

The Weekly Skillet

Serving Up New Choices For Your Life!

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The Main Course



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Fear and Control: Creators of Addiction

When we try to live life without Emotional Self-Authority and Emotional Self-control, we live in a perpetual state of "Fight or Flight." We feel "out of control" of our own lives and this results in a "State of Fear." Fear causes very predictable emotions and behaviors.

Fear drives us to try to control people, places, and things around us. The higher our fear level, the greater our need to control everything around us.

Controlling other people results in hurt. We try to get people to do things or stop doing things, and we end up feeling hurt.

We cover up our hurt with blame.

Eventually we take our hurt and we hurt someone else. Now we feel guilty.

We cover up our guilt with anger. We express anger in one or more ways:

- Hostility - We get angry AT others.
- Depression - We get angry AT ourselves.
- Resentment - We keep the anger inside and become overly helpful or non-caring.

As we accumulate guilt, our anger increases. Our life doesn't seem to be going very well and we begin to believe that there is something wrong with us. We begin to believe that we, as a person, are wrong. This is shame.

Shame is a deep belief that we are damaged in some way, as a person.

We cover up our shame with apathy. Apathy is numbness-- a feeling of not caring. Sometimes boredom is an indication of apathy.

To measure our fear we must look at its quiet devastation:

- How controlling are we?
- How controlled are we by others?
- How defensive are we?
- How often do others push our buttons?
- How focused are we on what we don't want in our lives?

As fear increases, we feel more and more "out of control" of ourselves, and this drives us to control people and things outside of ourselves, even more.

At some point, control of people, places, and things does not seem to work as well as it used to. **In other words, control does not cover up our fear. We become excessive, compulsive, and addictive in our attempts to control.**

This need to control eventually attaches to a substance, process or a behavior.

Substance addictions involve chemicals, which lead to a physical dependence. Drugs, alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, sugar, and prescription medications are the most commonly known.

Behavioral addictions involve an "emotional dependence." These refer to an activity, interaction, or emotional pattern that a person gets "hooked on." The compulsive use of control, manipulation, anger, worry, sex, work, TV, relationships, or the computer are examples of process or behavioral addictions.

(From Passage to Adulthood)

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