

#UNHARMABLE

Opening Exercises: The Addicted Self

Many of us live with a sense of emptiness or disconnection. We feel broken and empty inside, and we look outside ourselves for a solution. Or we're uncomfortable with what we see when we look within. If we cannot bear to be with our self, to look at that inner "edge" where our darkest feelings and memories reside, then we may turn outward for something that will seem to pull us back to safety. In any case, the pain of what's inside causes us to look outside for relief. Now, that outward-seeking might not in itself be a problem for you. But as we look elsewhere to fix what feels broken, empty or uncomfortable inside, we can begin to depend on those outside sources to feel safe or whole. When we use an external solution repetitively so that it becomes a habit for us. This perspective fits the Buddhist concept of aversion (to pain) and clinging (to relief).

Releasing Statement

I let go of the belief in my own disconnection.

Affirming Statement

In this moment, I am perfect as I am.

Simple Meditation Practice

This section's meditation is a walking meditation. Set a timer for 5-10 minutes (trust whatever feels like the right amount of time for you in this moment). Now walk in silence during your allotted time. The invitation is to simply notice your surroundings. See if there are aspects of your environment you have never seen. Do you see anything you've never noticed before? Do you now have a deeper appreciation for your space? Now, take a bit of time to write out what you noticed.

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2. Outer-Focused Life Technique: *"Addiction can be viewed simply as the outer-focused life. Rather than doing the inner work of healing that which feels broken or meaningless, we focus on something outside of ourselves to resolve, numb, or avoid a sense of psychic pain."*

- What does this quote mean to you?

- In what ways do you relate to it?

- In what ways have you focused on something outside of yourself to resolve, numb, or avoid a sense of psychic pain?

"Our solution can be a wide variety of things. We can be dependent on our own thoughts, using them as a strategy for resolving or alleviating our inner conflict. We can be addicted to ideas, to other people, even to spirituality."

- What does this quote mean to you?

- In what ways do you relate to it?

- In what ways have you focused on using your thoughts as a strategy for resolving inner conflict? How has that worked and *not* worked for you?

3. Cultural Influences Method: *"We live in a culture that's addicted to the concepts of 'right' and 'wrong,' highly addicted to competition, highly addicted to the belief in 'us' and 'them.' We live in a world where there is suffering and pain, and our society doesn't offer many healthy tools for dealing with that."*

- What do you think we mean by a culture addicted to "right" and "wrong?"

- In what ways have you been taught to look at the world through the lens of "us" and "them?"

- What is the relationship between that and your relationships?

"Depending on the specific culture where we are raised, we may get many layers of messages that teach us we are fundamentally broken or damaged in some way. Even if we had a stable and loving upbringing and are blessed with a safe and nurturing environment, we are still bombarded by messages that run counter to the truth of our fundamental perfection."

- What do you think we mean by "the truth of our fundamental perfection?"

- What were the messages you received that taught you that you were broken?

- What effect has that had on your life?

4. The Holistic Approach: *"Thus begins this incredible voyage inward. On this journey, we are not looking for something independent of ourselves, we are turning inward and recognizing that this pathway can lead us to return to the essential self. "*

- What stands out to you in this quote?

- What do you think "turning inward" might mean in your life?

- What would it take for you to return to your essential self?

"The spiritual perspective allows us to make an important internal shift. When we move from an outer-focused life to an inner-focused way of being, we can start to recognize and engage our wholeness, our inherent perfection."

- In what ways has your life been outer-focused?

- What might some important internal shifts be for you?

- What would it look like for you to "engage your wholeness?"

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Questions for journaling and further reflection:

1. Look at the language you use with yourself. Ask, "How am I speaking to myself?"
2. What am I attaching my 'I am' to?"
3. And is it possible to shift that language into something that's more accurate?
4. What does authenticity mean to you?
5. Is it easy for you to be authentic or is it difficult? What makes it so?
6. What does safety look or feel like to you?
7. How could you create more of this in your life?
8. What for you has been the difference between pain and suffering (if any)?
9. How has your shame created suffering?
10. What would it take to change that?

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