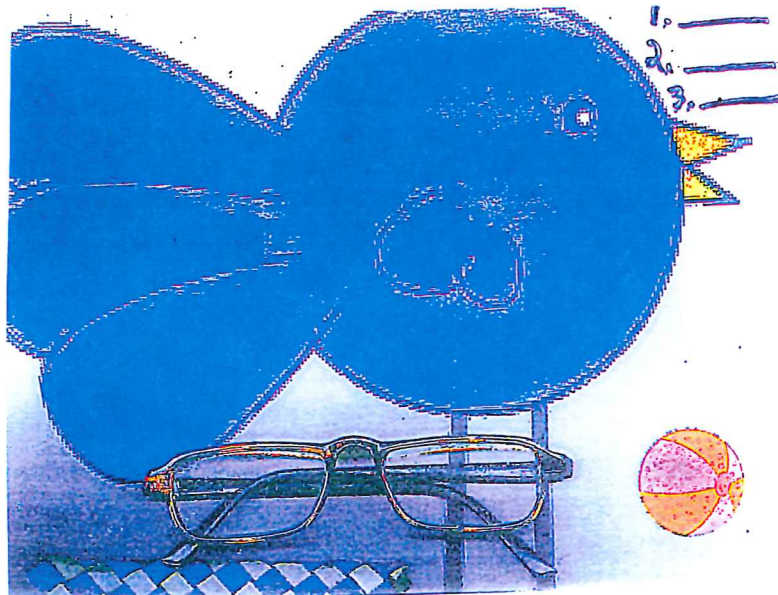


Live Better Series: "I can live a vital and meaningful life."

"ACT: Healthy ways to address addiction"

Tom Lavin MFT, LCADC, ACATA



Bluebird: I can live a vital, meaningful life. And, I accept I will sometimes have pain, and other times have joy, in my life.

New Pair of Glasses: to change my life, and grow in wisdom, I need to look at things differently.

Beach ball: I need to stop avoiding my life by pushing thoughts and feeling underwater. By being mindful, I will let my thoughts and feelings come up and accept them for what they are.

Finger trap: It is healthy for me to "accept what is as it is". When I struggle against "what is", I trap myself and cause suffering for myself. Accepting does not necessarily mean I like it.

1, 2, 3: I can live a vital and meaningful life by choosing and committing to values that are important to me—NIKE Therapy "Just do it!", make a plan, don't procrastinate, take action. Letting go and letting be is also a way of taking positive action.

1. Begin with the "ACT Mindfully Meditation" (Available online at http://contextualscience.org/tom_lavin_mft_lcadc_acata_live_better_pschoeducat) and then be aware of your experience of letting thoughts and feelings emerge and being aware of them and allowing them to be there. As you are letting your thoughts and feelings emerge and just be there, as we begin to look at your dependence-addiction behaviors, what thoughts and feelings come to your awareness?

___fear ___anxiety ___relief ___gratitude ___shame ___anger ___sadness

___remorse ___guilt ___peace of mind ___other _____

2. Next, you have the opportunity to examine your relationship with mood altering chemicals and the impact this relationship has had on your life. You will be using the "First Step Workbook: A guide to examine your relationship with mood altering chemicals", which asks questions and provides space for you to write thorough answers. (If you have a dependency-addiction besides/along with mood altering chemicals (food, work, sex, etc.), please use the questions to include those behaviors and impacts as well.)

Being mindful, answer each question with the greatest honesty and integrity that you can.

You don't have to answer the questions all at once—you take 1, 2 or a few or several questions at one—whichever suits your proper pace.

When you have completed the workbook, compliment yourself for having the willingness to take a good, honest look at behaviors in the past you may have denied or minimized or fooled yourself about or were afraid to face.

3. Next, choose someone that you trust and you know cares about you and will keep a confidence and ask them if they will sit with you as you review your "First Step Workbook" with them.
4. After you have completed sharing, find a quiet place, and ask yourself: "Am I willing to accept myself- forgive myself for the mistakes I've made?" Next, ask "Who have I harmed and am I willing to, when the time is right, make amends to them? (See the "Live Better" presentation and worksheets on "Forgiveness" and "Making Amends".

5. Vision-Decision-Action:

Have a vision of who you want to be and how you want your life to be, decide to create and live that vision, then, do it!

Lastly, have a conversation something like this:

"I am putting the past behind me. I have started to

follow a new life path. I want to be the best person I can be and live a vital and meaningful life.

A. What personal qualities do I want to develop: ___kind ___productive ___creative
___compassionate ___honest ___courageous ___patient ___grateful ___forgiving
___responsible ___service to others ___accepting ___good listener-communicator
___others_____

B. Meaning though giving: How I want to use my talents and gifts to contribute to
life_____

C. Meaningful connection: what activities will I engage in that bring me enjoyment or
connection with others and
life_____

What nurtures your spirit? Do that.

What does not nurture your spirit? Stop doing that.

Live simply.

Be grateful and share with others.

Forgive yourself and forgive others.

Maintain compassion for those who are suffering (that's just about everyone, most days).

Make a contribution to your community.

Keep an open mind.

Adapted from "Peace is Every Step", by Thich Nhat Hahn