

A Discussion of William Glasser's book, *Positive addiction (1965)*

Addiction to drugs, alcohol, food, smoking, etc. are instances of powerful motivation, but they sap our strength and zest for doing our best. William Glasser (1965) believes there are other addictive activities that give us strength: jogging, meditating, writing a diary, exercising, relaxing, and so on. These are called positive addictions. Like Ellis and Knaus, Glasser focuses on the emotions underlying our behavior (level II). First, we all want to be loved and to feel worthwhile. When we don't get what we want, we either have the strength to try again or we don't. Thousands of us give up, according to Glasser, by saying, "Why try? I'd just fail" or "It's my parents' fault" or some other similar rationalization.

When giving up and giving excuses don't remove the pain (of not achieving love or worth), we may turn to psychiatric symptoms, such as depression, rebelling, going crazy, psychosomatic complaints, or addiction to drugs, alcohol, or food. Painful as these conditions are, they are less painful than facing the fact that we have failed and given up on obtaining love and self-worth....

What is Glasser's solution? Positive addictions. It isn't an easy solution nor is it for everybody. It takes six months to a year of activity (jogging, meditating,

etc.) one hour every day to develop a strength-giving addiction. The activity must usually be done alone, with no demands or striving for excellence or self-criticism. There are thousands of joggers, bikers, meditators, relaxers, journal writers, exercisers, and other users of positive addictions, along with Glasser, who claim great benefits. They claim to get more results than just feeling better and getting pleasure; they claim greater self-confidence, more energy, better imagination and ideas, more frustration tolerance and so on.

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