

ESSENTIAL RECOVERY DEFINITIONS

- **ADDICTION** is a habit that's become so powerful the person can't stop despite desperately wanting to, and despite severe and escalating consequences.
- **SOBRIETY** is the absence of harmful and unwanted acting out behaviors; doesn't by itself transform thought or change the habit.
- **RECOVERY** is the active practice of healthy and life-affirming behaviors; transforms thinking over time – transforms habits over time.

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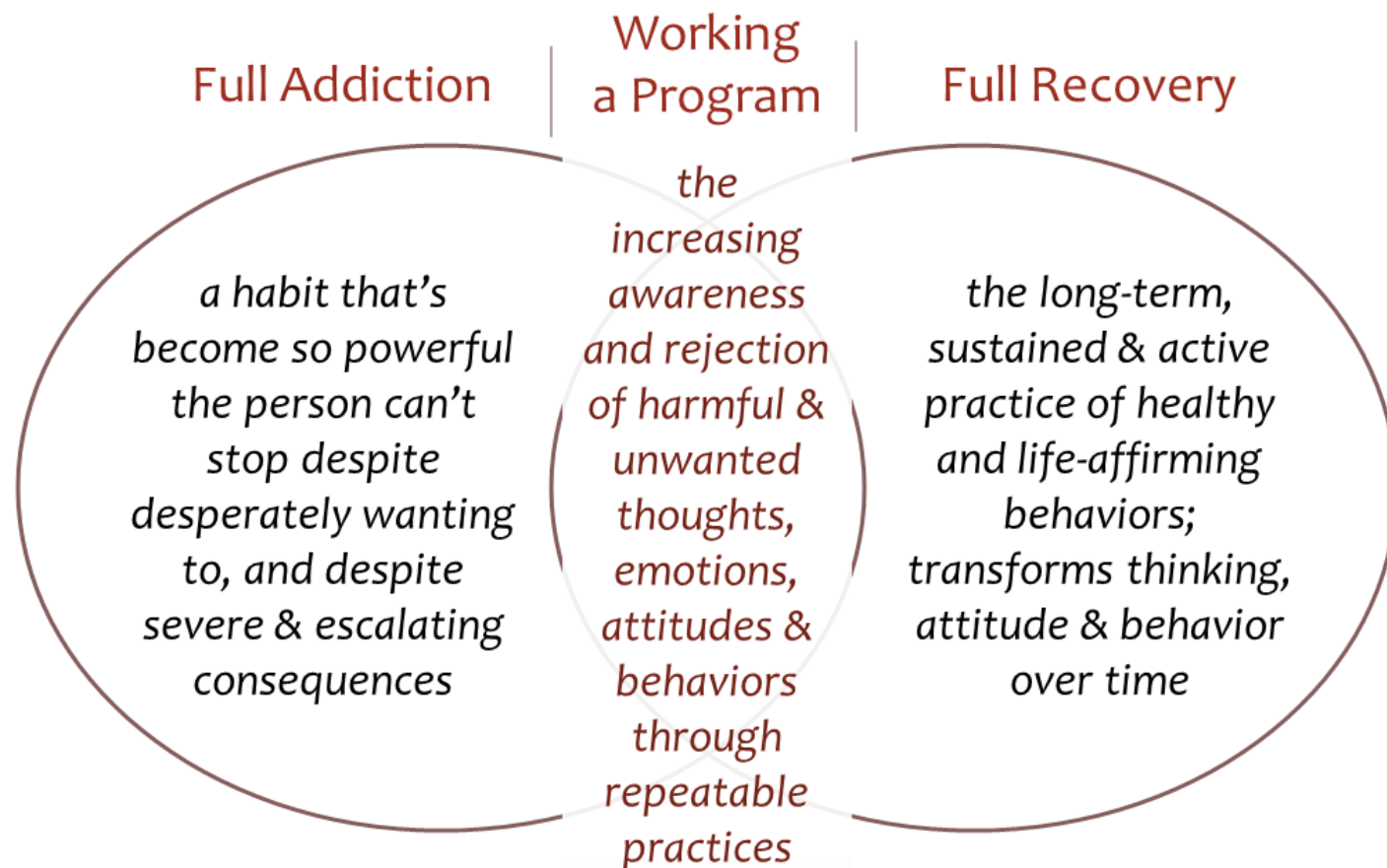
- **RECOVERY IS DEVELOPMENT IN A SPECIFIC DIRECTION:**
 - not only a focus on what you're recovering from, but also a focus on what you're recovering to – a learning process
 - not only the absence of unwanted or damaging acting out behaviors, but also the increasing practice and presence of healthy and life-affirming habits and routines

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- **WORKING A PROGRAM** is the increasing intentional awareness and rejection of unwanted thoughts, emotions, attitudes and behaviors through repeatable practices over some period of time.
- **FREEDOM (RECOVERED)** is the complete elimination of the overwhelming obsession and compulsion which drive the addict to use despite not wanting to. When the obsessive thought and compulsive drive are gone, **the addict is truly free.**

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Where does **‘WORKING A PROGRAM’** fit in the Addiction-Recovery space?



THE BRIDGE

A Habit is the Repeated and Reflexive Return to a Routine or Ritual.

Addiction is a Habit that has become so powerful the person can't stop.

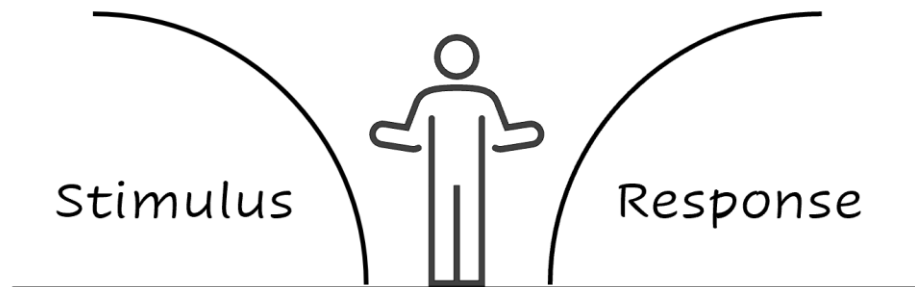


Habits become Addictions when Emotional Needs, Faulty Narratives, and Neurochemical Reinforcement override Choice.

-!- THE FRANKL SPACE -!-

Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

Viktor Frankl



Frankl Space

NarrativesCoaching.com

- A key feature of addiction (as discussed above) is the loss of agency (choice) once one crosses the line from dependence and ‘use disorder’ into full-blown addiction.
- A critical step in the change process is to create space between the Trigger and Ritual – a space where one can apply tools and other interventions to break the habit and establish new routines.
- Viktor Frankl captured this idea beautifully...

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- **The opposite of addiction isn't connection; the opposite of addiction is recovery.**
 - Hari's failed thesis* regarding the opposite of addiction rests on a false premise – that we already believe *the opposite of addiction is sobriety*. **We don't.** That's a misrepresentation derived from a conflated view of sobriety as a primary goal of AA or other recovery pathways. **It's not.**
 - The preamble of AA states, “a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and *help others to recover* from alcoholism.”
 - Due to the narrow definition of alcoholism in AA, *sobriety is the preferred first step* to recovery, but *is not a requirement for membership* or inclusion in the fellowship.
 - **The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.**

* [Ted Talk – Johann Hari – Everything you think you know about addiction is wrong](#)