

Publisher's Note

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering psychological, financial, legal, or other professional services. If expert assistance or counseling is needed, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

The names and events in this workbook are fictional. Any likeness to real people is coincidental.

Distributed in Canada by Raincoast Books

Copyright © 2012 by Rebecca E. Williams and Julie S. Kraft

New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

56.4 Shattuck Avenue

Oakland, CA 94609

www.newharbinger.com

Cover design by Amy Shoup; Text design by Tracy Marie Carlson;

Acquired by Melissa Kirk; Edited by Nelda Street

All Rights Reserved

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Williams, Rebecca E.

The mindfulness workbook for addiction : a guide to coping with the grief, stress and anger that trigger addictive behaviors / Rebecca E. Williams and Julie S. Kraft.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-60882-340-6 (pbk. : alk. paper) -- ISBN 978-1-60882-341-3 (pdf e-book) -- ISBN 978-1-60882-342-0 (epub)

1. Compulsive behavior--Treatment--Handbooks, manuals, etc. 2. Cognitive therapy--Handbooks, manuals, etc. 3. Acceptance and commitment therapy--Handbooks, manuals, etc. 4. Dialectical behavior therapy--Handbooks, manuals, etc. I. Kraft, Julie S. II. Title.

RC533.W478 2012

616.89'1425--dc23

2012011781

Contents

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Getting Started](#)

[Who Can This Book Help?](#)

[How to Use This Workbook](#)

PART 1: GETTING TO KNOW THE MAIN CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

1. Emotions

[The “No Feeling” Contract](#)

[Loss and Emotion](#)

[Unraveling Your False Beliefs about Emotions](#)

[Emotion Dodging](#)

[Getting to Know Your Feelings](#)

2. Thoughts

[How Thoughts Connect to Emotions](#)

[Repeat-Offender Thoughts](#)

[Why Is Your Thinking Misleading?](#)

[Considering the Evidence](#)

[Distracting Thoughts](#)

3. Behaviors

[A Ghost Fleeing Bullets](#)

[Self-Fulfilling Prophecy](#)

[Choosing the Opposite](#)

[Values](#)

[Learning More about Choosing the Opposite](#)

4. Mindfulness

[Observing Your Mind without Judgment](#)

[Imaginary Lions](#)

[Practicing Mindfulness](#)

[How to Breathe](#)

Radical Acceptance
The Serenity Prayer
Fight, Flight, or FLOAT

PART 2: LOOKING AT YOUR LOSSES

5. Loss

What Is Loss?
Why Look at Old Losses?
Taking a Look at Your Losses
Exploring the Impact of Your Losses
Connecting Your Losses

6. Addiction

What Is an Addiction?
Uncovering the Time Line of Your Addictive Behavior
Switching to Another Addiction
Journey to Wellness

7. Connecting Addiction and Loss

The Loss-Addiction Cycle
The Addiction and Loss Time Line
Loss Anniversaries

PART 3: MOVING FORWARD

8. Mindful Grieving

Coping after a Loss
Nothing Works?
Radical Acceptance Revisited
Personal Resiliency
Grieving the Loss
Resiliency in Action

9. Relationships

Basic Communication Skills
Identifying Unhealthy Relationships
Healing Broken Relationships

Building a Healthy Social Support System

Managing Social Discomfort

10. Recovery, Relapse Prevention, and Beyond

Nutrition

Sleep

Fitness

Work

Fun

Resources for Your Journey

References

Exercises

1. Emotions

- Exercise 1.1 Journal Questions
- Exercise 1.2 Identifying Your False Beliefs about Emotions
- Exercise 1.3 Emotion-Dodging Methods
- Exercise 1.4 Consequences of Emotion Dodging
- Exercise 1.5 Learning about Your Feelings
- Exercise 1.6 How Would You Feel?
- Exercise 1.7 Connecting Emotions to Life Situations

2. Thoughts

- Exercise 2.1 Identifying Your Repeat-Offender Thoughts
- Exercise 2.2 Where Did Your Repeat-Offender Thoughts Come From?
- Exercise 2.3 Consider the Evidence Worksheet

3. Behaviors

- Exercise 3.1 Reflecting on Your Behaviors
- Exercise 3.2 Practice Choosing the Opposite
- Exercise 3.3 The Birthday Toast
- Exercise 3.4 Uncover Your Values
- Exercise 3.5 Reflecting on Values
- Exercise 3.6 Making Decisions Based on Values

4. Mindfulness

- Exercise 4.1 Observe Your Mind
- Exercise 4.2 Imagine the Space
- Exercise 4.3 Study an Object
- Exercise 4.4 Count the Sounds
- Exercise 4.5 Be Focused and Fascinated
- Exercise 4.6 Be in Your Body
- Exercise 4.7 It Is What It Is
- Exercise 4.8 FLOAT Worksheet

5. Loss

- Exercise 5.1 Losses Checklist
- Exercise 5.2 Identifying Your Losses
- Exercise 5.3 How Resolved Is Your Loss?

Exercise 5.4 Loss Impact Worksheet

Exercise 5.5 Your Responses to Loss

6. Addiction

Exercise 6.1 Identify Addictions Worksheet: Alcohol, Drugs, and Caffeine

Exercise 6.2 Checklist of Addiction Signs: Alcohol or Drugs

Exercise 6.3 Identify Addictions Worksheet: Other Troubling Behaviors

Exercise 6.4 Checklist of Addiction Signs: Troubling Behaviors

Exercise 6.5 Time Line of Addictive Behavior

Exercise 6.6 Wellness Script

7. Connecting Addiction and Loss

Exercise 7.1 Creating Your Addiction and Loss Time Line

Exercise 7.2 Reflecting on Your Addiction and Loss Time Line

Exercise 7.3 The Loss Anniversary Calendar

Exercise 7.4 Specific Triggers Worksheet

8. Mindful Grieving

Exercise 8.1 Being an Observer

Exercise 8.2 Ignore vs. Accept

Exercise 8.3 Leaves Down a Stream

Exercise 8.4 The Gift to Yourself

Exercise 8.5 The Personal Resiliency Quiz

Exercise 8.6 Don't Be a "Calm Fighter"

Exercise 8.7 Walking with Words

Exercise 8.8 Your Resiliency in Action

9. Relationships

Exercise 9.1 List of Common Social Problems

Exercise 9.2 Practicing "I" Statements

Exercise 9.3 Practicing Your Listening Skills

Exercise 9.4 Qualities of Relationships

Exercise 9.5 Identifying Your Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships

Exercise 9.6 Letter of Invitation

Exercise 9.7 Healing Conversation Format

Exercise 9.8 The Commit to Quit Agreement

Exercise 9.9 Keep Track of Your Thoughts

10. Recovery, Relapse Prevention, and Beyond

Exercise 10.1 Food Journal

Exercise 10.2 Sleep Improvement Worksheet

- Exercise 10.3 Sleep Journal
- Exercise 10.4 Exercise Journal
- Exercise 10.5 Work as a Gift
- Exercise 10.6 Pleasant Activities List

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the Veterans Administration San Diego Healthcare System for its commitment to the well-being of veterans struggling with life challenges. This material is the result of work supported with resources of the VA San Diego Healthcare System. We are also grateful for the excellent recovery services at Sharp Healthcare in San Diego, which provides clients a safe place to rebuild their lives. We appreciate the many clients we have worked with over the years who have helped us understand true recovery from loss and addiction.

We would like to thank Melissa Kirk and her team at New Harbinger Publications, who gently guided us through the process of writing this workbook. A special thank you to Nelda Street, our copyeditor through New Harbinger, who helped us create a workbook that's easy to understand and even easier to use. New Harbinger's commitment to providing reader-friendly workbooks for living a healthier and more meaningful life is unparalleled. A clinical office without New Harbinger's workbooks is like a city without its landmarks.

Introduction

Tony and Carmen Gomez are married for nineteen years before “it” happens. They’ve had mostly good times, with the normal rough spots here and there. The miscarriage of their first child was a hard time, as were Carmen’s breast cancer scare and the time Tony spent without a job a few years back. But all in all, they weathered the storms of life pretty well. That was until last year, when their son, A.J., was killed in a car crash at age seventeen.

Suddenly it was as if something dark had crept into their house. It drapes itself over Tony, Carmen, and their twelve-year-old daughter, Tina, like a fog. Neither Tony nor Carmen can shake that fog. They can’t find a way to talk about “it,” even though they can see that Tina needs answers. She spends more and more time away from home, hiding away at friends’ houses or staying late at school to do homework. It’s as if something has infected the Gomez family, and time isn’t healing these wounds. As time goes by, things only seem to be getting worse.

Tony sleeps a lot more during the day, misses days at work here and there, and shows up late. The boss is starting to notice. Tony has always been a drinker, especially when he was in the navy, but he can’t remember it ever being *this* way before. More and more, he finds himself reaching for a drink. One never feels like enough. He hates the days at work because he feels itchy and stressed. It seems as if his thoughts will overwhelm him if he doesn’t have a few drinks at lunch to take the edge off. At night, he drinks in front of the TV until he passes out. It’s the only time he can pretend that things are normal. It’s the only time he doesn’t think about screeching tires or the way A.J. used to smile just like his father.

Things have changed for Carmen too. She spends more and more time in the little office off the living room, her eyes glued to

the computer. It seems that she can spend hours clicking through websites looking for shoes, purses, clothes. She was never such a spender before; she has always been careful with their money. Carmen tells herself she deserves some nice things and isn't hurting anyone. Still, she finds herself acting in strange ways. She goes to great lengths to hide the credit card bills from Tony. Sometimes she won't even open the boxes that arrive, and shoves them away in the guest-room closet instead. Something inside her feels restless, uneasy; it's hard for her to sleep. Carmen starts sneaking out of bed to shop online. It seems like the only thing that can quiet her mind.

Tony and Carmen are both filled with fear. They can feel the ground falling out from under them. But how can they give up the things that have given them just the slightest bit of peace since A.J.'s death? How can they stand facing that loss with nothing to keep the feelings in control?

Tina's school counselor calls her parents in to discuss a short story she has written. It tells how empty and frightened Tina feels inside, and how distracted and distant her parents now seem. It mentions how her parents fight about money, forget about dinner, and move like zombies through their house. Tina's story describes addiction and how it is destroying her family.

Tina's counselor suggests this workbook to Tony and Carmen. Feeling scared, upset, and helpless, they drive to the bookstore in silence. They buy two copies of this workbook, two notebooks, and a new box of pens.

Getting Started

Much like Tony and Carmen, you may find that your addictive impulses and behaviors confuse, overwhelm, or even control you. Congratulations for starting this workbook and making a move toward recovery! It is certainly possible to get back to the life you really want. There is a way out of addiction, and you are taking the first step!

At the end of each chapter, you will find a section called "A

- Give you hands-on, easy-to-do exercises and activities that will guide you toward the life you desire.

How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is filled with useful information, case studies to help you relate to new ideas, and exercises designed to give you the tools to change your life. The best way to become handy with these tools is to *use* them!

Reading a thousand fitness magazines won't get you into shape, right? You have to take action and do the work yourself. With that in mind, you will get the most out of this workbook if you:

- Work through the book chapter by chapter. The chapters go in order for a reason, and each one will build on the skills that came before.
- Complete the worksheets and practice the exercises. You may even want to copy some of the worksheets to use more than once. This is what it's all about!
- Keep a journal. A journal is a great place to reflect on what you are learning and explore how you are feeling as you move through the healing process. There is space in the workbook for you to answer journal questions, but we strongly suggest keeping a journal as you go through this workbook.
- Talk to a counselor or therapist. This workbook is designed for you to do the work yourself, and you will get results that way. But having a professional to explore things with as you move through the process will take you to an even deeper level.

Always keep in mind that the effort you put into this healing process defines what you will get out of it. It's up to you how

PART 1

GETTING TO KNOW THE MAIN
CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

Chapter 1

Emotions

*What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters
compared to what lies within us.*

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

Long ago, something taught you that feelings aren't safe. You learned that grief, rage, frustration, stress, loneliness, and guilt were your enemies. Maybe you started to believe that they had superpowers, like the power to completely overwhelm you or the power to make you destroy all that you love. Maybe these feelings seemed to have the ability to knock you off your feet for good so that you can't live your life. Maybe it seemed that once the feelings got you in their grasp, you could never tell what you might do. Maybe you learned that you would never be okay unless you found a way *not* to feel.

So, naturally, you went looking for a solution. Maybe you've spent your life shadowboxing, always ready to throw a counterpunch against a feeling that tries to rise up inside of you. Maybe you've thrown other things at your feelings: a drink, a

drug, a gallon of ice cream.

It's as if you've made a little contract with yourself:

I, _____, will do whatever it takes not to feel my feelings. I am sure that emotions are the most dangerous things in the world. To win the war against my feelings, I am willing to live a life that is limited. I will never be my whole self. I will avoid my feelings by _____ (drinking, using, sleeping, having sex, gambling, cutting, eating, watching television, and so on) as much as possible; the more, the better.

Feeling my feelings will surely kill me. So I will give up most of my life rather than let my feelings exist.

The “No Feeling” Contract

In signing this contract, you have also made a deal with your addiction. You've said:

- *I will let my addiction dominate me, control me, rule my life.*
- *I will let my addiction take everything from me.*
- *I will give up on my dreams.*
- *I will give up on being the person I want to be.*
- *I will give up real happiness, real love, and good health.*
- *I will let my addiction destroy me.*

Just don't make me feel. Promise? Why would anyone make a deal like this? Maybe you didn't know what you were really signing up for when you started. You probably didn't read the fine print. Most addictive behaviors don't start off bringing the

awful consequences and pain that they do later on. As one addict put it, “Long before it was a problem, it was my solution.” Your addictive behaviors probably started as a “solution” for you, too.

Does this sound strange? Maybe you are thinking, *How was my addiction a solution to my problems? It couldn't bring back the people or things I lost. It definitely didn't solve my financial problems. And if anything, it made my relationships even harder!*

Certainly, drinking alcohol, overeating, using drugs, or doing other addictive behaviors did not solve your immediate problems. Life is full of hard times, tragedies, and losses, and not one of them goes away when you get drunk. But the truth is, you aren't trying to solve your *actual* problems with your addictive behaviors. The problems you are trying to solve are your *emotions*. You are looking for a way to escape them, bury them, hide from them, or try to turn them into something else. Your addiction let you do this for a while. It's your temporary solution to the problem of feeling.

Loss and Emotion

Throughout this book, you will be thinking about loss. Looking at the losses that have happened in your life will help you see why you do your addictive behavior, and give you more power in your fight for recovery. But why, specifically, are we looking at loss? Because loss, by its very nature, brings up emotions. When you are experiencing loss, and throughout your life as you cope with old losses, you may feel angry, sad, stressed, or fearful. You may feel helpless, lonely, or betrayed. Sometimes you may even feel relieved, detached, or numb. It's likely that you will experience a whole range of feelings: sometimes three at once, sometimes twelve in the course of one day. At times, feelings will seem to hit like a tidal wave, knocking you to the ground from behind. At other times they may seem like a dog nipping at your heels hour after hour, desperate to get your attention. At other times, these feelings may be tiny fleas that leave you squirming and itching all over.

One of the primary aims of this book is to help you to *accept* and *tolerate* your feelings. Notice that we didn't say *change* your feelings. Trying to change, decrease, control, or avoid feelings is part of what led to the addictive behavior you are trying to stop. Once you have worked through this book, you will probably feel less angry, stressed, hurt, hopeless, and afraid. Some of these feelings may even go away. But the most important point is that your feelings do not have to change for you to be okay. You are already okay.

This may sound like a radical idea. We can understand that. As we will explain later, you have learned a lot of things about feelings that aren't true. Part of the work ahead of you will be to unlearn the lessons that have been leading you astray. Keep an open mind; changing your mind will change your life!

Embracing the Dog

A moment ago, we noted one way you might experience emotion: as a dog nipping at your heels. Let's explore that a little further so you can better understand how you may be responding to emotions in your life.

Picture your emotions as this dog: a mangy mutt you have no interest in adopting but who has somehow set up residence in your life. You have tried everything to get rid of this pesky beast. Why wouldn't you? There he is, day after day, under your desk at work, pulling at your pant leg, jumping up on you in the grocery store, distracting you when you are trying to drive. He doesn't smell great, either. You ask a coworker to take him off your hands. She politely says no, that she already has a few dogs of her own. You try locking this dog out of your house or keeping him in the garage. You even try leaving him at the park—not just any park, the one all the way across town—but there he is on the doorstep when you get home. He just sits there, waiting for you.

There are mornings when you wake up certain that this dog isn't going to bother you today, but within a few hours, he turns

up, barking outside your shower door or pawing at you on your lunch break. Every day, you are getting more frustrated, more and more convinced that until you get rid of this dog, you'll be living in hell. You think, *I won't be able to stand another day of this.* You think, *If this dog doesn't leave me alone soon, I'm going to go crazy.*

It never occurs to you to *embrace* the dog. He is here to stay, after all. He is a part of your life, like it or not. You may not have invited him into your world, but he sure isn't leaving it. Can you accept that? Can you accept this dog?

Now imagine that you take a deep breath, exhale slowly, and take a good, long look at this dog. He isn't *scary*, really—more irritating than anything else. He just seems so *needy*, always scrambling for attention. Something in you begins to surrender. You give up. You shrug your shoulders, bend down, and pet the dog.

The strangest thing happens. He calms down. He stops nipping at you, stops pulling at your pant leg, and rolls over. Mystified, you stroke his belly for a minute and then make him a small bowl of food. He eats, finds a place near where you are sitting, curls up, and falls asleep.

This goes on for months. The dog is always near you; he never fully leaves you alone. A couple of times a day, you have to feed him and show him some affection. If you don't, he goes back to his old ways. He starts nipping and snarling, and driving you nuts. But as long as you notice him when he needs to be noticed, he isn't that much of a bother. He's always there, but not so much of a nuisance—just a part of life.

Think of all the time you might have wasted battling that dog, maybe days, weeks, or even months! You waste just as much time and energy trying to get rid of your emotions. Just like that dog, they are here to stay. They are a part of your life.

Exercise 1.1 Journal Questions