaline

We've looked at some definitions of addiction, now let's look at a definition of sin:

**Sin is the broken (wounded) condition we find ourselves in as a result of mankind's separation from God. It characterizes itself in 3 ways:**

**1. Generational issues** (we didn't ask for these, but we got them anyway!)

*"...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..." Romans 3:23*



*"...to the third and fourth generation..." Exodus 20:5*

*"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." Ps. 51:5*

**2. Someone else's hurtful actions/behavior toward us**

(we don't usually ask for this either, but are nevertheless

wounded by it) *"...the wicked man...lies in wait like a lion in cover; he lies in*

*wait to catch the helpless..." Ps. 10:2,9 "Jesus said to his disciples: 'Things*

*that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that*

*person through whom they come, It would be better for*

*him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around*

*his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to*

*sin." Luke 17:1,2*



**3. Our own actions, behaviors, choices** *"I do not un-*

*derstand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I*

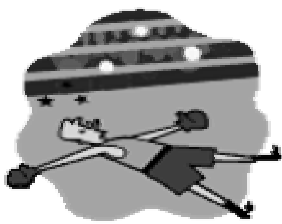
*do...I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my*

*sinful nature. For I have desire to do what is good, but I*

*cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want*

*to do; no, the evil I do not want to do- this I keep on do-*

*ing..." Romans 7:15-19*



*"Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the*

*world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against*

*your soul." I Peter 2:11*

## Generational Issues: **The Lies We Inherit**

Generational issues are those family system rules that we absorb even before we are born. We are bathed and immersed in these rules from the time of conception. They have a profound impact on our lives from some deep, often unseen place (a friend of ours calls it the "riptide effect"). Families that are dysfunctional (literally "functioning in pain") have one or more of the following destructive "rules" in place:

**Don't talk.** Actually, this rule usually says, "You can talk, but it must not be honest disclosure or anything negative in any way. Be loyal to the family secrets at all cost." Common phrases may be, "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all" or "Go to your room until you can have a better attitude." Honest questions about painful issues will likely be deflected away by silence or censure. It's OK to talk about the weather or sports, but never about real issues that might be painful.

**Don't trust.** The hallmark of the dysfunctional family is mistrust of "outsiders". "I can't believe you would expect me to tell our family problems to a stranger", a family member might say when a counselor is suggested. This family system rule doesn't allow for any intervention, even positive, helpful intervention, from others outside the family. Any attempt from others to facilitate positive change is viewed as a threat, time to "circle the wagons" against anyone knowing what is really going on in the family.

**Don't feel.** "Don't cry or I'll give you something to cry about." "Smile, smile, smile and keep right on a smilin'" In dysfunctional family systems, feelings are considered suspect and everyone other than the King or Queen Baby in the family are expected to display only positive emotions. (Interestingly enough, the King or Queen Baby is allowed to display whatever emotions he or she chooses to at the moment.) Honest feelings are suppressed and "masks" are encouraged.

**Don't be selfish.** This family rule could be translated "Don't have any boundaries or personal needs and definitely don't express your needs. Especially if they conflict with the needs of the King or Queen Baby in the family or those of the "golden child".

**Avoid conflict at all cost.** This rule, often handed down from generation to generation (as all dysfunctional family rules are), instills a deep fear of confrontation in family members. The result is a lot of triangling behavior (one person the rescuer, one the persecutor, and one the victim). Gossip about one family member to another temporarily relieves the tension that indirect communication causes, but the relief is short lived because the conflict has not been resolved, but complicated.

**Make everyone happy.** Part of avoiding conflict, this unhealthy family rule can create painful "catch 22's" in which it is impossible to please all parties involved.

**Avoid pain at all cost.** Pain is the enemy and comfort the goal in dysfunctional family systems. Growth, however, comes through pain, so no growth can occur when pain is studiously avoided or anesthetized (addictions)

## Wounded By Others-The Fallout of Sin

The second part of sin consists of others' hurtful actions or behavior toward us. Here is a definition of abuse:

*Abuse: The use of force to create a power imbalance in the relationship, so that one person gains the "upper hand" over the other.*

**Physical Abuse-** Hitting, pinching, slapping, restraining (unless it is restraining a child or hysterical adult to keep them from harming themselves), tickling, pushing, biting, etc. Any touch not given in love and respect for the person being touched. Any touch that violates the person's boundaries.

**Verbal Abuse-** Put downs, name calling, joking at the other's expense, ordering and demanding, any communication that does not affirm, support, or edify the other person.

**Emotional Abuse-** Terrorizing, intimidating, ignoring, passive-aggressive behavior, "silent violence", threatening body language such as glaring or refusal to make eye contact in order to punish, "walking out" on the other person to maintain control, "king baby" behavior to keep the spotlight always on self, thus preventing the other from having nurture and equal "emotional support time".

**Sexual Abuse-** Invasion of sexual boundaries (includes inappropriate comments or jokes about any aspect of the other's body, inappropriate touch, withholding of appropriate touch, sexual acting out in front of the other with self, others, or animals, exposing the other to sexually explicit material).

**Financial Abuse-** Controlling finances to keep the other dependent, neglecting to meet financial needs, interrogating other about finances, using threat of withdrawal of financial support as a power chip.

**Intellectual Abuse-** Using information to try to force change in the other person's position, lecturing, trying to "outtalk" or "outsmart" the other.

**Spiritual Abuse-** Manipulating and controlling through quoting Scripture or spiritual authorities, attempting to create shame and guilt in the other through condemning or judgmental statements, attempting to control through any of the above means from a position of spiritual responsibility (pastor, teacher, parent, Bible worker, professed Christian in a leadership position)

## Why Do I Do What I Don't Want to Do?

### Our Actions, Behaviors, and Choices- A New Look at Lust

Now we come to the third way sin presents itself, in our own actions and choices:

"Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. James 1: 14, KJV (Word "lust" is translated "evil desire" in the NIV)

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, *which war against the soul.*" I Peter 2:11 KJV (italics supplied)

### The Experience of the Numinous: It's the *Real* Thing

We are examining the way sin acts itself out in our own personal experience, but to understand it fully we must first look at another definition, one of the most important we will ever consider: the experience of the numinous.

**The experience of the Numinous: A profound disturbance in the soul, excited by the presence of One so great that "Under it my genius is rebuked..." (Shakespeare)**

John the Revelator "fell on his face as one dead" at the feet of Christ in a numinous experience. (See Revelation 1:17) Numinous awe is what Jacob experienced when he awakened from the vision of the ladder to Heaven and sensed the presence of God in that place. (See Genesis 28)

"When a man passes from physical fear to dread and awe, he makes a sheer jump, and apprehends something which could never be *given*, as danger is, by the physical facts and logical deductions from them." C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*.

In the numinous experience, all else but the worship of God fades into insignificance. The emotion can be intense as in surges of joy and gratitude mixed with the awe. Or it can be accompanied by a deep sense of peace. When pain comes, it is accepted as immaterial to the connection with God.

**We are created for a numinous experience with God. There is a place deep inside us that can only be filled by the presence of God Himself, in what John Eldridge calls "the sacred romance". Deep connection with the Divine is the only thing that can ever satisfy our hearts most profound longing.**

## A Definition of Lust

Now let us look at another definition. This word has come to mean something very limited in our day, usually referring to inappropriate sexual longings. Actually, lust is: **a profound disturbance in the soul, the *false emotion* of addiction.**

**It is the *substitute* for the experience of the numinous. Instead of the core focus being on God and worshiping Him, the focus is on the *anesthetic*.**

1. The core goal of lust is to ***avoid pain through addictive behavior.***

2. The core mechanism by which pain avoidance is achieved is through the ***"gate control"*** theory of pain management. The human brain will only let one primary stimulus at a time in. It, in effect, ***closes the gate after the first stimulus for as long as the stimulus is primary.*** This is why the Lamaze method of breathing during childbirth works to control the pain of labor. When the false emotion of addiction is flooding the pain sensors, the sensation of being in pain is blocked. The core grief that is causing the pain is still present, so it takes higher and higher levels of stimuli to achieve "pain blocking" .

As addictions consume larger and larger chunks of the person's time, energy, and resources and destroy relationships with important others, they begin to become a source of pain in and of themselves. This stage, when it becomes impossible to numb the pain any longer, is often when the addict begins to reach out for help.

## The Three Faces of Lust

- **Lust for control** (avoidance addiction, workaholism, perfectionism, religious addiction, ) Cause: No control/chaos/fear in childhood
- **Lust for attention (recognition)** (relationship addiction, misery addiction, "King Baby" addiction, drama addiction, Michal syndrome)  
Cause: Neglect/overattention out of the parent's own needs, *not* the child's
- **Lust for power** (gossip/slander/criticism addiction, sexual addiction, fantasy addiction, rape, murder/blood lust, serial killing addiction, adrenaline addiction, rage) Cause: dehumanization/powerlessness in childhood

## Numinous Vs. Lust

The experience of the Numinous is a gift from God and is received through **faith**. The experience of lust is based in **fear** and is the legacy of the evil one.

## The Three Faces of Fear (Lust Working It's Way Out in Relationships)

### Victim Mentality

- ◆ People pleaser
- ◆ Fears disapproval
- ◆ Can't see options
- ◆ Passive/aggressive
- ◆ Can't say "no"
- ◆ Feels manipulated by life
- ◆ Resents others
- ◆ Blames others for feelings
- ◆ Feels "caught in the middle"
- ◆ Feels helpless, expects others to care for
- ◆ Feels overwhelmed, can't make decisions
- ◆ Feels "less than"
- ◆ Gives away personal power by over- explaining and asking for approval



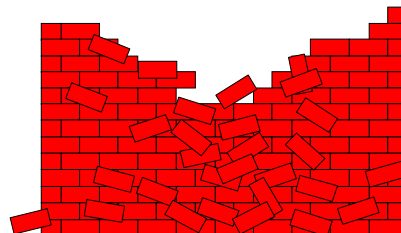
### Steam Roller

- ◆ Uses put downs and name calling
- ◆ Uses scripture to coerce (spiritual abuse)
- ◆ Slaps, punches, bites, or kicks
- ◆ Makes threats to end the relationship
- ◆ Threatens suicide
- ◆ Spies, stalks, controls actions of other
- ◆ Treats others like servants
- ◆ Argues often and loudly
- ◆ Attacks the other's "sore spots"
- ◆ Acts intrusively
- ◆ Destroys property
- ◆ Abuses pets
- ◆ Intimidates with looks or gestures



### Wall Builder

- ◆ Uses silence as a weapon
- ◆ Refuses to commit in a relationship
- ◆ Will not communicate
- ◆ Can't trust
- ◆ Lacks the mechanism to express emotions
- ◆ Isolates
- ◆ Often addicted to misery and loneliness
- ◆ Appears cold and uncaring
- ◆ Quietly self-absorbed
- ◆ May escape to fantasy world (pornography)
- ◆ Sabotages relationships by leaving when other gets "too close"



“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” Romans 8:15 (KJV)

## The Role of Generational Issues in the Development of Lust

1. **Lust can be learned.** “Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation...” Exodus 20:5

2. **90% of our learned lust is absorbed indirectly.** Parents, grandparents, and teachers may be telling us to have faith and trust, but through their own fears are teaching us at a very young age to lust (develop an addiction to cope with the pain of disconnection from God) These fears are communicated through:

- Unhealthy family rules/maxims (see “**The Lies We Inherit**”)
- The electrical field that surrounds each person and is made up of their thoughts and feelings (their “aura”)
- Personal example (and normalization) of *exaggerated ego defenses*:

**Projection:** (of their own fears) “You can’t do that, Johnny. Don’t even try.” “No one in our family is musically inclined. We aren’t even going to bother with music lessons.”

**Denial:** (This is the first stage of the grief process and only becomes an exaggerated ego defense when it continues past it’s God given usefulness: approximately one to two weeks) This ego defense protects the fearful one from facing his or her deep wounds and feeling the pain of healing. The hallmark of denial is the “don’t talk, don’t trust, don’t feel” family system rule. This is a favorite ego defense of addicts and often requires an “intervention” by a group of loved ones to break through to reality.

**Intellectualization:** (A favorite ego defense of men, but also used by women) This defense, when exaggerated, keeps the wounded one from actually getting in touch with any real emotion. “Just the facts, please...” with it’s emphasis on logic only can keep the mind so flooded with information that it is unable to process emotion in a healing way.

**Repression:** Occurs when memories are so painful that they are shoved down out of reach of the conscious mind. Repressed memories still impact behavior, but the person doesn’t have an awareness of why the behaviors are occurring. (example: phobias)

**Dissociation:** A fracturing of personality frequently associated with severe abuse such as sexual abuse or ritual abuse.

## The Role of Wounding from Other's Abuse in the Development of Lust

Age:	Task:	When Needs are Met:	When They Aren't Met:
Conception thru 1st Year	Trust	Hope. Trust in the environment and in the future	Mistrust. Fear of the future. Suspicion. (Lust for control)
2nd Year	Autonomy	Will. Ability to exercise choice as well as self-restraint.	Shame and doubt. Confused and fearful. (Lust for power / control)
3rd thru 5th Years	Initiative	Purpose. Ability to initiate activities, give them direction and enjoy doing them.	Guilt. Fear of punishment. Restricts self or shows off. (Lust for attention or control)
6th Year thru Puberty	Industry	Competence. Ability to relate to the world of skills and tools.	Inferiority. A sense of inadequacy. Fear of failure. (Lust for control.)
Teens	Identity	Fidelity. Ability to see oneself as a unique and integrated person and to sustain loyalties.	Confusion. Lack of identity. Fear of relationships. (Lust for attention, power, or control)

## Stages of Falling into Sin (It Doesn't *Have* to Happen!)

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it." I Corinthians 10:13 (KJV)

Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. James 1: 14, KJV (Word "lust" is translated "evil desire" in the NIV)

**Stage One: Lust Development** (generational modeling, abuse, neglect causes a bottomless pit of need. The cry for anesthetic is strong.)

**Stage Two: The Lure of the Anesthetic** (the wounded person is introduced to the possibility of dulling the pain of his "bottomless pit" of need. It may be in the form of work, sex, drugs, alcohol, relationship, a critical spirit, bitterness, rage, or any number of other strong psychic "drugs")

**Stage Three: The choice to engage** (There is always a moment of choice. The wounded person may likely have had his or her "no" broken through abuse and not be able to set a boundary at this point. It is crucial to go back to step one and allow healing to happen to be able to have victory at this point.)

**Stage Four: The wounding actions** (Once the anesthetizer is in place, it's presence will further damage the wounded person and those around him/her. Addiction isolates and isolation kills.

**Stage Five: Living "death"** (disconnection from God)

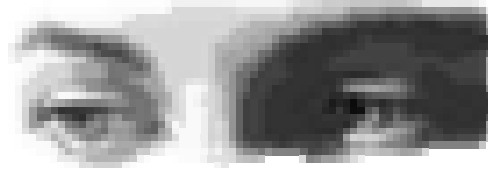
**Stage Six: Actual death from the addiction** (Addictive behavior is progressive and fatal, whether it be workaholism, sexual addiction, alcoholism

**Stage Seven: The final death at the second resurrection**



## A Program for Emotional and Spiritual Healing

- Learn as much as you can about how emotional and spiritual damage occurs. (Books, seminars, talking with others on the same journey of healing.)
- Apply what you learn to your own personal story. (A good counselor who will do a timeline and explore your generational issues with you is worth his or her weight in gold.)
- Begin to process through your own painful memories and experiences by going into relationship with God as He allows the circumstances in your life to trigger deep reactions in you (remember that if you have been spiritually abused, “going into relationship with God” may mean going to your safe group who is “God with skin on” to you).
- Commit to allowing God to “reparent” you through honest disclosure and accountability to your safe group.
- Accept responsibility for your own thoughts and feelings, refusing to place blame or hang your shame and pain on others (or on yourself!).
- Resolve to do any positive action assignments the Holy Spirit gives you, including refusing negative mind chatter and living in an attitude of forgiveness and thanksgiving.



*"The more truth you take in,  
the more will be given to you.  
Those who love the truth  
will be given more truth,  
and those who don't will  
lose the truth they have."*

**Jesus**

**(See Mark 4:24,25)**