



Am I an addict?

Before you write me wondering what this has to do with family business, read just a bit more. *Hi...my name is Mark and I'm an addict...*

WHAT?? Google the word *ADDICTION* and here's what pops up:

ad·dic·tion

əˈdɪkʃən

***the fact or condition
of being addicted
to a particular substance,
thing, or activity***

Synonyms: dependency, dependence, habit, problem

So, before you judge me, ask yourself, "Am I an addict?" If you don't think so, don't worry...Don't go wracking your brain to "discover" your addiction. I'm an addict. The thing is,

my addictions are easily hidden.

They don't carry the social consequences of many folk addicted to substances.

If we're honest, some substance addicts "get away with it, too"...for awhile. And so do I...for awhile...The fact is, there are always consequences, aren't there. And someone (or *someones*) always pays...

Gabor Mate, to whom I referred in last month's blog, says,

Any passion can become an addiction.

Are you passionate about your work? Be careful. Passionate about fitness? Be careful. Passionate about travel? Be careful.

What is true of an addiction? Let me list a few things that I believe are true of addictions:

- I expect my behavior or the substance to deliver something it rarely if ever does. I have unrealistic expectations.
- My addictions initially create a sense of guilt, which is about what I do; and then shame, which is about who I am.
- Over time, a sort of numbness sets in and along with the numbness comes the law of diminishing returns. It takes more and more to get the "high." And that high becomes more illusive.
- Addictions make certain things appear more important or valuable than they really are. Conversely, addictions can devalue important things in our lives.
- And, one last one:

Addictions thrive in secret.

So, in the spirit of vulnerability, permit me to share one of my addictions. I have a sweet tooth. And I have lots of experience with my wife's delectable chocolate chip oatmeal cookies. (Thank...or is it curse(?) you Patty for ever giving us your recipe...) And my experience tells me this:

***Cookie #12 tastes no better
than cookie #1.***

And here's another secret: I eat more in secret. If Lyn observed me eat my cookies, guess what? I'd eat fewer.

I believe Bruce Springsteen was right:

Everybody's got a hungry heart...

Johann Hari gave a TED Talk on addiction: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PY9DclMGxMs>

During his talk he made what was for me a startling statement. He said,

***The opposite of addiction
is not sobriety.***

***The opposite of addiction
is connection.***

So, if I want to break the addiction to Lyn's cookies, I need to come out of the closet and get connected. Coming out of the closet breaks the power of the secret. Shed light on the secret. And get connected.

***The life we're meant to live
is lived in relationship;
not in isolation.***

Brene Brown, near the start of her book, "The Gifts of Imperfection," says,

***Courage, compassion
and connection – the tools we need
to work our way through
our journey.***

So maybe we're all addicts of sorts...The road to "recovery" starts with admitting it. Then getting and staying connected...Then, realizing the path to that preferred future of recovery will not be linear. Practice grace and mercy – for yourself and other "addicts" on the journey. Along the way quit believing the lies that the illusive high from cookies or cocaine is attainable and ultimately satisfying. You long for something more...something better. Play that movie, not the lie. You'll be glad you did!

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