

Recover Recovery: Reframing Addiction Treatment & Recovery

By: Lisa Arrington

Introduction

My name is Lisa. Like many people, I have been directly affected by the opioid epidemic. I have lost loved ones and friends. My marriage was a casualty of the addiction recovery system. I, myself, have even struggled with high-functioning addiction for two decades of my life.

For years, I saw a need for reform in how we view and support addiction, as well as a dire need to reframe the philosophy found in many treatment options. The recovery journey catered to either:

1. Low-income addicts, through state-funded rehab facilities and overrun mental health resources that did not incorporate family and other key factors into the process, with a behavioral approach that barely scratched the surface, or
2. The upper-class addict, through programs that cost thousands of dollars with insurance and often failed to provide actual medical care.

There is no in-between. On both sides, Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) was not being implemented correctly. Medications like Suboxone or Zubsolv were being distributed without the additional requirement of counseling or group sessions being fulfilled. The medicine was prescribed and filled like a medicine would be for treating an acute issue like a headache, basically just thrown at the problem and nothing more.

What finally motivated me to act was noticing a shared pattern among many of the beautiful souls we have lost to overdoses. These people were not junkie addicts who were horrible, misled people. They were uniquely complex, creative, deep-feeling individuals who had endured soul-crushing pain and suffering from years of attempting to live up to others' expectations and operating from a place of deep-seeded trauma, irrational beliefs, broken cycles, and from a place of fear rather than love.

Many times, the person who passed away was in the recovery stage of their addiction, but succumbed to the drug during a relapse. The fact that people who had started their journey to recovery were still dying at an alarming rate signaled an urgent problem.

Realizing a Spiritual Need

The number of opioid-related deaths is rapidly increasing, and existing recovery methods are failing to keep up with this surge. People are continuing to die even when in recovery.

Why were so many intelligent, capable people dying from a mere relapse? The answer is much greater than the fact that the drugs on the street are increasingly stronger as time

goes on, so a person who no longer had a tolerance is at greater risk of overdosing when they go back to using after a period of abstinence.

The issue wasn't just with the treatment providers or society's stigma on addiction. The community — people like you and me — were failing to create an environment of support sufficient for their survival. We were co-existing with people who were not only struggling, but were in a life-or-death battle of the spirit. Something had to change. Additionally, recovery requires a comprehensive approach in order to be effective. Simply addressing the behavioral side alone will not yield results, because addiction is merely the *symptom* of a problem. Not the problem itself.

I realized that the people who were dying usually had another thing in common. In addition to the endless, grinding pain chipping away at their spirit over time, they were struggling more than the typical addict because these individuals were capable of deep, authentic emotion. When someone is able to live life at this level, it is a blessing and a curse. They feel the bliss of the highs, but the lows can be impossible to fully get out from under, especially when the person hasn't yet shed their old perspective of life "happening *to* them" versus "happening *for* them."

There was evidence of a deeper, spiritual component that was being completely overlooked by drug counselors, judicial recovery courts, treatment centers, and the like. Not only were these people in the recovery stage, they also exhibited evidence of yearning to rediscover their inner self and to nourish their soul.

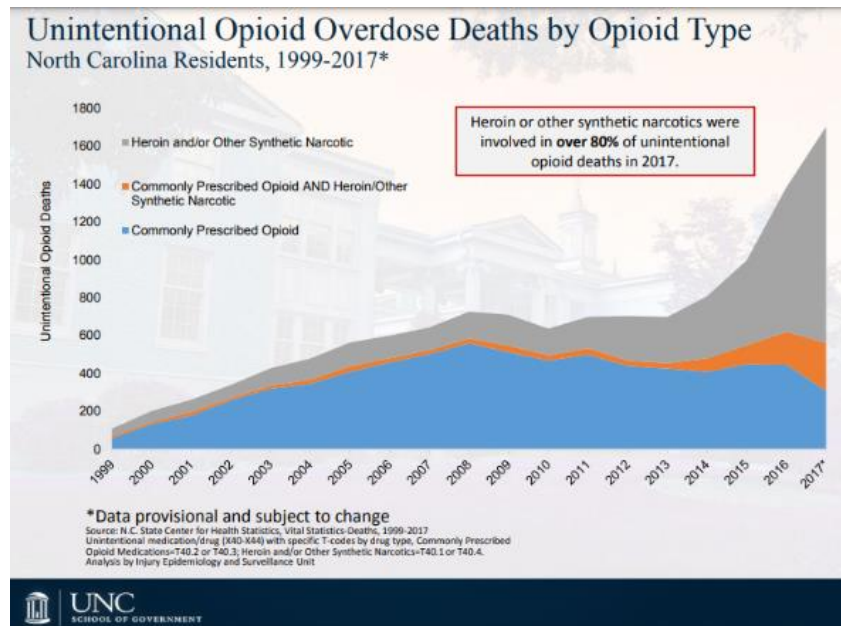
For instance:

- In one case, the person had asked multiple times for him and his family to attend Sunday church service. He was reading more about God and developing a spiritual mindfulness.
- In another, the person had embarked on a spiritual awakening and was beginning to explore spiritual alchemy (i.e., transmuting things that no longer served her into purposeful, positive energy), the power of co-creation and manifestation, etc.

It is no coincidence that there is a collective enlightenment occurring right now. People like you and I are being called to activate our purpose and lift up those who live side-by-side with us in so much pain.

The Opioid Crisis: A Rapid Rise of Deaths Causing the Mass Exodus of Our Loved Ones

Since 2015, the number of overdose deaths from heroin/other synthetic opioids has skyrocketed. Just in the state of North Carolina, more than six people die from an overdose every day.



Source: [Opioid Data for Local Governments in North Carolina](#), UNC School of Government

To put it in perspective, the number of deaths from a *global* pandemic that caught the attention of billions of people worldwide is not even a full 3x greater than those who have died from a drug overdose. The 100,000 statistic does not include people who passed away due to a cause directly related to the struggle of addiction.

- **385,000** people died from COVID (2020, USA)
- **100,000+** people died from overdoses (2021, USA).

The country shut down over 385K deaths in one year. What do we do about 100K+ deaths? We don't see the same sense of urgency or call to action. This is shameful, seeing as how the urgency of addressing the opioid epidemic has been expressed to the American people as early as 4 to 10 years ago.

We continue pushing the same flawed systems and beliefs. While maybe a handful of our brothers and sisters in recovery can claim they've recovered, our current collective approach isn't putting a dent in the daily number of deaths.

Public and private addiction resources have struggled to keep up with the increasing mortality rate. Reframing recovery may be the key to scaling treatment options in an effective way.

People are continuing to die from heroin and drug overdoses. It is clear that life, God, the universe (or however you choose to word it) is trying to get our attention and that we are being called to do something about it. It is also not a coincidence that many people are undergoing a spiritual awakening at the same time we're seeing a rising number of overdose deaths. **It is a call to action.**

Every day, it seems that someone we know has lost a friend, family member, or distant acquaintance. The frequency of people dying from overdoses is increasing. The answer is not as simple as the flow of drugs across the border or the limiting of prescription opioids to the public. It is a direct call to each of us, individually, to step up and make the necessary changes.

Addiction is a journey of spirituality, inner healing, and the soul.

People are dying when their spirit is broken. Every single time. These deaths are not occurring when the person is in decent spirits. It's always during a dark time where, even if they have taken steps to begin their recovery journey, their soul has not been made whole and their will to live subsequently is no match for the extreme drugs on the street today.

Even if the issue of affordable access and the variety of treatment options available was addressed, we would still see a regular frequency of fatal overdoses. This is because we are not addressing recovery at *every* level: Mind (Emotional and Mental), Body (MAT and Behavioral), and Spirit (Higher Power). We also must adjust the way society views these issues (i.e. the stigma), the options available (i.e. for high functioning addicts, not just the stereotypical junkie), and the fundamental perceptions we each view life with.

The desperate need to nourish the soul: Throwing medicine at a problem does not address the root cause and support groups only work if the support network is comprehensive. You have to also address your inner self's needs in order to survive a relapse.

Encouraging the *right* message of self-love: For those who are familiar with addiction recovery, you've probably heard the saying: "Relapse is part of recovery." Recovery requires a comprehensive lifestyle change. It doesn't just take practice. It requires a fundamental shift in the person's perception of themselves and the world around them. This level of healing does not happen overnight and so oftentimes relapses occur in the meantime of reaching their recovery goal. These relapses are extremely dangerous, especially nowadays.

Commendable programs like [SMART Recovery](#) do a spectacular job transitioning people's view from a self-centric perspective to one that is mindful of their irrational beliefs, and teaches them to be aware of how their skewed perceptions ultimately cause them to exhibit addict behavior. This is only half the battle, though. The other half requires a greater reach. One that calls on both addicts and the communities that affect them.

To do our lost brothers and sisters justice, we must come together to reform addiction treatment and promote the inclusion of a spiritual component within recovery. We are being called to collectively shift our mindset away from a fear-based mentality that drives thoughts like, "why is this happening to me," and towards perceptions like, "what inside me needs to be healed, released, or worked on."

While people like you and I may not be able to singlehandedly stop the flow of poorly made, incredibly dangerous fentanyl into the country, we *can* make an impact at other levels. We can begin to shift how our communities see addiction. We can lead by example and show the importance of nurturing our non-physical self (mental, emotional, and spiritual). We can urge non-profit organizations, lawmakers, and rehab facilities to integrate more education of deeper, greater things like intuition and empathy into the treatment methodology. We can start the shift away from focusing on what's situational/topical/material and to what's meaningful/consequential/purposeful.

What is the problem?

The existing approach to treatment is not enough to combat the spike in deaths. It's time to address reframe addiction recovery to make a difference. **People should not be dying while actively seeking help.** The current system is failing them.

Many people reach the recovery phase, but ultimately end up dying from a relapse. We're seeing people in recovery abstain from drugs for a period of time, where their tolerance then lowers and when they eventually relapse and use again, they are overwhelmed by the drug's effects and die. **A broken spirit or mental/emotional pain increases the likelihood of succumbing to these effects**, resulting in an overdose (OD) or death.

When a person is in the recovery process, their behavior may signal healthier practices and on the surface it may look like they're putting their life together on the outside, but on the inside they're still plagued with pain, struggle, and misperception. So long as they have a weak inner foundation, a lost sense of Self, and are devoid of spiritual fulfillment, the chance of achieving a full recovery is slim and the risk of death remains an active threat.

Additionally, the opioids on the street are rapidly increasing in strength. They're even being designed with different analogs and compositions to make things like Fentanyl Narcan-resistant. Meaning that if a person overdoses and is in need of life-saving medical attention, the Narcan medication EMS would administer to stop an opioid's effects is rendered useless. Now more than ever, it's **extremely dangerous** for addicts in recovery.

Recovery does not simply mean being sober from drugs. It means a complete life change that requires alteration of every component of one's life. That's a tall order and we should be giving our friends, family, coworkers, brothers, sisters, and fellow humans the best possible path for filling it.

The current recovery methodology is not set up for success. It teaches addicts to rely on external factors for recovery and fails to encourage the transformation of one's perception that's vital for a complete, comprehensive recovery of mind, body and spirit.

There are great resources and programs available across the country. However, most of them only look at one facet of recovery: the physical, material part. In order for these programs to treat and provide services for the high number of people that need help, the treatment methodology isn't able to dive deep into the multitude of layers in addiction. It's like public school, where some children may learn at a faster pace and be ready for higher levels, but the class has to stick to a generalized curriculum in order to provide education for so the volume and diversity of its students.

If someone has tried to change their life and break the cycle of addiction, but continues to relapse time and time again, their treatment plan is failing to nurture all areas of that person.

An addict may perform the steps of recovery, but unless their heart is healed and in a purposeful effort to reignite their self-love, the job is not fully done. A heart can only be healed through emotional, mental, and spiritual means. Unlike the physical aspect of life, in which many things are "one and done" like putting a bandaid on a cut, the cut heals, and you're good to go, addiction recovery is never a "one and done" process.

Addiction is interdimensional. It's not only physical. It's affected by emotions, mentality, psyche and perspective, behavior, one's moral and belief system, financial status, cultural background, family life, identity, socioeconomics, demographics, social factors, upbringing, childhood, religious beliefs... Many of the things I just named are material or physical. Although we may not be able to physically see, feel or touch them, the non-physical aspects of addiction are equally, if not of greater importance in recovery.

An Undeniable Pattern in Overdose Deaths

Addicts live each day in constant pain that eats away at their soul yet are expected to pick up the pieces and overcome addiction, when they can hardly function as a normal adult in life as is.

Many of the people who have died to drug overdoses were in recovery and shared similar traits:

- Void of **faith**. Whether faith in the Christian God, Muslim Allah, the Universe, or Flying Spaghetti Monster, their faith was shattered. They lacked faith in a divine order and did not recognize the unity of Love and God.
- **Lost** their Self, far away from who they once were and forgot the parts of them that brought joy.
- On the precipice of recognizing the role of **spiritual health** in relation to self-love.
- Their **self-love** withered away and their ability to forgive themselves and others was gone.
- Their spirit is **broken**. Their will worn down from years of living with an immense inner pain. Like many who live with chronic physical pain, their zest for life eroded. The ability to think without letting their negative thoughts block them disintegrated.

Many of those we have lost started along the path to recovery but struggled to go beyond just enacting the right behaviors and actually integrating the change into their lives. After years of spiritual neglect from turning to the drug to substitute true fulfillment for their soul, they were paralyzed by the deep-seeded pain, ongoing struggle, and years of negative self-talk. Their soul was so beaten down, they didn't stand a chance against the drug.

How do we fix it?

Reframing Addiction Recovery

We can aim to change the way addiction is handled by bringing the power back to the individual and reframing recovery to one where every step that's taught, every lesson instilled is one of self-love, faith, and freedom versus restriction or limitation.

By shifting the perception of spirituality into a message of self-love and connecting the "Higher Power" to the inner self, we are returning power to the individual and increasing their self-worth, giving them the internal tools needed to navigate recovery.

Treating the Problem at the Source

Addiction is being treated like a run-of-the-mill health problem, like back pain where doctors prescribe medication, encourage physical therapy (i.e. stretches), behavioral changes like posture or a chair pad with lumbar support... but what does this do for the actual source of the pain? Nothing.

Someone who implements these measures will get relief from their pain, but the pain will either breakthrough when their stress level rises or they suffer an injury, or either way it will eventually return over time because the root of the issue was never resolved.

Restore Self-love

Spiritual health is what fuels the feeling of connection. Being connected to oneself, friends and family, society, and the world around us is vital for sparking an inner motivation and desire to push forward in life. It is a necessary ingredient for restoring a sense of self-love and faith.

A sense of connection counteracts:

- Loss of sense of Self
- Broken spirit
- Feeling lost or out of place
- Notions of shame, guilt, unworthiness, and fear

Instilling Faith

The difference between the people we've lost to overdose deaths and the people who are still here on this earth today is FAITH. Faith in themselves, faith in something greater than them, and faith in the world around them. Faith itself is a manifestation tool. So, you see, we do not have to teach religious faith or teach things like manifestation in the religious sense. Regardless of religious belief, things like faith, empathy, telepathy, intuition, manifestation and co-creation are essential for someone to understand.

The best chance for success is to awaken their spiritual self. This prepares them for the bumps in the road and offer stability when times get tough along the way. Spiritual exploration provokes an understanding of greater things in the world and how someone fits into it. It brings them closer to their actual self, which is authentic and comforting. When something is authentic, it just feels like "home". There is no questioning it, no doubt, no feeding one's ego, and no need to escape it or get high.

Knowing the spiritual and non-physical side of recovery can help an addict to navigate their inner self and directly address areas they didn't even know were feeding their

addiction. It gives them the tools they need to self-soothe, to cope, and to make sense of their world on their own. As the brain is rewiring itself in recovery, their psyche and perception can also be rewired to view life from a perspective of limitless possibilities, identifying cycles, releasing old patterns, removing self-imposed expectations, illuminating illusions, and living from a place of love instead of fear. In this way, an addict becomes empowered to conquer whatever it is that's pulling at their soul, dimming their light or weighing on their hearts and causing them to use.

What will this mindset emphasize?

This mindset of weeding through the entanglements of signs, symptoms, and emotions to treat addiction at its source, plus instilling concepts of self-love, faith, and connection will bring about:

- A foundational unity between oneself, Higher Self, Love and Higher Power.
- The connection of everything in life, including oneself and their experiences, actions, thoughts, behaviors.
- An acceptance that everything happens in one's own time. Everything has value along one's path, even the things we perceive as "bad" or "negative" at the time.

The reason these core concepts are so important is because it's the foundation for shifting one's mindset away from the negative and towards the positive. It's the fuel that enables a person to visualize a happy, substance-free life.

A shift away from the Negative

- Viewing anger, anxiety, sadness, etc. as a call to action for uncovering the source, false belief, or point of healing that's needed, rather than something to run away from or cover up by altering one's mind
- Identifying and removing expectations, limiting beliefs and things that no longer serve oneself
- Removing the habit of comparing oneself to others

A shift towards the Positive

- Giving oneself permission to forgive themselves and others
- Harmony among mind, body, and soul
- Alignment of the inner self's desires and life purpose
- A perception of abundance, rather than lack
- Living from a place of love, rather than allowing fear to control actions and decisions
- Nurturing the inner child and the role childhood plays

- Understanding that everyone experiences struggle and has feelings of doubt to overcome

- Fueling a desire to explore the why behind what drives us

It's Time to Recover Recovery

The way we frame things matters. Like talking about a "Higher Power" without God is darkness.

A mindset of "if I could just get more, I'd be OK" can be a misguided effort to satisfy a spiritual yearning thru physical means. But it's also a matter of recognizing that we are idolizing substances/money/whatever we think we need more of.

We are expecting external, material things to fill our hearts. **Material things can't ever satisfy an inner hunger.**

When the foundation is built with bricks that, sure, they can suffice to build the structure, but if the cement that holds them together (i.e. the smaller details in the way we frame things) doesn't dry appropriately, there will be cracks for insects, water, mold, etc. to permeate and destabilize the foundation over time.

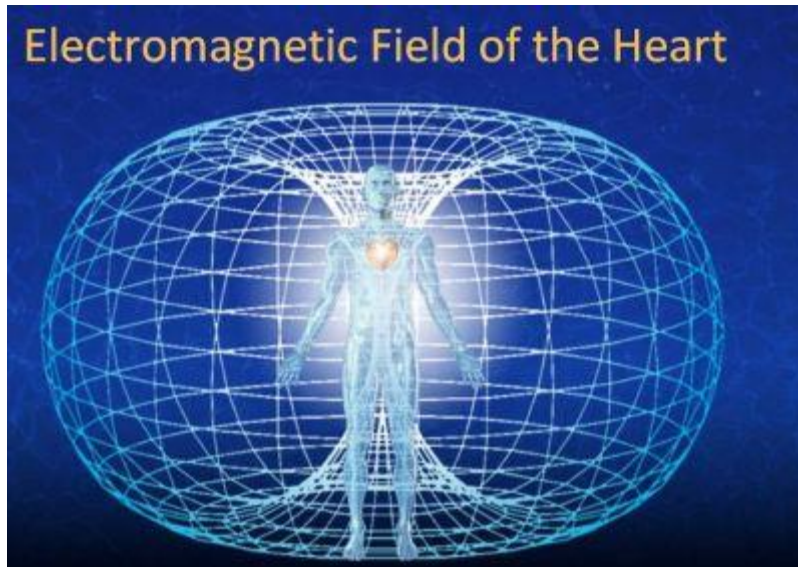
Everything Starts from Within: Psychospirituality

Important fundamentals are being overlooked in addiction recovery.

We cannot love others until we love our self. We shouldn't be focused on giving love away (an external action) until we've first tended to our own hearts (an internal need).

We cannot love our self until we shift our perspective to view life from knowing that everything in our life comes from an **internal** starting point. We create our reality.

When you fully love yourself, you're able to live selflessly because you're not living from a place of FEAR where you think you need more of something.



"Your heart emanates an extremely powerful toroidal energetic field. Your heart's electromagnetic frequency has been scientifically measured to go out as far as 5 miles."

– MindMovies.com

By emphasizing how our own body, mind, and soul's energy functions and affects ourselves and others and integrating this as a key learning of addiction recovery, we can give people the proper tools needed to manage their inner sense of brokenness.

Love: Connecting the Self with the Higher Power

It's no coincidence that God lives in our hearts and that it is our heart space that radiates our electromagnetic energy field.

If God is in our hearts, that means we DO have the power to fill our spiritual emptiness because God IS love and we can feel and experience love—love is real. We have the power to manifest God's will by generating the energy of love.

The spiritual emptiness includes a call for mental/emotional healing. In this process, we re-discover ourselves. We get to know why we think a certain way, what drives us, etc. and understand ourselves on an intimate level. Most importantly, we embody Christ consciousness thru mastering the act of forgiveness: Showing the ultimate act of love by forgiving ourselves.

It's time to take recovery culture to a deeper, fuller level.

What's Missing in Addiction Recovery?

Addicts are "trying to fill a God shaped hole" with drugs. This lack of spiritual fulfillment leads to:

- a deficit of self-love
- distance from knowing oneself
- maintaining the ability to self-motivate

Without this, people do not have the self-love to feel worthwhile or deserving of a better life.

Their focus is on external things to solve internal problems.

We are being called to shift addiction recovery from living from a place of **FEAR** to living from a place of **LOVE**.

Recovery as an Interdimensional Modality

Mental Health + Spirituality + Addiction Treatment, the connected pieces needed for successful recovery, are operating in silos. (Let's clarify: Spirituality = the Inner Self. Not necessarily religion.) The approaches used within existing recovery methods fail to bring attention to the spiritual component in a way that adequately touches on the notion of self-love. More emphasis has been put on treating the mental health component of recovery (i.e. dual diagnosis programs), but we are still far from providing the level of care we should be.

We've got to understand that everything is connected. These issues are not independent from one another.

**Addiction + Mental Health + Spirituality + Self-Love + Science
= Recipe for Success**

Even if you gave someone a grant for a free ride to attend the best rehab and removed any excuse for them to take this step and enter into a treatment program, they still wouldn't succeed if their self-love wasn't restored.

Responsibility does not just reside within a person's treatment program. Society and the community – you and me – plays a huge role in the wellbeing of addicts or those struggling with their mental health.

Putting Spirituality & Self-Growth at the Core of Recovery

When we realize our own impact on reality and the ways in which we can adapt, flow and manifest in life, we are able to fully live in true fulfillment.

Doing good deeds and checking off all the boxes of what you were raised to believe brings happiness will only be temporary, or you will always have a piece of you missing without this inner recognition + faith.

While acknowledgement of a Higher Power is important in addiction, the way that recovery material is currently presented voids the individual of accountability and relays a message of, "you still need to rely on an external entity (Higher Power) to succeed."

Self-reliance is key. The Higher Power is important, but it is better served in its true form: Love.

Your Higher Power is within Yourself

Our Higher Power is Love and lives in our hearts. So, the key to inner peace is through a journey of self-love.

Self-love → Motivation, patience, understanding.

Spirituality → Inner self.

This is different from the "Higher Power" that many of the programs refer to. A "Higher Power" is implied as an external force, rather than a component of one's internal self.

Breaking the Reliance on External Things

Addicts have historically relied on external things, i.e. drugs, to manage their mental/emotional state. Putting emphasis on the "Higher Power" only exaggerates this **external reliance** and does nothing to shift the addict's thinking to one of personal power or capability.

The focus on one's personal confidence, accountability, and self-love is essential to succeed in their recovery journey and keeping the focus on external sources only fuels reliance on other people, ideas, or things and continues the use of the same "broken" neural pathways. No actual healing is done with this approach.

Inspiring the Will to Heal

Programs like SMART Recovery make an attempt to return the power to the individual and emphasize important aspects like accountability and self-exploration to reframe old beliefs. However, people who struggle with pain in their hearts and are overwhelmed by the path to recovery are not likely to pursue SMART Recovery due to their low self-perception. For people who lack self-love and motivation, a fundamental reframing of addiction recovery is needed.

Adapting the national dialogue to one of positive positioning will help solve this problem before it even begins.

For example, when it is suggested that a person has a need to perform inner work (aka shadow work) within themselves, it is perceived "something is wrong with them." This

mindset is the very thing that needs to be addressed, as this effects people of all walks of life and not just addicts.

Additionally, 12+ month long stint of detox, rehab, sober living, meetings and groups, and medication assisted treatment (MAT) may eventually rebuild their internal foundation. But such a slow-moving approach that doesn't directly aim to strengthen the deep, inner needs is **dangerous** due to the rapidly increasing strength of chemicals found in heroin nowadays.

By being purposeful with the language used and framing things in the right way, seemingly small differences in the conversation can have drastic impacts in how a person views themselves – a vital part of whether or not one will be successful in recovery.

Finding Purpose

People who have spent their years feeding their addiction instead of holding a job or gaining career experience may see themselves as inadequate to join the real world. They believe they do not have the experience, education, or skills necessary to get a job like other people.

Recognizing a sense of **purpose** is an important part of self-love. A view of Self-love and Spiritual Health shifts our mindset to view ourselves from a place of love. When we do this, we remove the blocks that were in our way and can connect concepts like *transferable skills*. In this methodology, the recovery process helps the person connect the dots between the skills they possess (even from their addiction journey) and opens the opportunity of potential for them.

Example: Someone who sold illicit substances is well-versed in working with clients, client/vendor relationships, managing revenue and profit, and even marketing and promotional tactics.

Viewing themselves in this way frames their experiences as valuable and useful, and seen as a tool for obtaining a "real" career and building their future, as opposed to a discouraging viewpoint of not having any qualifications, skills, or interests.

Shifting Perceptions to Rewire the Mind

Part of the reason people continue dying while they're in the recovery stage is because it takes 12-14 months for the brain to dissolve the neural pathways used in addiction, and to establish new, healthy pathways.

An addict is not thinking in the same way that a non-addict is. Their brain is literally hard-wired differently at this point. What makes sense and seem obvious to you, may seem like the biggest roadblock and near impossible to them.

Their perception of how they see the world is different. Their inner belief system is contaminated with irrational beliefs they use to support their addiction. For example, "Alcohol curbs my social anxiety. I cannot attend a social function without it. By just having one drink to loosen up, it is OK."

We cannot expect addicts to be able to help themselves so easily, when it's their skewed thought process that's been fueling their addiction in the first place. They're approaching things with that same mindset.

Renewing the Spirit Helps Connect the Dots While the Mind Rewires

While the brain is rewiring itself and treatment programs are instilling new behaviors, the **spirit** is being left untouched in a way that enables them to self-source concepts of love, higher perception, and connectivity with the Higher Power and the self-exploration required in order to realize them.

We may think, "This person has a beautiful child, a family standing by to support them, and a bright future if they'd only do X, Y, or Z... Why won't they do it?"

They may think, "I love my son/daughter, but having to coordinate supervised visitation is just too much. My family hates me because of all the crappy things I've put them through. I'm a horrible person who deserves to feel this guilt and shame. I deserve to be punished for continuing to choose dope over my loved ones."

- They cannot pull themselves out of the guilt and shame. For them, it's an endless cycle that no amount of healthy behavior or external support can break.
- The pain they feel acts like tar, trapping them in a pit where the more they struggle to get out, the stronger the hold on them becomes.
- The more times they try to recover and the more failed attempts and relapses they endure, the deeper into the darkness they fall.
- Eventually, their spirit will be so weak, they won't be able to survive their next relapse.

An addict's physical and mental aspects cannot be fully recovered until their spiritual and emotional needs are met.

They could be handed the keys to recovery on a silver platter but will still struggle because their issue isn't a lack of resources or options. Their issue is internal, in the form of self-love and inner fortitude. **This can only be addressed at the spiritual level.**

It is such a debilitating struggle because they are fighting a spiritual war each and every day.

It is a constant battle against self-doubt, insecurity, mistrust, shame and guilt.

By putting self-love first and establishing the connection that the Higher Power is within your heart, hence the individual always holds the power to connect with their Source and harness the unconditional love and sense of control they've been seeking externally, we will:

- Shift perceptions away from "why is this happening to me"
- Break down illusions of barriers or excuses
- Eliminate the habit of comparing to others
- Remove the expectations that limit or restrict us
- Recognize what's living from a place of fear vs. a place of love
- Heal past trauma, inner child afflictions, and breaking old habits and cycles
- See how our inner state actively shapes our outer world, realizing how this can be used to create the reality we want to see, and trusting in our individual power
- Understand the importance of intention setting & the ability to set pure, authentic intentions

Example of a Shift in Mindset

Old Thinking:	New Thinking:
<p>I am stressed out and anxious because the world around me is chaotic. My roommate has too many dogs, I can't even walk to the bathroom peacefully without getting jumped on. I'm frustrated because the pharmacy can't fill my prescription until they get prior authorization from my doctor, and it's been two days so far.</p> <p>My friend always calls me to vent about her boyfriend and it's the same problems every time. Hearing her complaints start to wear me down and I'm tired of listening to her rant about how horrible he is, but do nothing about it. I'm stuck having to keep hearing her</p>	<p>There are many things right now that can trigger stress, but that's just the flow of life. I talked to my roommate about their dogs and offered to help crate them during the day. It's frustrating to jump through hoops to get my prescription, but I called my doctor and followed up again. I feel better knowing that he's on top of it. My friend may not be in a place where she's able to hear me out, but I said my piece and told her I can't be her emotional vent. It's too much for me and I need to protect myself. I did what's in my control so if she doesn't listen at this point, I'll have to set boundaries between us until the issues with her boyfriend pass. Life is</p>

bullsh*t. There's no use in me telling her it bothers me, because she only cares about herself and won't listen, or will call me a bad friend.

My life is causing so much stress! Why does this always happen to me? I don't bother anyone or do anyone wrong. No matter what I do, these things will find me. I don't understand why. I joke that I'm cursed and have accepted that life just sucks. I don't see how my life could ever be like other people's.

crazy and throws lots of things at me sometimes, but it is manageable and I'm able to keep calm.

Life is not singling me out or giving me a harder hand than others. Like Murphy's Law says, "Anything that can go wrong, will." It is the natural ebb and flow of life. Bumps in the road are just a part of life, not blocks and I deal with things as they come. I fully enjoy the good times, cherish the stillness of the "boring" uneventful times, and do my best to be prepared for the hard times.

Inner Work

Addict Behavior = *Human Behavior*

Shifting the perspective from a segregated categorization of "addicts" to a collective understanding of struggles, irrational beliefs, and perceptions that all people face in some way along their journey.

Someone does not have to be an addict to exhibit the same irrational mentality, inability for self-transparency, or malicious acts like stealing or scamming for personal gain.

By making recovery a journey of self-love, addicts are no longer separated from the community they're working to re-join.

Additionally, the family, friends, and others who participate in their journey may benefit from the program, as it can be applied to every person. From those battling a mental health issue to simply seeking to progress on their journey of personal growth.

The Labels, Connotations, Subtexts and Words we use **MATTER.**

In treatment, people are told that there is a significant difference between "addict behavior" and what is expected as normal adult life. Classifying it as "addict behavior" causes people to draw attention to their life versus others'.

Right off the bat, they are already being separated from their peers, creating a divide in how they see themselves and creating a barrier to relating to others and seeing themselves as part of normal society. It creates a perception of added difficulty to break this barrier down and easily transition into a "normal" life.

People who struggle with substance abuse self-identify with the label of “addict” and view themselves in comparison to others. This makes their journey tougher. They are constantly seeing how easy it appears for other people to navigate life and feel discouraged, frustrated, or like they are inherently flawed for not having broken free from addiction yet.

Being able to identify one’s thoughts and behaviors that require attention is important, but to establish an underlying principle of difference in “addict behavior” only furthers the same problematic thinking that caused feelings of displacement and separation, instead of unity and belonging.

We should not be blocking people from wholeness. We should be teaching things that encourage inclusion in the collective, rather than adding yet another barrier of discouragement.

Real Life Example:

The following passage was sent to me by someone attending an addiction recovery program in Wilmington, NC.

Just For Today
Daily Meditations for Recovering Addicts
September 15
Filling the emptiness

"...we think that if we can just get enough food, enough sex, or enough money, we'll be satisfied and everything will be alright."
Basic Text p.77

In our addiction, we could never get enough drugs, or money, or sex, or anything else. Even too much was never enough! There was a spiritual emptiness inside us. Though we tried as hard as we could to fill that emptiness ourselves, we never succeeded. In the end, we realized that we lacked the power to fill it; it would take a Power greater than ourselves to do that.

So we stopped using, and we stopped trying to fill the emptiness in our gut with things. We turned to our Higher Power, asking for its care, strength, and direction. We surrendered and made way for that Power to begin the process of filling our inner void. We stopped grabbing things and started receiving the free gift of love our Higher Power had for us. Slowly, our inner emptiness was being filled.

Now that we've been given our Higher Power's gift of love, what do we do with it? If we clasp that gift tightly to ourselves, we will smother it. We must remember that love grows only when it is shared. We can only keep this gift by freely giving it away. The world of addiction is a world of taking and being taken; the world of recovery is a world of giving and being given. In which world do we choose to live?

Just for today: I choose to live in the fullness of recovery. I will celebrate my conscious contact with the God of my understanding by freely sharing with others that which has been freely shared with me.

This passage references the need for a Higher Power, something beyond the individual. External forces cannot solve internal problems. The power is removed from the addict and allows their pattern of relying on external things to continue.

The message should not be tied so tightly to external factors (an external Higher Power; what others think of us or our obligation to others, where we'd feel guilty if the expectation to give this love away was not met.). This "meditation" implies that if we do not give love away, we are failing in our duty to others. Already, we are focused on restrictive expectations, rather than love as a freeing component of ourselves. However,

when we view the Higher Power as the Love in our hearts, we empower ourselves to live a life that honors our soul's purpose.

How this message would be communicated from the view of Self-Love/Spirituality: The Higher Power lives in our heart. It is NOT an external entity, but rather an energy of Love within us. "God is Love," and Love is real. So, when we Love ourselves, we are embodying Christ consciousness. When we live life from a place of Love, we are making the choices that are in our best interest. We are also living selflessly, understanding that taking care of our self is the best way to ensure we are able to spread Love to others.

Addressing Internal Issues at the Soul Level

Negative emotions are not the fault of our past experiences or the actions of other people. They are a call to the individual that something internal needs to be addressed.

An addict lives each day filled with multiple instances of emotions like:

- Anger
- Blame
- Guilt
- Shame
- Disappointment
- Anxiety
- Fear

Each of these emotions, thoughts, and mindsets are caused by EXTERNAL sources—things we cannot control, but allow to rule our lives.

If you struggle with anything on this list, you are being called to shift your life's perspective to one where your inner self runs the show.

Get back in touch with your soul and release the need to meet others' expectations. Learn to forgive yourself about past choices. Do the inner work to get to a point of acceptance.

The only truth in life is who we are at the soul level. Everything else in the material world should not have such influence over us. We control our material reality. Not the other way around.

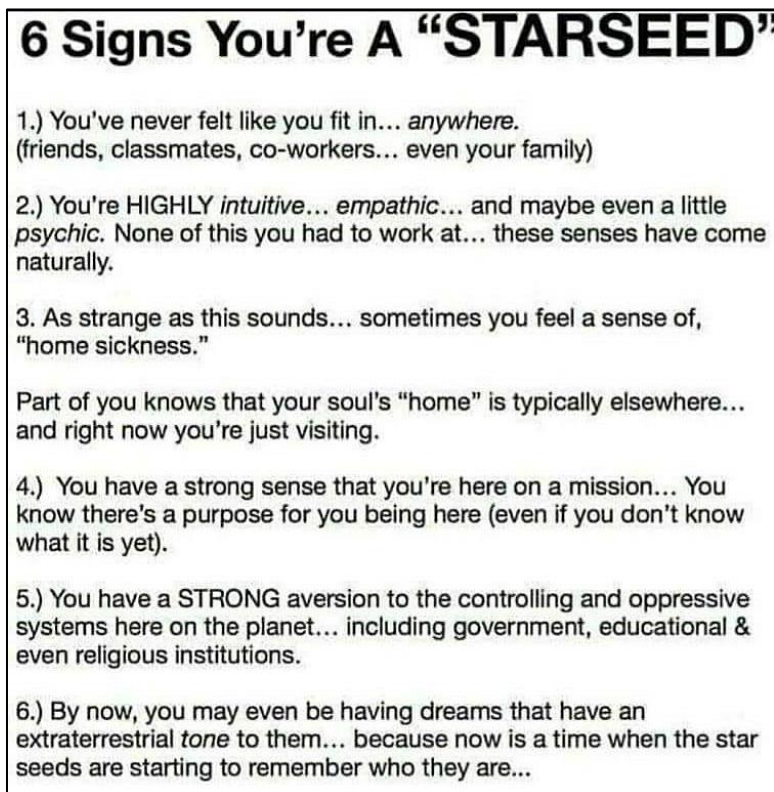
The Spiritual Awakening

A Growing Interest in Spirituality

In the early 2020s, we've seen a rapid expansion of people acting on a deep calling to fill the gaps within their spirit, bringing attention to topics like:

- Starseeds
- Empaths
- Lightworkers
- Ancestral Healing

There's a lot of overlap between the narrative of an addict and say, an empath or starseed, as shown by this meme from Facebook:



We must draw the connection and realize that "addict" or "starseed" is nothing more than a limiting label. The same methods, solutions, and mindsets are needed to bring about fulfillment whether from the point of view of an addict or a starseed.

Using Our Shadow to Illuminate Truth

It's within the shadows that we can see the most revealing things about ourselves.

Today's trends encouraging "shadow work" aren't just a coincidence. It's a call for us to use these things as tools in the recovery toolbox and connect them together for a more comprehensive, healthy society.

Building Self-worth

Self-worth can be supported by finding your life purpose: an answer to why you are here and the value that you add to life (why you are important in this world and how you can make your mark).

Purpose can be found by combining your skills + what inspires you + what naturally brings you happiness to fill the needs of the world.

Finding your life purpose includes the following steps:

1. Realizing your innate skills and talents.
2. Understanding what drives you. Why do you do the things you do? Why is your perspective the way it is?
3. Determining what naturally brings you joy or interests you.
4. Identifying a current need in the community. It could be as trivial as offering comfort to a troubled friend to volunteering with a non-profit organization to founding your own initiative.

Removing Expectations on the Journey to the Right Path

In addition to reframing one's mindset of their inner self, it's important to set proper expectations of what their journey is likely to entail: how long it may take, the struggles they'll endure, etc.

When you veer off the path for so many years, you end up miles away from where you're meant to be. When you choose to fix this and enter into recovery, you have to wade back through all the storms, bullsh*t, and chaos (because technically, you're still not on the right track, so life isn't going to flow perfectly yet).

Often, people reach sobriety, make an effort to make good decisions, and end up discouraged when life throws obstacle after obstacle at them, thinking, "Why me? I'm doing everything I can to do right!" This is part of the journey, but instead of pushing forward or recognizing it as a way to reinforce the new positive practices they've instilled, they revert back to old behaviors.

Part of the misconception about getting back on track is that you'll enter back on your designated path at an advanced point. When really, once you make it back to this path, you're starting at the point you first veered off on your detour. So, there will still be more work to be done to catch back up to where you were meant to be all along.

For addicts indulging in substance abuse for 10+ years, it is unrealistic to think that a mere 6-12 months of good intentions would put them back on solid footing. Success is more likely when we set realistic expectations from the start.

“If God is Love and Love is Real, then...”

So much suffering comes from when we live life from a place of fear, where our actions are driven by the fear of failing to live up to others' expectations. Including our own limiting expectations that have become so restrictive, even on a subconscious level.

God is Love. Love is the true opposite of fear. The only way to achieve true freedom of fear and other superficial man-made restrictions is through building a relationship with Him. God's Love and faith is the only external solution to fulfill your internal needs/wants. Because it's not external. God exists in our hearts.

The Science and Spirituality Behind Recovery

The Role of Neural Pathways

Did you know that the connections between the neurons in your brain are called neural pathways? And the more a pathway is used, the stronger it becomes? But the less it is used, the weaker it gets until a new pathway takes over. That's why some of us may find it difficult to try new things due to a fear response triggered by an established neural pathway. The good news is that we can rewire our neural pathways and create new highways in our brains.

Our brains are like a complex roadway system, with countless neural pathways connecting our thoughts and emotions. The pathways formed in addiction are strengthened through repeated use. But just like a GPS can give us a new route to a familiar destination, we have the power to rewrite these mental highways. By consciously choosing to focus on positive emotions and thought patterns, addicts reroute their neural pathways during recovery.

This is why programs like NA/AA encourage a long-term commitment to meetings, working the steps, and other behavioral changes. The person's mind is literally in process of abandoning one pathway and creating/establishing another.

Seeing Life's Beauty in Everything

Addicts are in the process of literally rewiring their brain. Things that normally are perceived as pleasurable may be of no interest to a recovering addict due to years of artificially surging their brain's pleasure centers with chemicals.

It requires a conscious effort to shift your perspective, including seeing the beauty, value, or fun in something.

For example, taking a walk in the park on a sunny day may not be appealing. But if they are aware that it's a physical issue of the neural pathways their mind is operating with, they can push themselves to at least step outside as a first effort. From there, they may notice the way the sun's light reflects off of a parked car, how green the grass is, or the momentary break from being an addict or in recovery and simply being.

In every situation, one can make a conscious effort to notice one thing about a situation that they like. This is how you can genuinely hold a conversation with someone you may not care to be around.

For instance, if you struggle with your relationship with your step-mother, but she's wearing a pair of earrings of your favorite gemstone. Focusing on that and channeling your affinity for this aspect of her will display as genuine pleasantries, because you sincerely like something in that moment.

Integrated Addiction Recovery

Instead of simply discussing concepts like Rational Emotional Behavior Therapy (REBT), ideally we would offer teachings of subjects like Psychology 101 as part of the recovery process. **If we do not understand how our own self works, how can we possibly repair it?**

Teach how to use each of these to heal, shift your mindset, understand yourself to understand others, establish a sense of self-love and worth, and how each area plays a role in recovery.

- Psychological Health (i.e. mirroring, projection)
- Spiritual Health (i.e. energies, intuitive guidance)
- Physical Health (i.e. the body, physical energy transfers)

When people draw a connection between their SELF, God, and the world around them, they can relate the beauty they perceive in life to themselves. Without this relation, and with an alienating or isolating mindset, the love, joy, beauty, and connectivity can't flow through.

Everything is Connected

Teachings should include concepts like:

- Different points in the body connect to different organs.

- Different hours of the day signal different organ activity.
- Different areas of the body harness different energy centers (chakras).

The Power of Spoken Words

The words we speak give off vibrations and are spoken at different frequencies. This is one reason that spoken words can be powerful.

The higher the vibration, the more positive the association like love, bliss, or harmony. The lower the vibration, the closer you get towards negative aspects like fear, shame, or anger.

Different frequencies have different connotations, as well (See *Solfeggio Frequencies*).

- Neural pathways are strengthened into habits through the **repetition and practice of thinking, acting and speaking**.
- In the Bible, God spoke Creation into existence in Genesis Chapter 1. God **said**, "Let there be light," and there was.

Daily Affirmations

Intentions, spoken words, and thoughts serve as a prompt for your subconscious to build on. Your subconscious is busy throughout the day, operating in the background to piece things together and help support your conscious interactions. This is why writing or stating daily affirmations are powerful in the recovery journey. It is not New Age goobily gook. There are scientific reasons, as well as spiritual ones for this exercise.

Metaphysical Traits

If you wonder what you're doing wrong or can't seem to figure out why certain things keep happening in your life, chances are that the issue is Metaphysical.

The things we expose ourselves to affect us at an energetic level. The shows we watch, the music we listen to, the conversations we participate in, the people we expose ourselves to, the content we consume, the words we speak... every bit of it matters.

Look around you. Throughout your day, notice if the things you're letting in your life are positive or negative. Are they uplifting or do they do nothing to contribute to your journey.

Faith, Trust & Surrender

If you find yourself in the same situation over and over again, there is a lesson you're needing to learn from this or inner work to be done to adjust what you're calling into your life.

Embrace the practice of releasing what no longer serves you. I.e. Breaking cycles, cutting cords...

Learn to trust the flow of life—that everything happens in divine timing as it's supposed to for you.

Meditation: The Opposite of “Clearing Your Mind”

Meditation taught as a transcendental experience — a means to communicate higher. Attempting to clear your mind may only lead to frustration or discouragement, as it's natural for your mind to wander.

These are just a few examples of how we can integrate multiple concepts *from a different perspective* to empower a new generation of addicts to successfully recover.

The Mission to Recover Recovery

The keys to unlocking one's self love and reestablishing their self-worth are not currently being taught in recovery. Treatment programs are covering the most basic of steps to follow and leaving the addict to fill in the blanks of their own past trauma and expect them to somehow figure out how to explore the depths of their own soul. Some people may have never even been to a counselor before in their life. How are they to know even rudimentary things like that anger is really just a signal of pain—it's the emotion of sadness amplified? Or that by simply acknowledging your anger and accepting its presence rather than continuing to resist it, you can diminish its effect instantly.

As a society, we are just now beginning to are beginning to acknowledge the importance of mental health and one's past, especially their childhood, in addiction. One's higher power has played a role in recovery, thanks to alcoholic anonymous. But this approach separates this higher power from the individual's heart, which is polar opposite of what true spirituality teaches and what our hearts crave, because deep down our souls recognize the truth, and the truth is what we crave.

Having to live in this human existence causes so many issues and feels of misalignment or out of place, because deep down our souls remember what “home” is. We are spiritual creatures living a physical existence and it is our goal to learn how to navigate this world and combine and balance all of these aspects for a full experience that shapes and enhances who we are in our hearts.

When people feel out of place or claim to be empaths who are struggling in this world, it is not an emotional struggle they are feeling. It is a spiritual one. Add to that, the low emotional intelligence and people's lack of accountability or desire to see their true self, and all the old souls having to live alongside people like this, and no wonder there is so much strife in this world.

Addiction recovery does not necessarily need to abide by any one religion or promote new age spirituality. But it does need to make the connection between mind body and spirit. Spirituality does not mean religion. Metaphysical does not mean new age hippie. We are interdimensional, experiencing this life on multiple levels and we all interpret and process this information differently. It's time that the path to recovery also become interdimensional and adhere to the different ways aren't ways in which we experience life.

It's Time to Recover Addiction Recovery

Addiction recovery can be reframed to emphasize the critical importance of self-love and faith in one's journey. The treatment methodology used must evolve to keep up with the rapid rise in opioid overdose deaths. This evolution can come about by integrating concepts based in science, spirituality, and mental health. It's time to: 1) Shift society's perception of recovery away from addiction (negative) and towards self-love (positive) to encourage an environment of relativity and understanding. 2) Go beyond the superficial level of behavioral or cognitive approaches and advance the practices taught within addiction recovery.

There is a dire need to reframe the way we view, discuss, and address addiction recovery. By shifting our shared perspective into one that properly incorporates ideas of self-love, faith, and connection, we will reframe the formerly paralyzing aspects of addiction recovery.

A fundamental shift in addiction recovery and treatment methodology is needed to curb the rapid increase of overdose deaths. It's time for a new mindset for recovering addicts, their families, and healthcare professionals, and you can make that happen. Please use this guide as a resource and share it with anyone who it may help.

About the Author

Lisa Arrington earned her B.S in Business Management – Marketing with an Economics minor from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, she found success as an enterprise SEO specialist, leveraging her insights on human behavior to great effect. She has taken this wisdom even further by studying energetic abilities and the power of intuition, as well as exploring theories of past life regression and quantum healing. A decade-long study of the Bible under the guidance of her pastor has helped Lisa understand how unlocking hidden connections can enable us on the path towards inner peace. Now, Lisa uses her expertise to help others reach new heights within themselves by viewing the world through a lens of connection. In 2022, she founded the Twin Flame & Soulmate Grief Support Group, a space of tools, resources, and connection to promote healing for anyone who's lost someone they're tied to at deeper levels. Ultimately, her mission is one rooted in growth: to inspire an all-encompassing awareness of the oneness that exists among us, supporting a perspective focused on unity rather than separation.

Website: <https://etherealsoul.net/>

Social media: @etherealsoul444
@lcgrabows