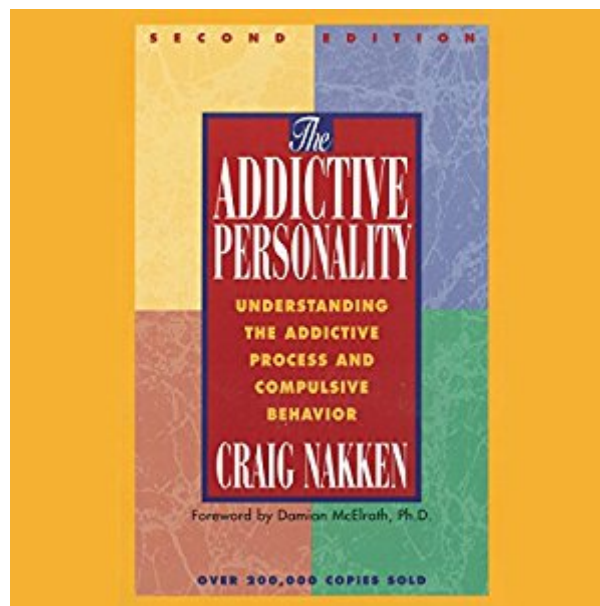


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# The Addictive Personality: Understanding The Addictive Process And Compulsive Behavior, Second Edition



## Synopsis

For over two decades, *The Addictive Personality* has helped people understand the process of addiction. Now, through this second edition, author Craig Nakken brings new depth and dimension to our understanding of how an individual becomes an addict. Going beyond the definition that limits dependency to the realm of alcohol and other drugs, Nakken uncovers the common denominator of all addiction and describes how the process is progressive. Through research and practical experience, Nakken sheds new light on: Genetic factors tied to addiction Cultural influences on addictive behaviors The progressive nature of the disease Steps to a successful recovery The author examines how addictions start, how society pushes people toward addiction, and what happens inside those who become addicted. This new edition will help anyone seeking a better understanding of the addictive process and its impact on our lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Craig Nakken is a family therapist and addictions counsellor at the Family Therapy Institute in St. Paul, Minnesota. He describes the addictive personality as "the most important idea expressed in this book". Nakken believes that some people are more prone to addiction than others. He examines various causes of this including influences in childhood. He does not rule out a genetic element saying that, "In all likelihood, it will be found to be a combination of the two" (environmental and genetic influences). An addictive personality may express itself in any addiction. This has important consequences for treatment. As Nakken observes:- Recovery is not just about breaking

off one's relationship with an object or event, though this is of great importance. Recovery is primarily about coming to know one's addictive personality and taking the necessary steps to rid oneself of addictive attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviours. An example of the effect of this is given:- "People in a recovery program for alcohol addiction need to clearly understand that they are prone to form a possible addictive relationship with another object or event - food for example. For these people, sobriety acquires a new dimension; instead of only monitoring their relationship with alcohol, they also need to learn how to monitor the addictive part of themselves." Craig Nakken believes that Society "can push a person with addictive tendencies toward addiction". In his book he outlines some values in modern society which are similar to addictive values. For those who are politically conscious this section provides an interesting slant on one effect of a consumer society. The section of the book devoted to the topic of recovery is perhaps the weakest section. This section would have benefited considerably from case studies and more detailed advice. -Reviewed by Patrick Harrington

No exaggeration. I'm considered to be a good person and a success, but have been deeply alone for years. I was trying to resolve an eating disorder when I came across this book. It explained exactly what was wrong, why, and how to heal and recover from not just the symptomatic eating disorder - but from the larger disease of addiction, which I now see has been at play in damaging so many aspects of my life. I wish I'd had this book 25 years ago. Everything finally makes sense. I'm so grateful for finding it.

This book, written in clear easily understood terms, is a MUST for anyone who thinks or feels they are family, friends or co-workers with someone prone to compulsive behaviour. Those of us who have not been through de-tox and/or a 12 step programme are so deficient in awareness of the illness of addiction as to be unable to understand the effect close proximity to this illness can have upon their own lives. Nakken explains the causes of addictive behaviour and the common theme between all forms of addiction. Whether you work with or for a 'Control Freak' live with an alcoholic or a gambler/shoplifter/over-eater, or have a child who is on drugs/shoplifting, this book is for you. An excellent first step to understanding the 'illness of the 20th Century'. Although revised for the 2nd edition (1996), it lacks a section on 'Further recommended reading', but anyone getting this far should contact the publisher for advice on books on more specific topics arising.

I first read this book maybe ten years ago, shortly after I quit drinking. At the time I was at a loss in

terms of understanding what I had put myself through, and why. When I read the book, it gave me an apt context in which to view my addiction. Every year or two I read it again, and always gain fresh insights. It surprised me greatly to read a few reviews here which put Nakken's work down. One person said the book was "useless" because it's too "theoretical". Funny, but I didn't find that to be the case. It definitely offered up thoughts on what I was going through which proved quite practical. Someone else implied Nakken's book is too contingent on the tenets of AA. I didn't find that to be the case either. It's a paradigm for understanding addiction which stands alone from the 12 steps. If people choose to use it in tandem with them, so be it. But it's not essential to what he says. Deng Xiaoping once said, "It doesn't matter if a cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice." Such is the case here. Some might feel he's too "theoretical", or take issue with his concept of the "addictive personality". Say what you want -- the man knows what he's talking about. He offers his readers some keen insights which are quite useful in understanding their own addictive issues, or those of someone close to them. I did NOT read this for a class. I read it because I had a problem, wanted to understand it, and when I was finished I actually did. As far as I'm concerned, Nakken's book was an excellent buy, and it's paid for itself maaaaany times over.

This book is a stellar discussion of the psychological world of addiction. It discusses the "private logic" of addicts, the type of daily rationalizations that form what Nakken called "addictive reasoning." These rationalizations make sense when you understand the short term goals and myopic mindset found in the world of the addict, but if you try to understand the addict using a general, "common sense" approach you'll find yourself getting frustrated. The real beauty of "addictive reasoning" is that it's broad enough to cover a lot of other types of behaviors that can loosely be called addictions, even if they aren't addictions in the strictest, most physical sense of the word. It can be applied to shopaholics, binge eaters, people who get addicted to certain types of lovers or with being in love in general, and others. A narcissist, for example, can be seen as someone who is addicted to validation and superficial forms of approval. By considering a narcissist as a validation addict and then applying Nakken's book on addictive thinking to such people, it can shed a lot of light on why they act the way they do and what types of people put up with them. This is all to say that the uses of this book extend beyond alcohol, drugs or whatever else typically first comes to mind when people hear the word "addict." I would highly recommend supplementing this book with readings from Alfred Adler (especially his writing on social interest), Karen Horney, Eckhart Tolle's *A New Earth* and buddhist literature in general, as I found a lot of overlap with those books and the concepts Nakken describes.

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