

FOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT MY ADDICTION*

A COST/BENEFIT EXERCISE¹

<p style="text-align: center;">What do I enjoy about my addiction? What does it do for me? (be specific)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">What do I think I will like about giving up my addiction? What good things might happen when I stop my addiction?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">What do I hate about my addiction? What bad things does it do to me and to others? (give specific examples)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">What do I think I won't like about giving up my addiction? What am I going to hate, dread or dislike about living without my addiction?</p>

*Alcohol *Drugs *Gambling *Food *Sex * _____

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Instructions for
FOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT MY ADDICTION*
A COST/BENEFIT EXERCISE

Jonathan von Breton, LCMHC, LCDP
Professional Advisor, SMART Recovery®

- * Alcohol
- * Drugs
- * Gambling
- * Sex
- * Food
- * _____

These 4 questions can provide you with a lot of useful information with which to grow out of your addiction(s). The more honest and complete your answers, the more this exercise will help you.

1. What do I enjoy about my addiction, what does it do for me (be specific)?

List as many things as you can that you liked about whatever you are/were addicting yourself to.

- a. Where possible, find alternative ways of achieving the same goals.
- b. Recognize positive thinking about the addiction as a potential relapse warning sign.
- c. Realize that there are some things you liked about the addiction you will have to learn to live without.
- d. List what you enjoy about your addiction so you can ask yourself if it is really worth the price.
- e. Realize that you aren't stupid; you did get something from your addiction. It just may not be working on your behalf anymore.

2. What do I hate about my addiction, what bad things does it do to me and to others (give specific examples)?

List as many of the bad, undesirable results of your addiction as you can. Here it is extremely important that you use specific examples. Specific examples have much greater emotional impact and motivational force!

- a. Ask yourself honestly "If my addiction was a used car, would I pay this much for it? If you wouldn't pay this much for it, why not?"
- b. Review this list often, especially if you are having a lot of positive, happy thoughts about all the great things your addiction did for you and how much fun you had in pursuing it.

3. What do I think I will like about giving up my addiction?

List what good things you think/fantasize will happen when you stop your addiction.

- a. This provides you with a list of goals to achieve and things to look forward to as a result of your new addiction free lifestyle.
- b. This list also helps you to reality test your expectations. If they are unrealistic, they can contribute to relapse based on disappointment, depression, or self-pity

4. What do I think I won't like about giving up my addiction?

List what you think you are going to hate, dread or merely dislike about living without your addiction.

- a. This list tells you what kinds of new coping skills, behaviors and lifestyle changes you need to develop in order to stay addiction free.
- b. It also serves as another relapse warning list. If all you think about is how much life sucks now that you are not doing your addiction, you are engaging in a relapse thought pattern that is just as dangerous as only focusing on what you liked about your addiction.

This is not a do once and forget about it exercise. It is an ongoing project. Most people simply can't remember all of the positive and negative aspects of addiction and recovery at any one time. Furthermore, seeing all the negative consequences of addiction listed in one place is very powerful. On the positive side, most people do not absolutely know for certain what they will like or will not like about living free of their addictions until they have done so for some time. I know of people who continued to add items to all four questions for a full 6 months.