



## **A Year-Long Enneagram Certification Program in Conscious Living™**

### **The Enneagram as a Tool to Navigate Addiction and Recovery Elective Session with Michael Naylor**

Ann: Hello and welcome to our October elective for our *Year-Long Enneagram Certification Program in Conscious Living*. Today's session will be facilitated by Michael Naylor, and this is titled "The Enneagram as a Tool to Navigate Addiction and Recovery." I'm Ann, Program Manager and host for The Shift Network. Let's give a warm welcome to Michael. Welcome, Michael.

Michael: Hello, everyone. Good to be here. I'm Michael Naylor calling from South Portland, Maine on a very wet and rainy day to share with you some of the perspectives that I've discovered over the course of 40 years of being sober. Which every day the angels cheer, and so does my family that they have a sober man in the house. I'm going to walk us through some slides and create a dialogue around the slides. But I'm not going to do a long monologue because I might bore myself to death and let alone you. As questions come up, write them down and you will have an opportunity to jump in and have a conversation with me because I think that's where the best learning occurs and it's more fun. I love to get a chance to meet some of you. I see at least one familiar face out there, [Participant], so it's good to see you.

With that said, I'm going to start my slideshow and see what we can discover here. "The Mystery of Addiction" is what I titled this little lecture today. I am the director of the Maine Enneagram Center for Transformation and Well-Being. This scene here is about a mile from my house and I go here just to get peace of mind. These are a couple of my beloveds. In the middle is my lovely type Two wife. My type Nine daughter is on the right. As you can see, I'm blessed with great positive energy to balance out my type Four notoriety for going into the dark. Here they are again. Then we have this other little guy, Felix, who's my grandson who I think is a type Seven. He's just pure joy.

I wanted to start with about a five-minute sitting practice and sensing practice. I've been involved in the Gurdjieff work for many years. The thing that my teachers tell me is, "Michael, sense your body as often as possible as if your life depends on it because it does." We'll just do a short, brief sensing practice, so just follow along, whatever you're comfortable with, eyes open, eyes closed. Just begin by finding your breath and sensing the rise and fall of belly and diaphragm. Just taking a moment to bring some of your attention out of that four-lane highway in your head center and down into your body. Just making contact with the sensation of breathing. On each out-breath, just relaxing a little bit more. Then put the spotlight of your attention on your right arm from the shoulder to the elbow, to the fingers. With just a gentle awareness on the right arm, just notice what you discover. If there's tension, relax the arm.

If you notice sensation, just be aware of that. Sometimes the hands are more susceptible to allowing sensation to arise. Just to be with whatever you discover. As your beloved monkey mind takes you on a thought trip, just pat it on the head and bring your attention back to your arm, just relaxing as much as you can. Then bring attention down into your right leg, from the hip to the knee, to the toes. As you bring that gentle spotlight, just notice if there's any sensation occurring or if there's an inner sense of an electric current that's going through that limb. Sometimes people experience that kind of throbbing electricity. It's different for every person. Just notice as put your attention on the exterior and interior of your right leg what arises. If your spiritual inner critic says you're doing a terrible job, you say thanks for sharing, and then go back to your attention on your body. Then move attention to your left leg. Again, from the hip to the knee, to the toes, just taking that spotlight of attention through the left leg. There's no correct way to do it. Just follow what occurs to you. As you relax on each out-breath, you might experience your body starting to fill in with a sensation or energy.

Then bring attention to your left arm from the shoulder to the elbow, to the fingertips. Just put gentle attention both on the external skin, and if you can, on the inside of that left arm. Noticing any currents or spots on your arm that have access to sensation. Just noticing. You're not trying to make anything happen. Then bring attention into your trunk, both the front and the back, your spine, belly, and chest, and if you can, on the interior of your trunk. Just be aware of tightness and relaxing, and also being aware of sensation if there's any current there. Maybe you feel your heartbeat. Just notice what you notice. Then bring that gentle spotlight of attention up to your face. Begin by sensing the mask of your face and relaxing it as much as you can. Relax the tongue in your mouth, the jaw, the eyes, and the eye socket, the forehead. Just notice any sensation available in your head. There's also where sensation is showing itself throughout your whole body.

Move your attention into your heart center. Be aware of the weather there. Is it depressed and cloudy? Is it a bright, sunny day and you're experiencing joy? Is there an anxious electric storm in your heart? Just notice. What is the state of my heart and what are the sensations that I experience in my sternum as I put attention there? Then bring attention up into the head center. What's the weather like there? Is it a calm, clear day? Is sitting on the side of a lake with stillness pervading your head center? Is it foggy and confused? Do you have a Los Angeles eight-lane freeway pouring through your head center? Whatever is there, just notice it. Don't fight it. Just take in the impression. Then for a moment, I invite you to just notice any stillness that you're experiencing internally. Just to be with that for a moment. Take one breath. Thank you. All right. Let's continue forward on this interesting journey.

I'm just going to start with saying a little bit about my journey. This labyrinth is a great symbol for me for reminding myself that the way home is not a straight line. There are curves to the left, curves to the right. There's movement backward. You may have to dig a tunnel to get to the next level of awareness and pop up someplace else, but it's not linear. That's for certain. I started my own recovery journey coming into Alcoholics Anonymous 40 years ago, and it was really a stroke of luck. I was at the time teaching a fitness class in the morning to all of these professors at the University of Maine in Orono on an assistantship. One morning, I had arrived after being in the bar all night and drinking my favorite drink, which is Kahlua Sombrero, and I started to march the group around the gymnasium. The guy behind me said, "You smell a lot like Kahlua Sombrero." I said, "Yeah, it's true." I showed up late.

In the course of several weeks, there were actually two recovering men in the group, and they would come up and start talking to me. They asked me, "What's your relationship with alcohol?" I said, "Well, I maybe only drink three or four times a week." They said, "Oh, okay. Well, probably six or seven, right?" I was taken aback by that. Then they kept inviting me to come to an AA meeting. After a while, I just felt like I wanted to make them feel better, so I went to an AA meeting. I had an amazing experience where I just felt like this energy wave came through me and I realized that was in the right place, that I was struggling with addiction. The light went on quite miraculously, so that started my journey in the direction of home. From there, I went through a lot of things, but one of the things that was for certain in the beginning is I thought that this should be a quick, easy journey. I should be able to make my way to peace and happiness in five easy steps. But I realized and learned quite quickly that there were many dips in the road, many trenches, many abysses that I would fall off of, and that that was just the nature of spiritual growth. Along the way, I began working with Zen Buddhism and Shambhala Buddhist practice.

From there, I can remember one day, I was at a Zen monastery, and I was talking to a monk there, a genpo. I've been clean about 15 years, and I was still relatively miserable. I said to him, "The longer I go, the more I have to apologize. What's up with that?" He said to me, "Well, do you want the good news or the bad news?" I said, "Well, I seem to like bad news. What's the bad news?" He said, "Well, the bad news is that will get worse. But the good news is over time, you will begin to discover that you have the same suffering and flaws as other people do in a slightly different package form, but you have the same issues on a fundamental level. As you recognize that and embrace that, you'll start to develop more compassion, unconditional compassion for self and others." That seemed like a pretty good deal although it didn't alleviate my suffering in the moment. Shortly thereafter, in the midst of an epic destruction of my life as I knew it, I found a counselor who said to me, "Michael, do you know anything about the Enneagram?" I said I do not. He said, "Well, I invite you to read this book." This is in 1995 to 1996 by then. It was Don Riso's. He said, "Read the Type Four. Then also read *In Search Of The Miraculous* by Ouspenskii and tell me what happens."

I read the Type Four and I went, oh my god, this is horrible. It's like this guy has just looked into the depth of me and seen everything that's haywire and messed up. It just so happens that it also seems like that was what I prided myself in. He kind of wrapped my story. I said to my counselor at that time, who then became later on my guru teacher, "Is this reputable? Is this real material? This isn't fantasy stuff?" He said, "No, it isn't. You can trust this." I started my journey there and began doing the Gurdjieff work. One of the things that I love about the Gurdjieff work is something that Gurdjieff said. He said, "I ask you to believe nothing that you cannot verify for yourself." As we go through this conversation today about addiction, I would just offer that as something to remember. This is just one tiny human being's perspective, so it's a work in progress. Just stay open and see what seems true to you and ask questions when it seems weird or strange or not accurate.

It was then as I started doing the Gurdjieff work in 1996 to 1997 that it was about nine years later, 2006, when I had the pleasure, the joy of going to a part one. In which, case Russ was teaching it, Russ and Gayle Scott, and again, had this moment of feeling in the depth of my core that this is who I'm supposed to work with. I found my next lighthouse. Shortly, within a year, I'd done all the trainings and everything in sight. I must have gone to, over the course of a year and a half, seven or eight five-day trainings. I became a certified authorized teacher and then became a faculty of the Enneagram Institute. I had the great pleasure of working with Don and Russ and getting to be with them up close. That really for me created the paradigm and the sense that I bring to the Enneagram. One of the things that Don said that I thought was so beautiful was this idea.

He said, "If you're going to teach about the Enneagram, the more you can learn to embody and feel the type from the inside out, the more of that information in your head center that you stored away in the library of the Enneagram studies will start to come alive." I invite you to really practice on trying to feel from the inside out what a Nine is like, what an Eight is like, what a Seven is like. This was in line with one of the central teachings of Gurdjieff, which is that a human being cannot become fully conscious until they are able to feel the heart, soul, gut, thinking center of the person in front of them. He called this external considering, learning to really through a visualization start to feel what it's like to be in the skin of this other person. Of course, the Enneagram is such a perfect tool for that. That started again a journey when I learned about my type. I'm a Four with a Five wing. I thought, oh my god, he's just laid out the entire map home. I should be able to handle this in two weeks.

There should have been a little asterisk at the bottom of one of the pages that said okay, now that you have this information, you will slowly, crawling on your hands and knees, begin to relax the patterns of your type. It's a slow process. There's no fast journeying. Part of your work will be to learn to develop compassion for seeing your patterns take over lightning quick again and again and again and learning to develop kindness for yourself and the ability to observe these patterns without annihilating yourself with judgment. As you know, we're looking at the three centers, the gut center, heart center, head center. As I'm talking today, I just invite you to keep some attention in your body to the best of your ability. Keep your heart center open. The head center is to just be curious. I always tell people this isn't a belief structure that you're supposed to believe in, but really bring your best discernment to whatever I say.

A primary practice, regardless of where you are in your recovery, and I call myself a recovering type Four, is learning to observe myself with compassion. The Gurdjieff work, we talk about this all the time, this ability to objectively notice, oh, there goes the machine of my personality again. How interesting. It's kind of like a wayward child that keeps running out into the street in front of traffic. I call the child back in and hold it with kindness. If there are apologies to be made, then I make them. The other thing that was told to me early on was this. One of my mentors said, "You know, if you haven't apologized this week, Michael, you're just not paying attention." The truth is that is true. There's always a new apology to be made at some point during my day or week. Learning to not mess with myself. Become a kind observer. That has something to do with noticing that whatever state is going on inside me, instead of pushing it away or judging it, I just allow it to be there and sense it. Bring presence to it and see what I discover.

Ironically, this practice of being able to sit with whatever is arising in me with a centered kindness is one of the first lessons you might have in working with somebody who's struggling with addiction. Your ability to rest in stillness and be with whatever pain is coming up for them, confusion coming up for them, reaction coming up for them. Learning how to hold the space and be with their suffering will begin to teach them how to do that, too. It's probably the most fundamental gift you can give them, to be able to witness and be present with their own obscurations, their own suffering. To hold that space without judgment. This has a powerful effect on helping them begin to do that for themselves. If there's one fundamental thing I would have to teach, it would be that. The Zen Theory of Change, I free myself not by trying to be free but by simply noticing how I'm imprisoning myself in the very moment I'm imprisoning myself. This is from *Taming Your Gremlin* from Rick Carson.

This is another idea, I think, that's important for helping people you love who are struggling with whatever the addiction is. When we heal ourselves, we heal our ancestors from wounds that run deep in our family. When we heal our ancestors, we heal the world from wounds that run deep in humanity. I would just add a flavor to this. Don used to talk about this a lot, Don Riso. Also, this was certainly Gurdjieff's words. We develop more presence and healing in our gut, heart, and head center as we clear space for our true nature to arise, but that healing we experience goes in two directions. One is it goes to our ancestors, our mother or father, their grandmother, their mother, father, all the way down of what might be called the essence line. Then it also goes into the future towards those who I will meet. It prepares the future, so to speak.

It's this idea that my healing doesn't just stay with me, but it goes in two directions. In terms of addiction recovery, I think that's a kind of a crown jewel to hold on to, because when people are struggling with addiction, it is so painful to watch. You want to reach in and help them. All that good compassion, you want to put it to use. As my teacher said to me, when you're in the face of other people's suffering, use that pain you feel to amplify your own inner work of developing a sense of a collected atmosphere, and that actually heals people very deeply. I'm going to just check back in and see if human beings are still with me and if any questions are popping up as I go along. Let's see. I don't know if there's any in the chat box, but I'm open for a question. Anybody got something going? If not, I will just continue forward.

Ann: I'll jump in here. You're welcome to raise your hand. The raise hand button is under the Reactions button. You're also welcome to type questions right into the chat and I'll read them out to Michael. If there are no questions, we can also just move right on. [Participant] has a question.

Michael: Yeah. Even better yet just speak to me. I want to have human contact here.

Participant: Hello, Michael. It's a pleasure to be here with you. I truly, truly enjoyed what you've shared so far.

Michael: Thank you.

Participant: My question is, how would you recommend to be with someone that is suffering? Because my experience has been that being with close ones that are in addiction, there is a part of me that wants them to change. It's like when I'm with them, I have an agenda, and it's so difficult to sit in neutrality for the pain of what they're going through. Do you have any suggestions there?

Michael: Yes, absolutely. There's a special training involved which involves the idea of I can't control, cure, or change another human being. One of the training grounds for that is in a group called Al-Anon. Where you're with people who are trying to learn how to understand that if I keep my hands off the person and stop trying to change them, or just in a sense provide a ground of unconditional kindness towards them. That that pierces people's defenses more than anything. But you need to have people reminding you because in the moment, it can feel like oh my god, they're going to die. They're not going to make it. They're suffering so much and oh, it's so painful. It is something to really invest in in terms of that kind of training. How can I begin to relax that part of me that wants to reach in and save them? To also trust that your kindness and your presence has way more impact than you realize. I've worked with so many people who have come into recovery and will say over and over again it was the kindness of people rather than their words and instructions that called me forth. That's certainly true for me. So many people extended kindness and love to me before I was even able to ask for any sort of particular help. I would just say give that a try.

Participant: Perfect. Thank you so much. Thank you.

Michael: You're welcome. Any other questions? Go ahead.

Ann: We have [Participant]. Hi, [Participant].

Participant: I'm so appreciating this opportunity to talk to you. Thank you. You had mentioned when you're in the presence of someone who is suffering from their addiction and how challenging it is to watch that. I appreciate what you said about doing Al-Anon, because it's so easy to get pulled in to wanting to be helpful. But it sounded to me like there was a method that you were suggesting besides Al-Anon in terms of just applying it to your own suffering.

Michael: Yeah. Again, a fundamental, simple idea is that the more I can practice whatever it is that allows me to develop more presence, that affects the people I'm around. It affects the people I love. Again, don't believe me. I think it's more the proof is in the pudding as you begin to notice that people start to shift, and you didn't put a lot of pressure on them to shift. To the extent that you're present and can hold the space and be in a centered place and not get caught up in a fear around them, that presence touches people. It penetrates all the external obscurations of how they're suffering in all the drama. There is a way that it reaches people. The hard part is to trust that. That's where Al-Anon comes in. I'd suggest Al-Anon. I'd also suggest reading particular books on recovery to understand how people get lost because the thing that is true, when people are caught in their addiction pattern, regardless of what it is, they can't see it and you can. It's like how do I reach to their blindness and open the window? You can't do that for them. You can mirror the fact that you see the good in them and that you love them. Try to avoid going into judgment or punishing them, and that's a hard thing to do. It takes a lot of presence to be able to hold that and to rest and trust and realize that that has power.

Participant: Thank you. I also wanted to elaborate. It sounded to me like it was even something not in their presence when you're alone doing your own practice.

Michael: Well, I think there are a lot of different things people do. Certainly, prayer, the Buddhist prayer, may you be happy, may your addiction be healed, may you be free from suffering, and really holding an impression of them in my heart. I believe that reaches people. However you do that, whatever is in correspondence with your own spiritual path.

Participant: I guess one last thing. You talked about how it affects future generations and heals. Can you elaborate on that a little more?

Michael: Well, I can remember my Gurdjieff teacher saying that. I had been separated from a loved one. He said, "If you keep working on yourself." First, he said, "Michael, understand this. Your hands are full with yourself. You really don't have time to try to change somebody or save them. But the more you save yourself, the more you create the light of possibility. People who are struggling with addiction see that. They see if you have developed a deeper sense of health." He said, "Don't believe me. See what happens." I had been separated from somebody and in really difficult circumstances for 14 years, someone who I loved dearly. When I finally met up with them 14 years later, it was amazing. They had been reading all the Buddhist books that I had been reading. They had the same practice that I had. We sat down after 14 years and talked like we knew each other for a thousand, so something got transmitted.



The same way I noticed that is that when I went through all my recovery work and my essence work, I noticed that my mom and dad started getting healthier without even going to therapy. The hearts would just open up and they were unafraid and just start sharing their heart, the truth of their own journey. I thought, well, this isn't fair. I had to go to therapy and do meditation for 15 years, but it reminded me that there's something going on that gets transmitted. I can't say so much about the future except that the more I do inner work, the more it feels like the people who are destined to be with me arrive. They just arrive and I'm always grateful for that.

Participant: Thank you so much.

Michael: You're welcome. Okay. Should I travel on with these slides? Is that our next thing to do?

Ann: Let me see. We do have some other questions. Do you want to take them now, Michael, or do you want to take them in a bit?

Michael: Well, let me take them in a bit. I don't want to lose them, but let me just see how this unfolds, if this helps. Addiction, we say that it's cunning, baffling, and powerful. What that means is that when an addiction takes over that there's a way. It's like you're really possessed by what I would call an addiction personality that has the uncanny capacity to seduce you into feeling like you're doing just fine as your life goes into destruction mode. When people give you a hard time, you say, "No, it's not my addiction. It's probably you. If you'd get healthier, I wouldn't need to drink so much." In a sense, it's like being invaded by an alien entity and it has different ways of putting us to sleep. Certainly, this is beloved Dorothy in the poppy fields. People in addiction all fall prey to the sense of the nine-ish cloud of disassociation where I can't feel my suffering that I'm causing or that I'm experiencing. In my inner sanctum, I'm imagining myself as being much, much healthier than I really am. I might even be imagining myself as a king or a queen.

The other thing that I notice about this whole addiction process is that it's so seductive. We could say one of the seductions, regardless of whether it's food addiction, sex addiction, drug or alcohol addiction, shopping addiction. There's a way internally that your inner critic, addiction identity will send across your thinking center a movie of all the awesome, wonderful times you've ever had and it will delete all the horror. Here you are, trying to recover from your addiction, and the next thing you know, you start experiencing what we call euphoric recall. It's like all of a sudden, this trance occurs, and you forget all the suffering that's happened, all the work you've put in to come to a grounded presence. The substance or the action that sets you up for addiction suddenly

just seduces you in and you feel like I can do this. I can taste this. I can touch this. It's no big deal. Everything's well.

Again, it's almost like having an alien Jedi knight inside of you who says nothing bad can happen. Just go ahead. You're safe. If you've never been addicted to a substance or a behavior, from the outside, it looks like pure madness. But you don't realize that you have this little guy in the head center whispering incantations around how it's not that bad. This can happen. People can get clean, sober, substance behavior sober, and out of the blue, the movie starts playing and they can suddenly throw away 10, 15, 25 years of the recovery work. This is a place I worked for around 15 years, Serenity House, which was a treatment center and also a halfway house for men. There are 31 men there. This is one day in the life of these guys. I want to talk a little bit about this guy, Bill Wilson. Bill Wilson, I believe, is a type Three. He had an experience where he was on his deathbed for the 25th time. He had what I would call as an essence experience where something came through him. He felt this magnanimous spirit of loving kindness touch him. It just blew him away and he didn't drink for the rest of his life. But in a short while, he basically had a transmission, I would call it, of the 12 Steps of Recovery. He wrote them down and they went into the Alcoholics Anonymous' *Big Book*.

He was a type Three on his deathbed and got visited certainly by a team of angelic forces. If you want to get a glimpse of him, there's a documentary called "Bill W." which really talks a lot about this and his journey forward. It wasn't an easy journey. It turns out that he was a sex addict and had to have other men keep him away from all the newcomers when they came in. He went through terrible depression for years and never found a source or a way of getting back to this kind of essence experiences. He said something that I think is beautiful about the type Three. "True ambition is not what we thought it was. True ambition is a profound desire to live usefully and walk humbly under the grace of God." That's certainly the story of recovery for many people. Little known is he had this very good friend, Tom Powers, who started the first center for addiction for drugs, alcohol, shopping, and sex addiction back in 1951, and developed a community that lasted for 50 years.

That said, just look at the symbol from AA. See the triangle, the three legs, and the heart of the Enneagram. Then if you look at the Enneagram symbol itself, what's only missing in this AA symbol is the hexad. The point being is that the principles and the storyline of AA, my belief, is that Bill Wilson drew from the wisdom of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky at that time, and a lot of AA principles mirror Gurdjieff work. Practical goal of inner work, after each ego death event, the new ego that arises is less brittle and more resilient. What will destroy the sixth iteration of a person, the first iteration could not have survived mirror

contemplation of. Eventually, the capacity to let someone be wrong on the internet emerges. This just means you've gone up the levels of health a little bit.

The other thing, just to keep in mind, the question is, how do I help somebody? How do I give my wisdom to them? John Bennett, who is one of Gurdjieff's most profound teachers who evolved Gurdjieff's death, said, "Sometimes I say to myself there's no reason why other people should take as long a time as I've taken. I've made so many mistakes. Surely, I can help them not to make the same mistakes. It's the same as with our children whom we want to save for making all the mistakes that we are now able to see. It does not work out like that. Everyone has to learn for himself or herself from their own experience. There are some things that are useless, and I've known it all along for me to try to convey it to you. Nothing but the bitterness of one's own experience and the joy of one's own experience can convey it." This captures the spirit of the 12-step programs, which is I cannot control, cure, or change another human being, but I can be kind to them.

Then there's this little nugget. "There's no coming to consciousness without pain. People will do anything, no matter how absurd, in order to avoid facing their own soul. One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light but by making the darkness conscious." When we're thinking about helping someone, if we can be with them as they suffer their pain and agony and just create in a sense a holding space of waiting and watching, it is only that suffering that they're experiencing that will wake up their will to feel better and to take action. Part of the journey is to allow people the suffering they're experiencing and helping through kindness. If they're finally ready for help, making suggestions of things they could try and then taking your hands off the steering wheel, not easy to do.

From Riso-Hudson teaching, wisdom teaching about waking up. "When we're able to notice what we are doing now to experience our current state completely and without judgment, the old patterns will begin to fall away." If that isn't the essential practice of everything that we learn here, I don't know what is. Again, just to say if I'm able to do that with the person in front of me who's suffering and be with what they're experiencing and mirror it to them and notice, "Oh my gosh, it must hurt so much. You must feel so much shame." Just creating an atmosphere of loving kindness, that helps them to see themselves, too. Let me just check back in on all of you and see what's popping up as I go along here. I'll jump on here. Any next question that someone might have?

Ann: We've had some questions come in through the chat, Michael, and I can bring them forward. We could also address some of the questions that people have sent in. [Participant] says, "You were talking about holding difficult emotions, but

how exactly do we do that?" He's been hearing this a lot and wondering what it actually means, and how we do hold emotion.

Michael: Well, for myself, the way I work with that is I find the ground of stillness within myself. I really bring attention to my inside world, to calming my own heart down, to realizing that if I can come into some quality of stillness within myself then I can bear with and witness the suffering that someone's experiencing. And not by my own human orientation get caught in reaching in and trying to fix it. That means listening to the suffering, noticing it touches me, and not trying to kill my own emotional reaction, but really creating it to the best of my ability, a neutral space of witnessing. Just being with, just processing, being with, noticing what gets triggered. To the best of my ability, just being kind and just saying I hear you. That's got to hurt horribly. I'm so sorry you're suffering.

The holding has to do with somehow creating, again, this is something that's practiced best when you're not in the heat of the storm when somebody is in agony, but really working on, how do I anchor a sense of collected presence by myself. Then learning how to maintain that when someone's suffering and understanding that you don't have to save them. I think that's the challenging thing. When people are suffering, it's like, oh my god, I must do something. I've got to do something. Often there's nothing to be done except to be there, to witness. If there's a concrete solution like if they say, "I want to go to treatment." Then you help them get there. If they say, "I want to go to AA." You help them get there. But if they say, "I'm not ready to do that," you go, okay. Well, I'm here if you need me. I can walk with you for a while, at least. It's in that spirit. That's what I'm pointing to.

Ann: Thank you, Michael. [Participant] wrote in, "My type Four teen seems to have an addictive personality that helps her cope with melancholy and the strong emotionality and something's missing aspect of her type. How can we help our young people find relief through more positive and healthy means other than substances?"

Michael: Well, it's always the perennial question, is how do I help my kids? Again, for myself, I had a son that went through a terrible bout with addiction. Here I am, an addiction therapist and going, oh my god, I can't change his mind. He's just caught up in the pattern and he's trying substances. What I could do was tell him I'm concerned, and I love him. When he was in a clean and sober state, I could encourage him to step into creative endeavors or to move towards what he cared about. For the most part, what I could do is mirror his beauty and what was really essential to his nature and wait until he reached a point where he said, "I want some help." I always let him know I was there and with him. If he did things that caused harm, I would say objectively without condemning him, "This is what happened today. This is how it affected me and your mom and your

sister, and we're worried for you." It's all from a standpoint of I'm worried and concerned for you. At different points, you just say, okay, all right, whatever. At some point, those kind statements of, "We're worried for you. We love you. We don't know how to help you. Let us know," at some point, his whole life turned around. Something happened. A light went on and he's been clean and sober today for 10 or 11 years and he's an amazing dad.

There's no magic solution as much as asking, "Can I help you? What's going on? It appears to me that when you use, this happens. I'm just concerned for you." There's not much more I could say about that except that when this type Four kid is present and hooked on the drug of choice or whatever the addiction is, it's to keep kindly encouraging them to move in the direction of their creativity. Also, talk about their emotional states like, "What's going on for you?" without trying to fix it. I have a lot of parents I coach who have Four kids. Four kids have big emotions. Part of the work is to realize that's just what happens. I don't have to do anything about it, but I can mirror it. I can say, "God, Tom, that's a big emotion. Tell me more about it." Of course, our inclination might be how do I tamp this down? But something opens up when I simply say tell me more about that. I want to know more about that. That's I guess what I'd say about that.

Ann: That's very helpful. Thank you. [Participant] shares, "I really like the idea of being present. What about consequences handled in a kind but firm and no reactive place especially with children?" We also had some questions about young adults, those kids that are 18, 19, 20, knowing when to set the boundary with our young adults. That fits into this question, too, Michael.

Michael: Yeah. I think that's one of the hardest things to deal with and to know what to do. There's been a story around for years and it's changing around tough love. If someone gets in trouble, I don't rescue them. I don't do anything to support them. I just allow them to face the consequences of what happened. There's a certain part of that that is true and helpful. But sometimes, when people are struggling with addiction, sometimes you have to even do the opposite and just take care of them. Find a safe place. Make sure they have enough food to eat, enough money to live. Basically, it ends up being an experiment. If the behavior of the person who's using is terrorizing your life, at some point, some parents say, "You can't be here anymore unless you get sober. I'm sorry. I love you but this can't happen. I'm getting crazy."

Again, going to Al-Anon, the challenge is how do I take care of myself and nurture myself and not forget to do that? Because the problem with being around somebody, living with somebody who's active, whatever the addiction is, is you start to breathe in their addiction. You get crazy like they are. You start second-guessing your judgment. They get crazy and make you think you're crazy. That's where support comes in. I would just say the first thing is to get support

from people who are experiencing this, and you'll learn some options that you have at your disposal. It's not just one thing. There may be a variety of things that you can try because it's an experiment in a lot of ways. I've seen kids go almost to the cliff of their own death and their parents have just hung in, keep sending them to rehab, making sure they've got enough money to take care of their car and have a job. After the eighth rehab, they get sober, and they've been sober for years now. There's no linear way. I wish I could say more about that but that's just the territory.

Ann: Thank you. Do we have time for a question from [Participant] before we take our break, Michael?

Michael: Yeah.

Ann: Okay. Hi, [Participant]. Let's go over to you.

Participant: Hi there. I'm wondering what your opinion is or your experience is with regard to these intervention practices that some would say promoted disconnect by being sent away. It's an open-ended way of saying what do you think.

Michael: Thank you for that question. Well, it's a tough one. The problem with the intervention system is the structure of it is we have an intervention, and we say, okay, you've got to go for therapy. You've got to go. Otherwise, you can't live here. Actually, we bought a plane ticket for you, and we've got you set up for a place here in Portland, Maine. There's a big foundation house where kids get sent. What my experience is that unless somebody really wants to go there, you're wasting your money. They'll go there to please mom and dad. They'll fake it. The second they leave, they use again. There can be a kind of bullying nature to interventions. The truth of the matter is sometimes it works but it only works with people, with kids, young adults 20 to 35 or whatever who are actually ready, and they say, "Okay. I want to do this." The problem for interventionists is that they actually make money when they refer somebody. There's like a money factor that can make it a little bit less healthy. I'm not saying that happens all the time, but I'm around here in Portland and see people come through. They get sober for three to six months and out the door and they're using again. That's my take on it. Is there anything else that comes up around a question with that?

Participant: I think you've addressed the situation. I have a friend who's recovering, and he would say that what's needed most is connection, not disconnection, so I just wanted to throw that out there.

Michael: Well, what's true, if you go to the right place, a lot of places now are set up as a year-long program, so you develop connection. But when you go back home, if you don't have something set up, your addiction is just waiting for you to be

disconnected and it starts working on you again. That's just the pattern, this happens. The major treatment centers like the Karen House, the Karen Foundation does beautiful work trying to get people to stay there as long as possible, and boom, they go back to New York City and they're using again in a heartbeat. There's got to be a connected system waiting for them.

Participant: Thanks.

Michael: Okay. It looks like we're getting close. I just want to remind you that we're going to do a very short exercise when we come back. If you're exercise-averse, you don't want to miss this exercise because sometimes people have instant enlightenment and then you go, oh my gosh, I'm glad I stayed for this. We're just going to do a short exercise where you pair up with somebody, and then we'll be back and continue on this conversation. This would be a good time to do the instruction for the exercise. You do this in pairs. There may be one group who has three. The exercise is one person at a time to talk about in a monologue what's coming up for you as you hear this conversation about addiction recovery and helping people. Does it touch anything in you? Have you had experiences in your own life that have shaped you or touched you? It's an opportunity just to really talk sincerely about what's coming up for you right now as we're talking about this, always keeping in mind that this is held in the spirit of confidentiality. We're not going to question people later on and dig for more details. It's just listening. Again, this is practicing holding the space for whatever is coming up for people. I am a present, awake, and grounded listener. Ann, did you want to talk about the time situation?

Ann: Yes, I do. Michael, would you tell us, if someone is watching this in a replay, what can they do for this exercise?

Michael: Well, one way to work with this is just to have that kind of conversation on the page where you journal about it and see what's coming up. What's been your experience? What kinds of questions are being generated? Is it touching a painful spot inside me or anger and rebellion like, oh my god, I went through so much suffering? Just try to have an honest inquiry with yourself.

Ann: Great.

Michael: I just want to address a couple of questions here that were sent to me. One is are certain types more prone to getting caught up in addictions than others? The answer is no. It's evenly divided across the spectrum. Do certain types have an orientation towards one kind of addiction? The answer is no. I've been in this field for many moons and all the types get addicted to all different kinds of substances. There's no prototype. Sometimes I've heard a story that Nines are likely to get hooked on heroin or pot. I've seen plenty of Nines who have been

hooked on methamphetamines, the whole variety of addiction. What's often true is when people get caught in addiction, they're often multi-addicted. It's never one substance. It's always a combination. Whatever is there, one works with.

The other question is does certain subtype dominant folks, variant but dominant folks, get addicted? It happens. It doesn't matter what the stack is. Addiction doesn't really care what your stack is. It just loves to invade your psychic space. The other thing I would just say is that as people develop more presence in their recovery and go up the levels of health, the question is can they still get hooked by addiction? I can tell you; I've seen people up at levels one, two and three die of addiction. There's a way when addiction enter yourself or somebody that's at a higher level of awareness. There's that kind of compartmentalization that occurs where they're able to step into a teaching space and really transmit some deep wisdom, walk out the door, and their addiction is just waiting for them. They spend the rest of the day in their addiction and then come back and have some kind of remarkable capacity to compartmentalize and receive presence when they teach. That's not an unusual thing. It happens. It's only to say that you're not immune.

One of the things that we often say jokingly is that while you're at a transformative workshop or at a recovery meeting or whatever it is that really allows you to relax and learn and become more present, outside in the parking lot, your addiction is doing push-ups and waiting for you to come out again. It often is reshaping itself, so you don't notice it when it enters you and takes you over. It's just to be expected. We have a joke in the Gurdjieff work that at the end of a workshop, someone will say, okay, everybody's pretty lit up right now. There's a lot of presence here. I can really feel you. See if you can keep that state of presence to the first stop sign. You're going to notice at the second or third stop sign that your default is back and that's okay. We say in the Gurdjieff work, that's lawful. Just notice it.

When we talk about the emergency medical kit that people should carry with them, when you get a chance to look at this handout I sent. Point 21, my emergency medical kit should include a mentor, either a sponsor, a therapist, a teacher or a coach, someone that keeps her eyes on me. Because one of the things that we notice and I notice is that the healthier people get, the wiser they get. But when they get triggered, their capacity to BS is even better than ever. They just have better BS. They've got all the spiritual wisdom and it just comes through. They are able to perform magic tricks when it would just really be good to say, "I'm triggered, and I need help right now." That's the nature of the ego. It likes to come in and sweep through.



As I've always been instructed, "Make sure you have three men in your life, Michael, who are more experienced and wiser than you so that when your ego does magic tricks and you're under pressure and you come up with a great rationalization for why you're present and your wife isn't that they can help you see the light of day." That's just human. We're all going to go through that. The second factor or thing you should have in your medical kit is a group of spiritually minded people who support you whether that's AA, whether that's Diamond Heart, whether that's Gurdjieff, whether that's the essence work, whether it's your church. The third ingredient is having a daily mindfulness practice to your suiting that includes sensing the body. Sensing the body is like the foundation for helping people awaken and be able to see their patterns when they get triggered, to have more objective awareness internally when their patterns are coming through in some sneaky form.

The fourth hope is that you do have a spiritual or creative path that has deep meaning for you and some kind of daily practice in which you wake your body up through exercise, yoga, running, dance, weightlifting, but you're using your body. It's not an idle component of your daily experience. Your body isn't just a taxicab through your head. It's actually something that needs to be alive, too. In the Gurdjieff work, one thing that we talk a lot about is these bodies are meant to work hard and sweat and labor and be felt. That's a part of the component of waking yourself up, is inhabiting your body. Another component is having a practice of conscious eating of foods that carry the life force, which means they're not dead substances like processed food. The last piece of it is really having an ongoing awareness of what your default Enneagram patterns are when you get triggered. Some kind of plan to wake yourself up when you're in the midst of being triggered and having the basic fear or the secondary fear, or your passions obscuring your capacity to be present in the moment.

Practicing good self-care, that's ultimately when someone comes in recovery or they're on a spiritual path. In some way, we're all on a path of recovery. When you're somebody who has a substance issue and you fall off the path, your addiction comes to life. But if you don't have that problem with the substances or some action that addicts you, you still got the same assignment if you want to grow and mature and really rest in your true nature. Anyway, I can say take what you need and leave the rest. Let's just go forward here. This is from Richard Rohr. "If we do not transform our pain, we will most assuredly transmit it, and the only way out is in." It's this whole conversation around the doorway for a vast amount of my issues in the beginning is going in and healing that, and then being more capable when I come out of that inner chamber. I want to just bring the Enneagram in here for an important piece, which is we start off with a beautiful circle of unity, that sense of when our three centers are working together in harmony. That we have more access to presence and conscious awareness or Spirit or God, whatever that resonates for you.

Then we've got the beautiful Law of Three. I often think of this in my own imagination that the three points of the triangle represent the body, the heart, and the head center. As I come into more conscious awareness of all three centers and there's an inner unity that occurs from time to time then the circle manifests and I'm more present. Then we have this really interesting and strange graphic, which we call the hexad. It really, to me, represents the principle of transformation. That principle is that either you're moving in the direction of your health or you're moving in the opposite direction. This is something Gurdjieff talked a lot about. We talked about the Law of Seven and then we look at the musical scale, which is one of the archetypal graphs we use to represent this Law of Seven. When you start an activity, whatever it might be, I'm going to get sober. I'm going to start doing the work of getting help for my sobriety and I strike a Do. Then I'd follow, Do, Re, Mi, and then I come to an interval between Mi and Fa.

Now, what does that interval represent? Often it represents a person starts into recovery. They're feeling really good. Maybe they've got six months in. They've got their family back. They feel good. People are starting to love them again and trust them. Maybe they've even got a job. They hit the shock point between Mi and Fa where suddenly, mysteriously, they lose interest in what has been inspiring them. Maybe they have an inner conversation that will arise for sure like, "I've done enough. I'm good to go. Life is good. I don't need to keep doing meditation, working with a support group, working with a therapist or sponsor. I'm good to go." They stop doing exactly what brought them to this place of feeling good and they fall back to zero. For people who are first learning about recovery, this happens a lot. I've often noticed that let's say with substances like alcohol and other drugs, sometimes it takes about seven years, roughly five to seven years of people hitting the shock point and disappearing, hitting it, and disappearing, hitting it.

What happens eventually is they go, oh, I know the shock point. I've got to prepare for it. They do the necessary work to notice, okay, I'm going to hit this flat point. I'm going to not stop what I'm doing. I'm going to endure whatever this mystery is. Then I make the beautiful leap of moving to Fa. I go Fa, So, La, Ti and then I come to another shock point. Again, I hit this place where maybe suddenly, whatever I've been doing has no meaning. All of a sudden, it's just like, guys, I don't really feel that good. It's not really that interesting. It's getting boring. It's repetitious or I don't want to have to do any work around stepping into new territory because in recovery, if I'm not stepping into the next growth area, my addiction starts pulling me backwards. That means I've got to have the courage to keep stepping slowly but surely in the unknown territory of new vulnerability and new learning.

I hit the shock point and my inner critic jumps up and sizes my addiction personality and says, "You've done enough. In fact, aren't these people full of bullshit? They don't know what the hell they're talking about. They're messed up." Someone stays around in recovery for a year. When you first come into recovery, of course, you idealize people. Then you realize everybody's messed up in some way or another. We're all here because we're not all here. Whatever the idealized imperfection I had of somebody fades away. Then my inner Jedi dark force says, "Oh yeah, this is good as it gets." This is not that good, or I get bored, or I start getting seduced with I think I can use. I'm okay. I won't fall down the same swamp hole that I have resurrected from, or I switch addictions. I suddenly get attracted to something else. It wakes me up because all addictions, when they start off, feel good, and so I fall again. That's only to say that when a person begins this journey, and this is true for all of us as we do spiritual work. I notice that I can be going along, doing awesome, and suddenly, all of my practices just feel dead and dry. Some voice in me starts complaining.

Usually, I've discovered that I need to go and learn something new and bring in some kind of new information and experience support to get me through the shock point. Otherwise, I can start moving back in the direction of where I came from. These are really important intervals. I've seen people at year five, ten, fifteen, twenty hit these intervals. One other thing that is part of that interval is as you make a leap over them in the recovery world, you begin to unearth deeper suffering. When you hit a shock point, it's often when there's an important necessity to dive deeper into the suffering that brought me into recovery. There's this idea that we're peeling away the onion of self-protection as we evolve in our recovery. When I first came into recovery, as I look back on it, I feel like I had 25 sheaths up in front of my heart to protect me, protect my wounded heart.

Each year, one of them got stripped off and stripped off, so I became more vulnerable. I felt suffering more deeply. I started this journey of what Russ and Don would call excavating the true self. If you have *The Wisdom of the Enneagram* and you go to Chapter 17, they talk about excavating the true self and navigating the strata as you go down deeper and deeper towards true nature. Part of the shock points is suddenly, after all the great work you've done on yourself, you hit a shock point and it's like no man's land. You haven't been there before. You don't know what the hell's going on. Your ego structure is shattering, so you feel like I'm not protected. With the right support around you, you move through it. You have what might be called another dark night of the soul. As my Diamond Heart teacher said, "Michael, there's not just one dark hour of the soul. There are probably going to be 25 or 30." Each time I hit one of these shock points and I'm in that place of what the hell's going on after all these years of working on myself, I'm lost, which always cheers my teacher up. I again know that I step through, and I find the next support I need.

This doesn't end in this lifetime, I don't believe, although I'll find out. I figured I've got at least five more lifetimes to come through here. But this concept is really important for understanding what happens when people go back to the start. It's also just a reminder not to be discouraged because each time somebody has a slip or gets sucked into the power of their addiction, they're gaining really important information and accumulating more and more in their wisdom selves, in their consciousness that will allow them to finally make the leap. It's just one of those necessary things that we all go through. The hexad represents the dynamics of a shock point that must be crossed to continue one's spiritual transformation. Of course, as you navigate your own patterns, you may notice that on the one hand, you're really tired of the patterns, and then they happen again, and they happen again. If you persist with it, one day, they start to loosen their hypnotic capacity. We say we go four steps forward. It feels like, man, I'm finally through that one thing that's been driving me crazy, and then I get thrown back three steps. I go forward four steps, come back three steps. Forward four steps, come back three steps. It's just to know that that's the lawful movement of one's soul as we do our inner work. It reflects what Gurdjieff spoke of that one is either moving in the direction of growth or moving backwards. There's no standing still. Let me just check in and see if there are any questions that have arisen either in group or as I'm talking. I see a hand, [Participant].

Ann: Yeah, I'll bring [Participant] on.

Michael: All right. Go ahead, [Participant].

Participant: Hello, Michael. Thank you so much for all this wisdom. Also, I feel so much of the compassion coming through, so thank you for that, especially for this subject. My question, and I've always toyed with this question. I've put it to myself a number of times. The question is what is the difference between addiction and commitment? Because in the subtler forms of addictions that are everyday addictions, there seems to be this way that we assert ourselves like I've got to have my cup of coffee, or I've got to have that glass of wine in the evening or all those things. They're just everywhere. What is the difference between commitment and addiction?

Michael: Well, the way I work with that, first off, is beginning to notice that within me, we're looking at the triangle and the point Six being the affirming force where I say, "I want to get sober, clean, become conscious and present." Then we look at point Three on the triangle which we call the denying force. It's realizing that there is an equal force inside of me who could care less about any of my spiritual dreams. In the Gurdjieff work, we're always noticing whenever you make a commitment to something, always there's an equal force that says I'm going to go sit on the couch and drink wine and watch Netflix. Part of my work is to notice these two opposing forces. Part of being able to notice them is beginning to

understand, what is the reconciling, that point Nine. What's the reconciling force that I need that allows me to stay conscious and not get swept away?

That's an ongoing practice. I can notice I make small commitments. I'm going to eat well. I'm not going to eat sugar and it feels good. Then all of a sudden, the denying force goes, oh, it's not so bad. You can have a little bit. Don't be so hard on yourself. I start to eat sugar again and it does feel good. Then I notice I'm starting to eat it more and more and more, and now, I've got a habit again. How did this happen for the 19th time? So again, it's just noticing with kindness, oh, there is that inner mechanism, that denying force. It's always working against me, so what can I put in place that helps me remember, or at least more often? For myself, in fact, I just have to start over again. That's one aspect of it. The other is noticing I've got a little kid inside of me that when I move in the direction of what might be more present or bring more presence, this little kid stands up and says, "Hell no, I'm not going to go. You can't make me do that." I begin to notice, oh, there's the little kid. How can I quietly start to intervene on that voice so that I don't get taken out by it so much? Part of it is just being aware of it. Is this resonating at all or making any sense?

Participant: Absolutely, yeah. I'm a type Nine, and so there's always those reconciling forces going on. For me, it's just those daily addictions and those subtle, the ones that just creep up on you that is more in my face.

Michael: Yeah. The other thing I've been taught to do is at the end of the day, I imagine myself as the day started and to walk myself through my day and to notice what I did. Notice whether it was in line with what my wish is and going, oh, ten o'clock, I forgot about my wish. This little habit jumped up and there I was. Okay, that's good to know. Just to notice and go through it and track it, not beat myself up. But the more that you gather an impression of the day, you will start to work in the moment. When at ten o'clock you fall asleep, you actually stay awake, and don't succumb to that particular addiction. It's a practice. Part of the practice is realizing I fall asleep every day. As my teacher says, "When you wake up in the middle of your day, use that time to work on yourself." But you will fall asleep again. It's like a wave. I fall asleep. I come back. I fall asleep. That's lawful. Don't beat yourself up. Don't get that inner critic come in and beat the crap out of yourself. What I always do in the morning is try to remember and say out loud to myself what my intention is. My intention, this is my heartfelt wish, and then I let it go. I do my practice. Then I notice at the end of the day what happened. It's something to work with.

Participant: Thank you.

Michael: You're welcome. Another question floating around there?

Ann: Let's see. We do have some written questions, Michael. You've been hitting some, but let's see. Here's one. [Participant] shared this. "When people think of addiction, they often think of drugs and alcohol. Will you speak about the addiction to such things as food, sex, love, and some suggestions you have for working with clients that present with these addictions?"

Michael: Okay. Well, I've mentioned prime addictions. A big one today also is internet addiction and porn addiction. They all manifest with individuals getting obsessed with a certain stimulation that starts to hook them, starts to change their brainwave patterns, and disconnect them from reality and having a source of real stimulation inspiring them. I've worked with one woman, a beautiful type Seven, who the second she would see an email advertising a clothing sale, she could not stop herself from pulling out her credit card and buying five or six dresses or whatever was there on the spot. She would get them, and she'd go, oh, this doesn't feel that good. Then another email would come, and she would do it again. She would notice when she was driving past Nordstrom, it was like her car just pointed her into the driveway, into the parking lot, and she would go and spend. When she came to me, she had something like \$130,000 worth of credit card debt and couldn't stop herself.

We worked with it individually as a coach and what really helped her the most to get a start on this was to go to a rehab and sit with other people. Have group support, be away from her environment, and then coming back having group support also. Because these triggers get really wired into our neural pathways and it takes time to unplug them. Certainly, whatever I do to keep myself away from those triggers can be helpful. But usually, I've got to have something, an ongoing practice where in the morning, what's great about Zoom today is I can find ongoing daily meetings for Overeaters Anonymous, for Sex Anonymous, for Spenders Anonymous. I can go and I can get a voice of wisdom and support each morning, so I've got that shock to start my day and not go into automatic patterns. That's what I would say in the first level of it. Again, anything people do to start developing practices of sensing the body, all of that kind of thing helps, but I think in the beginning, it helps to know you're not alone.

Ann: Thank you, Michael. Let's go over to [Participant].

Participant: Hi. Thank you so much for all the great information that you're giving us. I have a really good friend whose son is addicted. Her ex-husband was an alcoholic and ended up dying from it basically. She's been surrounded by it her whole life. She's been dealing with her son for 13 years, paying off his debts to drug dealers, etcetera. I've come back into her life, and I want to help her. I'm not trying to fix her. It's clear to me that her relationship with her son isn't healthy. She won't kick him out. She loves him. She's afraid he'll die. She's been surrounded by this

her whole life. But how do we help the caregiver, the main support? I'm just at a standstill on what I can do.

Michael: Okay. This is what comes to me in the moment. Sometimes if someone like your friend were to call me and did some coaching around how to be with this, I mean I'm not the only coach around. There are lots of coaches, but I think coaching can help somebody who has a background in understanding addiction. Then creating in a sense a reasonable reason for how do I start taking care of myself again. Because that's what happens for people when they have somebody in the family who's addicted, is they stop taking care of their own needs. Taking care of their own needs is often the most powerful thing they can do for actually inspiring the person who's using to wake up and pay attention. That would be one possibility.

The other is, again, going to Al-Anon and learning, what is the shift in how I frame this situation that I need to learn so I enter it with a healthier perspective. She's going to need support around the idea of knowing the difference between, what am I actually enabling somebody and making it easier for them to go down the hole of addiction. When is it that I'm taking care of them because I want to keep them alive? That's a healthy wish. Nobody wants our loved ones to die. But there might be some discerning that she could do around how I do this too much and what can I do in my interaction with my loved one that might help them begin to wake up and feel what's going on inside them. That's the general answer that comes up.

Participant: I appreciate it. She went to Al-Anon for years, which has stopped. She's read up and she's educated herself. She knows it's a disease. In some ways, those shock points really resonated with me, because she's hit those shock points and slipped back. But I think that the whole idea of maybe some one-on-one coaching to help her to get out of the enabling, I appreciate that.

Michael: Do you know what her Enneagram type is?

Participant: I'm pretty sure it's a Two. She helps everybody in the neighborhood. Everybody comes to her. I'm going to suggest she call. Are you going to be leaving us your phone number?

Michael: Yeah.

Participant: Okay. Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

Michael: Yeah. Awesome. Thank you.

Ann: I have a couple more questions. Do you want to go on, Michael, or do you want to take more questions?

Michael: I'll take a couple more questions.

Ann: Okay. Wonderful. [Participant] says, "What are the multifactorial life experiences that can cause a turning point for the alcoholic to turn from addictive behavior to positive, life-giving behavior?"

Michael: If I knew that answer, I'd be a millionaire, because it's complicated. My experience is that people feel received and held and cared for, and they're around recovery people. They start picking up the things that other people do that help them to get healthier. I've seen this happen where suddenly, they'll hear a number of people say, "Exercise is what really made a difference for me," so they start exercising. People usually start stopping smoking. One of the big things for everybody who struggles with addiction, or their own transformation is they get reminded that they've got to keep continuing asking for help. You never overuse your need for help and asking for it. As a person gets healthier, they start seeing the various factors that can help them live a better life, but it's not linear necessarily. Everybody gets drawn to the modeling of people ahead of them who are healthy.

Ann: Great. [Participant]'s asking, "Assuming all types can suffer from addiction, as you said, are there different ways that types approach addiction or recovery? Is recovery more successful for any certain types?"

Michael: I would say no. I see all the types recover in one form or another, so no type has the fast lane, or the last lane for death and destruction. Really you can't sort it out by type.

Ann: How about that first part of that question? What have you noticed about the way different types approach their treatment and their process?

Michael: Well, we can count on that in the style of the type. Type Eight comes into recovery and they're like a bull in a china shop. They're just like, get the hell out of my way. I don't know why I'm here with you wimps in this recovery program. I don't need you. In fact, you can all f--- off right now, and yes, I'm in trouble. My heart's broken and I've lost everything. There's that bristly dragon. What we love about the Eights, they just tell you where they're at. If they think you're full of it, they're just like, you are full of it. You shouldn't even be in this position. How'd you get here? The work with the Eights is how do I learn to tolerate their anger and their rage and receive it without rebelling, so that they start to be able to tolerate it. It's based on the type. The type Nine comes in and they have an invisibility cloak around them. You may not even see them.



The Nines can just be there and pretty soon, all you see is the chair and you don't see the body in the chair. Nines, you have to knock on the door and say come on out. We want you here. If you think about how the type goes down the levels, that's how they enter recovery. That's what shows up. Type One, "I'm clear that all of you, I may only be sober two days, but you guys don't know how to work these programs. I don't know who taught you this, but you guys suck. What can I say?" That sense of I know the way and you're doing it wrong. Again, if you understand the type and what they do under stress, what their habit is, that's what tends to present. The type Three arrives and oh my god, in one week, they know the way to recovery. They know it. They can speak like they've been sober for five years. They pick up on the successful ones and they start mimicking their lines.

Then people come up to them after a meeting and say, "How many years have you been sober?" They say, "Well, I've been sober four days." That's what they do. They can become the healthiest one in the room. They know what the standard of the best recovering person is and their BS is unshakable. Unless you know them and then you go, "Okay, you've been sober four days. You might even be Martin Luther King, but how's your life been the last 15 years?" "Oh well, I don't talk about that." We're going to go to whatever it is that protects our heart in the beginning. With time, that kind of mask of the type starts to melt down. I'll go through the others, the last piece here. Do you want to do one more question or take a seven-minute break?

Ann: Whatever you want to do, it's up to you. You're the one that's doing all the talking and sharing. What do you like? What would you like to do, Michael?

Michael: Let's go forward. I just want to reiterate this. As a person relaxes their addiction to personality patterns so the defense structure softens, it always opens us up to undigested delusions that we're living in and harbor in our beloved head center. Undigested suffering that we haven't had the resilience to heal or any contractions and suffering we hold in our body. We open up, we expand then we take a deeper dive. Open up and then take a deeper dive. Now, that said, sometimes people say, is addiction something that people inherit? Does it have a genetic base to it or is it all trauma-based or is it a combination? My experience is that some addiction patterns have deep roots in trauma. Also, there are many people who get really addicted who don't have a deep history of trauma. In which case, I would argue, I don't know if it's true or not, that they have a biochemical predisposition that's wired into their biochemistry. For many people, it's a combination. The bottom line, however, I think, that's important to hold if you can, it can be hard to understand if you haven't suffered with any particular addiction.

In my experience, no one chooses to be addicted. No one chooses to suffer with the consequences of addiction. There is a way that one gets overtaken by this internal distortion energy that comes through and really possesses the vehicle until something breaks through and allows for healing to occur. That can be a tough pill to swallow because when people are caught up in their addiction, they don't tend to behave very generously or kindly or sweetly. It's hard not to get upset with them and say, "What is wrong with this person? They're just awful people." My truth is that as people drop down those levels, so that will hit Five, Six, Seven on down, that they tend to be suffering more and be less aware objectively of how they're coming across. They're blind. People confront them and truly they don't get it. They may feel ashamed that they're getting confronted, and so what do I do when I'm ashamed? I just fight back, right? I don't have a problem. You're the idiot. Leave me alone. But that's only because I'm protecting what I would say is a broken heart.

All of us on one level or another has suffered a broken heart. If you go back to the theory of the initial breakaway from essence, that to me always speaks of a deep connection with my true nature, which breaks my heart. All of us adapt to that, some more skillfully than others, someone who's going through addiction. But again, what is it that heals that hole in my chest? Is it there because of loss of connection with essence? If I grow up in an abusive family then I have a more profound, sicker shell. If I grow up in a healthier family, I still have that initial suffering, but it's not so buried by the shell of personality. So again, just to wrestle with yourself. Does it seem possible that people are really victims of these dynamics? That's certainly been my experience. You don't have to buy my storyline. But I think it can be helpful to even go to a couple of AA meetings and just listen to people talk about what happened to them in the recovery. Because it's almost like as I go down the levels of health into the darker chambers, I actually can become more certain that I'm okay and you're messed up and more blind. I even imagine myself obviously at the higher levels.

Levels five and below, I can't see myself because I'm hurting and protecting myself. I think if it's possible to hold that, because when people are struggling with their addictions, boy, they can be tough to be with. On the one hand, you feel a deep sorrow for them. One of the things that's true about people struggling with addiction is they become really clear about two things. One is they can spot your Achilles' heel and throw a nuclear explosion right into wherever you are caught up in ego or whatever your vulnerability is and unveil you in a second. Working with people in recovery, that's a gift in some ways. As a therapist, you go, wow, you just ignited my core wound. That's amazing. How did you do that? If I can hold it with a light hand, it makes it easier to create space. But the other thing I have noticed is that people who are really struggling with addiction, whatever form it is, part of their survival capacities that they develop is this ability to sense who is authentic and really telling the truth.

Who has an earned sense of humility around how difficult it is to be a conscious human being. When they spot someone who's authentic, there's a way that they begin to listen a little more. It's not from the words one says but it's really about your presence, and whether when you speak, it's coming from a place of compassion, kindness, and humility. Because the truth is we're all crawling on our hands and knees to awakeness. As my teacher says, "You've got your hands full of yourself, Michael. If you just take a look, you'll be shocked once again how much you fall asleep." I was thinking of one guy who really exemplified this, Richard Rohr. He was being interviewed by Oprah. This is about a year and a half ago. She said to him, "Richard, what percentage of the day are you really awake and present?" Of course, Richard Rohr is a type One and he's very humble and very wise. He said, "Well, on a good day, Oprah, I'm awake and present 30% of the day." Oprah's jaw dropped. He said, "Well, wait a second. I used to be 5% awake. I have come a long way; 30% awake in a given day is an awesome day."

There's that kind of humility that comes for all of us, that we realize we're a work in progress. If I haven't apologized this week, I'm just not paying attention. That said, I want to go down these slides a little more and maybe move through some of these a little quicker because I want to take a look at something around the types. Just food for thought. No one can do your work for you. You hear this in the Gurdjieff work all the time. You are responsible for your way forward. You can borrow people's maps, but other people's maps may not be your own. I know that in recovery, people get sober through AA. People get sober through SMART Recovery. People get sober through a Zen Buddhist recovery work. People get sober through counseling, through a church group. Some through some kind of a spiritual yoga practice. There's a lot of different ways. There's not one way. It's really up to a person to explore and find out what that is. Some people started Diamond Heart work. Some people did Gurdjieff work, essence work. There are many ways. There are many paths.

Always, it's that principle of take what you need and leave the rest. Only accept this truth where your own experience and common sense have confirmed. Idiot wisdom will not transform you. What do I mean by idiot wisdom? Gurdjieff used to talk about this a lot. If you just believe without testing what I've taught you, you're an idiot because you will not have any earned inner understanding and wisdom. Don't believe me. It's cheap energy to believe. Begin to explore and test out these ideas and see what works for you then you'll have something to work with. Whenever you have tendency to put any teacher or teaching or role model on a pedestal, you will always be disappointed. As you get closer to them, you'll see that they, like you, every one of them have their own blinding shadows. No one is exempt. The fact is it's really hard to see our deeper shadows. Let's just take a look, take a little journey down here. We've talked a little bit about loss of essence. Again, I love this.

There are a lot of schools that don't use the levels, but I think that's incredibly important. Just one of the conversations maybe to have is that when someone gets clean and sober or develops the capacity not to drop into their addiction and they start to experience higher states of essence, maybe they move up to level three to a one. One of the things that I discovered was there's a part of me that couldn't tolerate feeling so good. It was like I wasn't used to it. There was like, again, a gravitational pull in me to go back to a more familiar, less joyful state of being. This is often true for a lot of people when we start to go up the levels of health and experience the higher levels. We may notice that even something inside us rebels. One of my favorite and most precious experiences I get to have is working with people and navigating the Enneagram, teaching and learning with students, and really being in the presence of folks who are sincere about their growth. And for whatever reason, they choose me up considerably.

For a period of time, I would notice that at the end of a workshop, I was just so delighted and filled with joy that I would walk out of the room, and in three minutes, I would just suddenly get really angry at my beloved wife, Donna, about something that was ridiculous. I was sharing this with my Gurdjieff teacher, and he says, "Well, listen, your ego does not want you to get away. You must prepare for this. Notice at the end of the workshop, you have something to remind you that when you leave the room that there's a rebellion force inside you that wants to kill the joy, that wants to bring you back to this sort of familiar sense of misery and loss." That's certainly been a part of my own journey as a recovering Four. Notice, be conscious that at the end of this workshop, I've got to keep my eyes open for this inner rebellion force that wants to undo and take me out of a sense of joy. Let's see what happens.

The conscious work after I get sober is continuing to work on landing in the moment, relaxing our defenses. My experience has been the more I land in the moment and relax my defense patterns and heal my heart, that essence, states of well-being, wholesome states of experience happen. I don't make them happen. I can't dial up equanimity, but something occurs and relaxes me. For a period of time, I might have access to those higher states, and I say thank you, knowing that this too shall pass. To really not get attached to that state or get identified with it, because then I start to develop a deluded essence state presence. I begin to act like I'm somehow responsible and the owner for these essence states occurring inside my being. I'm not. I'm just a grateful recipient when they arrive. We talked a bit about the shell of personality, which we all have to develop. We're not trying to kill it. In the Gurdjieff work, we say the personality is fertilizer for the soul. You've got to have it. That's what matures an immature essence that we arrive with. That theory seems to work for me.

I want to just do a little conversation about the types and take a look at some of the amazing people in recovery. We're talking first about the type Eight. This is Mark Wahlberg. I think he's actually a type six. Then we've got Johnny Cash who was a heroin addict and came into recovery. Then we have Alec Baldwin who's been sober for many years. Gosh, he just went through one of the most horrendous experiences one could imagine. If you've been watching the news, it's everywhere. The movie "Walk the Line" is really a story of Johnny Cash and what he went through, the highs and lows. Then there's this great movie called "Flight" where Denzel Washington plays an Eight who's an addict and what he comes to at the end of his destructive journey. Which was a little farfetched, but the acting and capturing the horror of addiction was really done well.

Then we have some great type Eight humor where the dragon is saying to the incinerated person, "If I tell you it's a sign of affection then it's a sign of affection. I can't help it if you're flammable." A lot of type Eights go, yeah, that's the story of my recovery, is how do I learn to not be incinerating people. I just wanted to jump back in and make sure, I will send you these slides on the types, but I just want to see if there's a question popping up. I noticed that possibly [Participant] is in the audience, so we'd love to hear from him. I'm sure he's got a bazillion things coming up unless he's left the playing field. But is there a question or something bubbling up as we continue to talk?

Ann: We do have a lot of questions, Michael, in the house. If you want to come forward, just raise your hand. We'd love to bring you forward if you'd like to come forward. In the meantime, I do want to get through some of the questions, so I'll bring them, too, and we'll go from there. This one is [Participant] who was asking if you could speak a bit more about the relationship between shame and addiction.

Michael: Well, for me, shame is at the core of all addiction. When people begin to act in violation of their values, what comes up is horrific shame. When I say horrific shame, because I am not skilled at navigating that until I get healthier, I push it away and go forward with my next addictive acts. Shame is a big one. Working with people, it's really noticing it and really bringing a deep compassion for what lies underneath the surface of their struggle. That deep shame and deep sense that I'm not lovable and I don't deserve to be here. The way I express that is I hate on you, or I attack you or I rationalize my way around it. But if I can really be in contact with that, I can be able to transmit more compassion. It's good to see [Participant] up there. You're up in the corner of my screen and you're looking healthy. Good to see you. Any words of wisdom that you'd like to throw in?

Participant: Michael, thank you very much. I'm a little embarrassed that you landed on me, but very excited, too. We had our monthly coach meeting, so that's why I wasn't here sadly for the first part of this. But I knew you were on tonight and I couldn't

not join in because I love you, what you do for this community, and what you do for addiction which helped me personally through my journey. There's no way I'm going to start trying to usurp your beautiful teaching tonight because you know way more about the connection between addiction and the Enneagram than I do. I know a fair bit about addiction. One thing I'd share with the audience, I think it's tying in with what you're saying. For so many years in the addiction community, people have tried to help addicts cure themselves by saying just stop. Nancy Reagan's famous quote, "Just say no." Well, we're not going to stop doing something if it's what's been making you feel good for 50 years or however long you've tried it and you've been using anything.

You tapped into the thing about behavioral addictions versus the classics, chemicals, drugs and alcohol. There are so many addictions. I sit here very proudly and unashamedly stating I'm recovering from sex addiction. I have struggled with sex addiction for most of my 54 years after being abused as a child. Sex addiction is very real. Every addiction is very real. It doesn't matter what you call it, whether you want to call it compulsive sex drive, hyperactive penis syndrome. It doesn't matter. Some people hate even tying the word sex and addiction in the same sentence. Some people don't like putting the word exercise and addiction in the same sentence. It doesn't matter. If you're using anything to make yourself feel better, look at it. If you want to see if it's addictive, try stopping it for a while and see what emotions come up. That's a pretty big clue as to whether it's compulsive addiction or not. I honor you, Michael. Your words of wisdom, I tuned in because I couldn't resist listening to you, so I had to get back to you and your wisdom but thank you for calling me.

Michael: Well, thank you, and always a pleasure to be with you. I think the gift of having experienced addiction in a number of different ways is just this awareness. It's like another life force is inside of you that decides for you. It takes over what you see, how you respond, and it's powerful. It doesn't really care what you think about it. It just takes you. The image came to me that we all have sort of a car we drive. I drive the type Four car and I imagine I'm in the driving seat steering it, but actually, I'm in the backseat. My addiction and my patterns are driving me around. If I start to develop some capacity to observe, oh, I'm not the driver, it's this personality pattern or it's this addiction, I start to edge forward and maybe enter the driver's seat. But it takes time to actually learn to dismantle whatever that pattern is that's so pervasive that it will take me to my death and tell me you're having a good life. It's just these other people are messed up. It's potent and I appreciate you bringing that up.

Participant: When I coach my groups, when I coach groups of men, I try and draw one of those big, old, yellow American school buses on the whiteboard. I say imagine you're sitting at the back of the bus, 30 feet back, and your inner child aged ten is driving the bus. I say what are you going to feel? Obviously, they mostly say

terrified. I say what could you do to help yourself? Eventually, we try sometimes moving forward and putting a hand on the wheel and loving that beautiful inner child.

Michael: Yeah. Thank you.

Participant: I'm going to let you return to the group but thank you so much.

Michael: Yes. Thank you for sharing very much. Another person with a question?

Ann: Yeah. Michael, here's where we are. We have several written questions, and we have a few hands raised. So where are we? Are we now able to take questions for a while? Do you want to show more slides? What do we still have here?

Michael: Well, let's go with questions. We could go for another three hours. It's just the nature of the beast, but I'd love to hear from [Participant].

Ann: Okay. Let's do it. Let's see. Hi, [Participant].

Michael: I think you need to unmute.

Participant: There we go. Hi. Thank you so much for this. It's just an amazing few hours. I felt compelled to raise my hand as a recovering alcoholic. Just say that when I was active in my addiction, I did not think it was making me feel good. I thought without it, I would die. It was the only thing that was holding me together and if I didn't have it, I'd die. That brings me to two places, the first being denial is not I refuse to see this in terms of alcoholism or any addiction. It is I simply cannot see this. I can't see it. The other piece of it for me is I've always said that my recovery came through grace, but I'm listening to this and I'm listening to it in terms of the Enneagram. I'm thinking my recovery was a connection to essence. My moment when I said I can't do this anymore was a connection to essence. Thank you for giving me that piece.

Michael: Absolutely. Well, it's true for me too. All of this has been around grace and something touching me from another dimension and in the form of loving kindness, care, support when I've been broken. When I started recovery, I thought this was going to be great. It's just going to be this nice, steady, uphill climb, and it was more like [grunting] and one too many. At year five, I lost everything. I was just devastated. In those moments, it's where grace of other people, loving folks arriving, serendipity. One of the things that I love about the Gurdjieff work is they said part of doing this journey and developing capacity to be more present means putting yourself in the atmospheres of other healthy people.

Putting yourself under healthier influences than just yourself, that those influences are necessary for really channeling higher essence and higher loving kindness. What did Gurdjieff say? Doing inner work alone isn't easy. It's impossible, so we need others. That's where AA comes in and in other 12-step groups. I know when I'm at an AA meeting that something comes through of a higher nature than any one single person talking. At a bad meeting, I'm just at a bar and everybody's crazy. You have good meetings, and you have bad meetings. Anyway, thank you for that. It looks like there's another hand, [Participant] or [Participant].

Ann: All right. Let's go to [Participant] and then we'll take a couple of written questions that we have from people that submitted them the week before. All right. [Participant], you've been invited to unmute.

Participant: Hi. I have a brother. I was at a family reunion with him. I walked out of the bathroom and saw him down part of a fifth at the sink. He turned. He knew I saw him. I saw him and I want to connect to that. I have always supported him, but he lives seven hours away from me. I care about him. I see how he's doing. At that moment, I never know what moment is the right moment to ask the loving question. Or say, hey, I saw you do this. Is it to write him an email later? Is it next time you see him, talk to him about it? There seems like there might be a moment that I need to deal, I know it's just to deal with, but, you know.

Michael: One of the gifts that we have that we can contribute to people is objective observations. There are a lot of things you could have done. There's not one right way, but one is to say if he's intoxicated, wait. But if he's sober and able to hear you, just say, "I just saw you down that alcohol. Do I need to be worried about you? Because I care about you. I'm just opening the door. I'm not accusing. I'm not saying what's wrong with you." Whatever time you choose to talk to him, it's always that invitation of, "I'm concerned about you, and I care about you. Do I need to be worried? Do you need my support?" Then leave it up to them without pushing it, because people notice when people care. When the time's right, he'll probably let you know.

Participant: Okay. Thank you.

Michael: Yeah, definitely.

Ann: All right. Thank you. We have a couple of questions and then we'll take some more hands, too. Here is one from [Participant], "How do you integrate the Enneagram into the 12-step model of powerlessness and manageability, surrender, etcetera?"



Michael: Well, to me, it's a really easy blend. After somebody gets sober and we start the inner work of looking at what are my less becoming behaviors that seem to manifest when I'm caught up in personality. I begin to talk about them and do the necessary work of making amends with people I've harmed. The Enneagram simply provides a map for understanding how my habits arise, when they arise. They show the pattern of my reactivity. If I use it well, it all points towards the same doorway, which is allowing myself to be able to become present enough to embody presence and be touched by it. Powerlessness, all I have to do is watch myself for a week and notice how often my patterns take over and I am powerless in that moment. It doesn't mean I'm powerless to do things that help me see them more easily, but our patterns are like independent agents. To be really honest, I notice every day it takes off and I'd go, oh, there I went. Okay. Take a breath. Put my hand on my heart if I hurt somebody and I say I'm sorry. It's all in the same spirit of coming into presence. What is it that I need to do in terms of my type patterns that allow me to relax and become more present and available to the moment? Does that answer some part of the question or is there something I missed?

Ann: It was just a written question.

Michael: Those written questions are tough. I'm telling you. It's a setup.

Ann: All right. Let's go over to [Participant].

Participant: Here we go. Am I there?

Michael: Hey.

Participant: Hi. Hello, Michael. Thank you so much.

Michael: Yes, definitely.

Participant: I guess I'm just putting this in there. I am not sure what your feedback would be. But I know for me, I'm 19 years sober in March. This coming March, I'll be 19 years sober. For me, I came across the Enneagram work the same time I was first getting sober, and they completely blended in terms of when I came into sobriety, me trying to see, we do something called a fourth step where we take a personal inventory of my character defects is what they call it, but my ego patterns, my personality patterns. So many of them, like someone earlier was saying, I couldn't see. Not didn't want to see because I didn't want to see them, but I couldn't see them to begin with. The Enneagram helped me a lot to see that for myself in recovery. I don't recommend that to others because I don't know where people are at, but for myself, that was hugely helpful.

As a person in recovery, it also helped me to learn about other people because when I came in, I didn't know other people weren't like me. I thought they were just like me and just doing such a better job as a Four, the NVPs. I just thought everybody was doing so much better with the same hardware/software I had. So that also helped me in the world with others, and that also goes into making amends. There all kinds of things in the program where the Enneagram was able to help me learn, recognize, realize. It has been helpful in huge ways. There was a question in there and I'm having a hard time coming around to it. It also took me everything to get into AA. It took everyone, begging, threatening, everything everybody did. All of that together got me into AA, but the most powerful thing was a friend of mine, just a really good friend of mine saying, "I know you drunk, and I know you sober, and I can't handle you drunk, but I love you sober." That was it.

Michael: It was genuine and caring and objectively true. That's the doorway of communication. Sometimes, people like yourself are ready from the beginning to look at the Enneagram and use it. I have a beautiful type Five that I've been sponsoring for a number of years. When he learned about the psychic structure of the Five and how he went down to levels and that it wasn't a personal fall of his, it's where he went when he contracted with fear. For him, he went all the way down to levels eight and nine where he had a voice inside of his head talking to him for almost 17 years during his addiction. When he had been sober for about a year, I started working with him. He had his feet on the ground enough and had enough counseling behind him when he learned about the Enneagram. It just blew open his optimism and how to work with his idiosyncratic patterns. He started exercising and meditating. We have conversations around how his pattern is showing up today, which has really helped him in relaxing and be more present. Some people are ready for that.

Other people may need to take a while before they ground and the explosions from the recovery settle and are ready for it because if you present it too soon, it can be overwhelming. Just like if you present too soon that it's trauma. Let's look at your trauma history. A lot of times, people in the very early stages of recovery, they get overwhelmed. I get too much in my head center thinking about stuff, and what I really need is just to stop my use and be with caring people. Start some simple practices that help me ground, and the time will come when I'm more ready. I notice when it's not the time is when I present it and they go, "Oh, yeah, that really represents me." Then they never talk about it for another two years. Okay. You're not ready. I'm sure people have tried to get people to be interested in the Enneagram. How does that work? Well, usually it doesn't work when people aren't ready. They say, "Oh, thank you for sharing, but I'll talk to you later." There's a hidden mystery around why some people are ready, but like I say, I've got two or three guys that it really helped them experience a kind of compassion.

I had one Four who was down at levels five and six and just hating himself. We just talked about the patterns of the Four and what happens when you go down the levels. How there's this sense of I'm so awful but it's a part of the pattern, but who you are is this beautiful man. As he read about and saw the path, he's like, oh my god, there's hope for me here. Somebody knows this territory. The right time and the right place is very potent. Thank you. Any other question popping up?

Ann: Yeah, lots of questions popping up, Michael. We've got a lot. I'll share this one. This is a share and a question from [Participant]. "My husband is a high functioning alcoholic and does not want to change. He has not hit bottom. I have gone to Al-Anon and I learned to stop trying to change him. However, I cannot detach and show compassion. The most I can do is leave when he is in a state. But I feel like I am suffering because I can't detach, and I can't show compassion to someone who doesn't want to change. Is there something you'd recommend?"

Michael: That's such a challenging a situation. I think first off, it's really not to beat yourself up for not being able to experience compassion. Just know that's my state of experience. I just hate what's happening and I can't detach from it and that's just a fact. There's nothing wrong with me. I can work on it and try not to dump it on my partner, but mistakes will be made. Sometimes it raises the question of is this addiction too toxic for my life? Is it time for me to consider leaving the relationship and drawing a boundary which says unless you get clean and sober, I can't be with you? That's also a fair and legitimate choice because each of us has a right to live in an environment where we're inspired and seen and loved. That's a tough juncture to come to, but for some people, that's the truth, is I've got to go.

The odd thing is sometimes when a person finally makes that decision and goes, the partner wakes up. It's almost like I can drop into a Nine mode when I'm in my addiction and imagine that everything's good even though my partner is saying, "This is killing me." In my fantasy world, all is well in here. When the partner finally says, "I cannot bear this. It's not good for me anymore." They leave, it's like they wake up and something comes to life and that's when they get sober. I've heard so many people say, "I didn't get sober until my partner left. I thought, finally, I can drink with no pressure from anybody. In the course of three weeks, I'm going, oh my god, I'm in trouble. I have a problem." Those are tough things to navigate. Again, I'd invite somebody to have a coach or a counselor to help work with that because it can feel like I'm leaving this person to die. But in fact, it may be the one thing that wakes them up. It's a tough one.

- Ann: Thank you. [Participant], this is another [Participant], "I have a family member who has long struggled with alcoholism, eating disorders, borderline personality, which results in ongoing manipulative behaviors. I can see how the Enneagram would be so powerful for her. She identifies herself as Seven. However, I worry about how she has often used therapy and tools for self-learning as more information to manipulate, play victim, blame others, etcetera. How would you introduce the Enneagram to someone with these struggles? Or would you?"
- Michael: That's like the premier difficult circumstance. I would tie them to the floor and not give them any food for two months and see if they have a spiritual awakening. Just kidding, of course. Again, I wouldn't introduce the Enneagram to somebody in that difficult situation. I might say, hey, there's this thing here. But when I'm struggling like that, I don't want somebody to come along and say I've got a solution for your crazy behavior. I already feel bad about it. But if I can offer it in a way that isn't about, I want to fix you because you're driving me crazy then there may be a possibility. Borderline is a tough one. When you've got borderline personality going on, it's really hard to see yourself. It's one of the most difficult psychological patterns to break through and it's very challenging. In some ways, I could just say I don't know. I don't really know. I've worked with folks who were borderline, and it exhausted me.
- Ann: Thank you, Michael. We have one more question here from [Participant]. "I've seen work that matches the 12 steps with the points on the Enneagram suggesting that for that Enneagram style, that particular step is the most difficult to make. I'm wondering if this has been your experience." Is that clear?
- Michael: Yeah, it is clear. It hasn't been my experience. I think that the first step where I admit that I am powerless is huge for everyone. If I pass through that gate, the next one is doing the fourth step where I look at my history and do an inventory, bear with and notice my suffering and talk about it. That sends a lot of people out the window. If I pass through that then making amends is huge. It's not type-specific. In my experience, each person, regardless of their type, will struggle with those steps. That's just been my experience.
- Ann: Wonderful. [Participant] is asking, "I had a spiritual teacher once say that it is the heart and mind being incongruent that is at the root of addiction. Do you have any thoughts? Does that resonate with you?"
- Michael: Well, certainly, I'm going to be disconnected from my heart. My head center is going to be obscured with all sorts of distortions. My body will be tight and asleep. I think all three centers fall asleep. The work is to progressively open all of them up to being conscious. I would just say all three centers. I wouldn't just say the heart and the head. It's just my opinion.

Ann: Thank you. Well, this is really it unless anyone has any more questions. The chat is open. You can raise your hand. I also want to say, Michael, that many people have asked for resources. Whether you have a list of resources on a website or whether you want to give us a few now to take down or you want to email them to me, whatever would be easiest for you.

Michael: Yeah. What I'll do is my slides, which are not particularly consequential, but from type Eight all the way to Seven. I've got some books and some movies. I will just send you a PDF of that and then people can use that as a resource. They can email me and ask questions, too, if they are inclined towards that.

Ann: Yes. We've had people ask if you're seeing clients, if you're taking clients. We'll post that and how to get in touch with Michael. Anyone else has any final words to share, or questions? Otherwise, we'll go over to your final words and questions. Thank you for this wonderful gift of time with you today.

Michael: Thank you. I don't see any hands popping up. Final words, I think that you could never underestimate the possibility of someone getting clean and sober. I have worked with so many people who had both legs and one arm in the grave and I'm thinking they're a goner. They resurrect. They come back. They get sober. They live awesome lives. That happens more often, than not. There's a lot of hope and optimism. Oftentimes, when people are on the verge of a breakthrough, it looks like they're closest to death that they could ever get. It just seems to be the nature of recovery. My body hangs over the valley of death for a while and then something wakes up. Again, I think your patience, loving kindness, taking care of your boundaries, learning Al-Anon stuff is one of the keys. There's a lot of hope. More people get sober than we realize. They get sober enough. They go and they live a good life. That's really what I would say as my parting words.

Ann: Wonderful. Thank you so much, Michael.

Michael: Thank you.

Ann: If everyone wants to open their mics, we can just say goodbye and thank Michael for his time today. Many blessings to you, Michael.

Michael: Thank you so much and very best to all of you, too. Much love. All right. Bye now.

Participants: Thank you.

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