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Written by Susan Hepburn

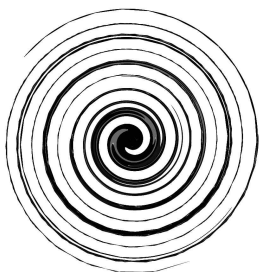
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HYPNOQUIT

HOW TO BREAK FREE
OF **ANY ADDICTION** –
FOR EVER



SUSAN HEPBURN

ARE YOU AN ADDICT?



How do you know whether you are addicted or not? First, let's look at what addiction is.

An addiction is a compulsion to engage in a specific activity and to repeat this activity time and time again, as if powerless to stop. An addicted person will either use a substance, or persist with certain behaviour, in order to feel good (or to avoid feeling bad). The compulsion can be so immense that they often go to great lengths to fulfil it.

Astonishingly, around one in three of us suffer from an addiction of some kind, but addictions don't all work in the same way. Drugs, alcohol, chocolate and nicotine, for example, all affect the way you feel, both physically and mentally. You then crave more of that feeling. Other addictions, such as shopping, the Internet or sex, give you a mental 'high' followed by a strong urge to do it again.

Of course, not everyone who enjoys shopping (or the Internet, or sex) is an addict – far from it. You may tick many

of the boxes in the questionnaire on page 93, ‘Are you a compulsive shopper?’, but not be addicted. You simply enjoy shopping and may feel a little guilty now and then for over-spending, you may return a dress because you have changed your mind, but it doesn’t make you a shopping addict. So, to clarify, if shopping dominates your thoughts – and you tick all the boxes – and you always get a ‘high’ followed by anxiety and self-hatred, if you repeatedly buy the same items and definitely do not need them, then you are most likely a shopping addict. The same applies to Internet use and sex: if you are using the Internet to extremes, or your desire for sex is out of control and causing unhappiness, you have a problem. All these addictions will be explained in full in Part 2.

THE HIGH THAT TURNS TO A LOW

Addictions all initially give you a buzz, but this eventually turns to angst. This is the stage that you are at right now, otherwise you wouldn’t be reading *Hypnoquit* (unless you are reading it out of pure curiosity).

Now that you are past the buzz stage, you need your ‘fix’ – whether it’s chocolate, a cigarette, a prescription drug, a visit to the shops or alcohol. You feel that you need it just to function and to feel normal. Although you may or may not have physical symptoms, there will certainly be mental agony if you deny yourself. This leads to a sense of powerlessness and despair. Your feelings towards that habit have now changed. When the addiction initially took a hold of you, it seemed amazing: ‘Wow, why didn’t I do this sooner?’ Now you realise it’s capable of destroying you.

★ **Case Study:** Jennifer, 19, was addicted to food and chocolate.

Before treatment:

'I became aware of the whole concept of weight when I was 13 when one of my friends said, "You would be really pretty if you lost some weight." I felt embarrassed and wounded.

'My sister is two years younger than me, but she gets all the attention, because she is thin and has a nice body and is outgoing, whereas I am quite shy. I get really annoyed, as my mum and my sister are really close and they seem to laugh a lot together and mum will say to me, "You are so serious Jenny. If you lose some weight you will be happier and see life differently, why can't you be like your sister?"

'I started starving myself . . . one day I would hardly eat and another day I would binge and make myself sick. There was no pattern to this; it simply depended on my mood. I got thin and thought I looked good, but my self-esteem was really low.

'I was trying some jeans on and my best friend said, "Ooh you look really lovely and skinny," and it stuck in my head.

'My best friend and I used to share a meal sometimes or decide not to eat dinner at all. I absolutely loved chocolate and was not prepared to give that up, so I always ate my chocolate in secret. I know I'm addicted, but I don't care.

'I feel I have lost my childhood, I feel I never had a childhood. I hate exercise and I feel that it is a punishment.

'My mum told me about Hypnoquit and I was reluctant at first, and then I thought, What have I got to lose? And it gets my mum off my back.'

After treatment:

'I am surprised how this method has changed my whole concept of food and addictions and has given me more time to

enjoy other things in my life, like family, friends and sport. Before hypnosis I never stopped thinking about food and chocolate. Now I am so surprised that I am almost indifferent to food, and I am so busy I hardly ever think about it unless I'm hungry, which is a revelation in itself; I never knew what it was like to be hungry before, as I was constantly grazing. I do have chocolate now and again, but it doesn't have the same buzz, it's just enjoyable. My sister and I are friends now and I no longer think my sister is my mum's favourite. I am doing better with my studies and I do see a purpose in life now.'

WHO BECOMES AN ADDICT?

Anyone can develop addictions and dependency problems. They are not limited to a certain age group, gender or income bracket. But the experience of addiction is different for everyone. This is because there are so many factors in the mix: your personality and disposition, your life circumstances and the substance or behaviour to which you are addicted.

There is a common perception that an addict must be 'weak' in some way, but this is simply untrue. I have seen people from all walks of life with dependency issues. Some of my clients are extremely influential people; some of them are successfully heading major public companies by day, but their world changes by night because of their addiction. Outwardly, they seem to have it all. They may be incredibly successful, beautiful, powerful and high-profile people and yet still they have become addicted. Of course, some people have more disposable income to enable them to indulge; others, however, have more spare time: they may be waiting around

for the next movie offer – or they may be unemployed because of the effects of their addiction. There can be any number of reasons.

How is addiction affecting you?

The actual experience of addiction is different for everyone. But I have found that all addicts have one thing in common: their dependency invariably damages their life. It harms their relationships, their career and their self-esteem.

Does this ring true for you? Are you suffering from the loss of your career due to your addiction? Or is it coming between you and someone you love? Or is it simply something that you would just like to remove from your life because of the money it costs and the time you spend thinking about it rather than thinking about other things?

Of course, not everyone is badly affected by their addiction – a social smoker is one example, and you may be one of them. But you know that you are hooked and you want to quit, partly for health reasons but also because most of your friends have probably quit already.

However bad your addiction feels you still go back for more, time and time again, because of the addiction haze surrounding you. You think you will never overcome your addiction and get out of this mess.

*Life is not meant to be lived
in an addiction haze.*



WHY DO PEOPLE BECOME ADDICTED?

Many addictions are simply the cigarette smoking that grew from the occasional one enjoyed when socialising, the bar of special chocolate that you looked forward to at weekends, or the glass of wine you drank to unwind after work. Others, however, are more linked to the desire to find a space that frees your mind from difficult feelings. There can be many complex reasons why someone feels compelled to take a break from the reality of life and indulge in an almost fantasy world: relationship issues, life's stresses, boredom, peer pressure, childhood trauma and even a genetic predisposition. For some, this break from reality is a mere self-indulgence, taken now and again, but for others certain factors dictate that they are more likely to become hooked.

When you indulge in an addiction such as cocaine, for example, the euphoria you get from this drug takes you into an unreal world, a blissful state, an 'Alice in Wonderland' moment – just like a fantasy – and for some the unreal world is scary and they either never go there again or they do so infrequently; others, however, become hooked.

*Hypnoquit will work for you
whether you are, in your
opinion, mildly addicted or
severely addicted.*



WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF ADDICTION?

Sometimes you don't believe you are addicted because you just see it as a habit. Smoking is one such example. You always

smoke at particular times, and you might not see it as having a very detrimental affect on your life. Getting your ‘retail therapy’ is another. You don’t feel that it’s so bad that it is really creating problems. But, if you *have* to do those things regularly, you are, indeed, addicted and once addicted you will inevitably suffer financially, personally and, for many addictions, with your health. And those nagging fears are often at the back of your mind even when you are just classifying your addiction as a habit. Eventually, you want to rid yourself of those fears as you realise that this ‘habit’ has a greater effect on your life than you once thought. But when it comes down to it, giving up is not easy and you may have tried many times, failing each time and feeling more consumed by the guilt of your failure and your desperation to get out of this cycle.

The power of addiction

Addiction can be so powerful that it dominates your mind and affects your daily life and relationships, but it still has you going back for more. Some addictions can create a constant physical craving, where you are powerless to stop yourself and feel desperate and alone.

As an addict you will go to great lengths to score a ‘hit’. If your addiction is antisocial or illegal, you may have to indulge in risky or criminal behaviour in order to satisfy your addiction. Although most addictions are not extreme, others might involve using dirty needles, interacting with dangerous unstable individuals, burglary, or any number of crimes to fund the addiction.

Many addicts are in denial and invariably will attempt to

hide their addiction. They begin to adopt covert behaviour as the addiction takes hold and they will hide their behaviour from others – drinkers hide their alcohol, smokers sneak cigarettes, food addicts eat in secret, drug addicts hide their drugs, heroin addicts inject between the toes, and so on.

Addictions affect not just your life but also the lives of those around you. When you are in the throes of your addiction, you ignore all your responsibilities and become selfish, as your hit becomes the most important thing in your life. You may even go on the missing list, causing your loved ones to worry about you, or you may find little time for personal hygiene.

*I will teach you to take
control of your life and to no
longer be addicted.*



★ **Case Study:** Marilyn, 43, is a PR company director and was addicted to alcohol, drugs and sex.

Before treatment:

Marilyn lives in a cul de sac. Her neighbours are social animals – gathering in each other's houses for drinking parties in the winter and barbecues in the summer, with alcohol flowing. Initially, this only happened at weekends, but gradually they began to gather four or five times a week.

Soon, Marilyn became so accustomed to alcohol that she could drink two bottles of wine every night – party or no party. Her fitness-fanatic husband was frustrated with

her. He could control his alcohol to an occasional glass of wine. Marilyn had gained over 12.7kg (2st/28lb) in six months. All resolve for healthy eating disappears under the influence of alcohol, and Marilyn was no different. She was eating takeaways, ice cream, pizzas and chocolate, and she regularly raided the children's treat drawer. She was dehydrated in the mornings and although she planned to drink water, she ended up drinking copious amounts of diet sodas instead.

Her husband was honest and direct. He wasn't the type to say, 'I love you whatever size you are.' He told Marilyn that he no longer found her fat body attractive and found it difficult to desire her sexually. He said, 'You need to get something done about it. You have lost self-respect by doing this to yourself, so how can I respect you?' But this made her defiant – so she drank more.

Then one day tipsy Marilyn was play-chasing with one of her children in the garden. Her daughter started screaming, saying, 'I don't like your voice Mummy and I want Daddy to put me to bed.' Marilyn was mortified. At that moment, she knew she had to get help. Her drinking was out of control, as were many other aspects of her life.

During our first consultation, Marilyn also admitted to me that she was addicted to two other things: prescription drugs and male prostitutes. She told me she'd been using male prostitutes for over ten years. She'd tried to stop when she had her children but she simply couldn't. It felt completely out of control.

She told me she'd wanted to try Hypnoquit years ago to cure her addiction to prostitutes, but was ashamed to

admit it to anyone. I reassured her that whatever she could tell me about her addictions, I'd probably heard it all before – and sometimes more extreme versions – but, more importantly, the very nature of the addictions never occurs to me, as I'm not here to judge. I'm here to help.

After treatment:

Marilyn is now making excellent progress. She's eternally grateful to hypnosis. She has been free from all her addictions for 32 weeks now and is very confident that she will remain in this positive frame of mind. In the midst of her addictions, she just didn't seem to realise how much she had to lose. Now, with a clear head, she does.

WHAT DO PEOPLE BECOME ADDICTED TO?

People assume that addictions invariably involve alcohol or drugs such as nicotine. Although it's very common to be addicted to these substances, they are just the tip of the addiction iceberg. In fact, it is possible to become hooked on virtually anything.

I often treat people who have become addicted to sex, or to the Internet, to shopping, computer games, work, food, gambling and much, much more. Other less-known addictions, which have been treated equally effectively by hypnosis, are thumb sucking in adulthood, or men who have an addiction to wearing ladies' silk underwear. I have treated several men who need to wear rubber clothing and rubber boots during sex. If their partners are not interested and they want to stop anyway, Hypnoquit does help.

With Hypnoquit there is so little investment and yet the rewards are immense.



You buy new shoes, win a bet, sleep with a stranger, swallow a pill, light a cigarette or drink a glass of wine, and you experience that high. Just for that moment, the world feels wonderful. You feel light, free, happy, ‘better’. But as the high wears off, it’s replaced by a yearning – the need to repeat the feeling. You may feel withdrawal symptoms – either physical or mental, or both. The urge to repeat the behaviour can become so powerful that it dominates your thoughts.

HOW DOES ADDICTION WORK?

Addiction doesn’t happen overnight. Nevertheless, it seems to take you by surprise, and by the time you have to face it, you may have already lost control.

Addiction works in two ways:

- 1 **Physical addiction** happens when you take a substance, such as alcohol or drugs, which cause physiological changes in your body. When you use this substance it changes your body’s chemistry. Used repeatedly, you can become physically dependent, and may crave the substance constantly. Without it, you experience withdrawal symptoms – often shaking, nausea, bowel changes, headaches and sleeping disorders. A physical addiction can develop through repeated use of prescription drugs such as antidepressants, tranquillisers

or sleeping pills. They all change the body chemistry, alter the mind and become highly addictive.

- 2 **Psychological addiction** is when you want, or need, your fix and you feel that you cannot function without it. The mind can become addicted to almost any activity that enhances your mood: addictions to shopping, sex, or the Internet all work this way. You experience powerful mental cravings. There are also often physical symptoms, such as anxiety, while you wait for your next fix, when you can repeat that particular behaviour until your mind is hooked on it.

'Every form of addiction is bad, no matter whether the narcotic be alcohol or morphine or idealism.' Carl Jung



WARNING SIGNS

Do any of the following apply to you?

- 1 Do you feel unsettled at the thought of quitting your habit, and would you prefer to quit later, say next month?
- 2 Do you become defensive if anyone suggests your habit is a problem?
- 3 Is your habit an important part of your life?
- 4 Do you spend most of the day thinking about your habit, and wanting to do it as often as possible?
- 5 Do you indulge in your habit to change the way you're feeling, or is it a compulsion you find difficult to do without?

- 6 Is your habit your guilty secret?
- 7 Do you often indulge in your habit on your own?
- 8 Do you need to have more and more of it to get the same buzz?
- 9 Have you ever tried to quit and been unable to do so, even though you know it's interfering with your career, your family or your relationships?
- 10 Has anyone asked you to 'Please get help'?

Prescription medicines, alcohol and drugs

If you are taking antidepressants or tranquillisers, or are seriously dependent on alcohol or addicted to hard drugs, it is essential to seek medical advice before using *Hypnoquit*.

★ **Case Study:** Rachel, 35, works for a documentary film company and was an alcohol abuser.

Before treatment:

Rachel is single and works long hours, socialising late into the night with other single 30-somethings in the city where she lives.

'I didn't start drinking alcohol until I was in my late twenties and only when socialising. All my friends at university were drinking copious amounts, but I just wasn't interested. I changed jobs and met a great bunch of people. Most of my friends were married with kids, so it was such a relief to find people my age, without ties, who were having fun. We'd go to bars, sometimes clubs, or restaurants. I didn't really like the taste of alcohol, but in no time I'd have two or three large glasses of wine, maybe some cocktails too.'

I only actually got so drunk that I fell over about once a month, but I'd be drinking consistently: large pub measures, wine, cocktails or champagne. I would simply fall in with whatever my new friends were having. They would also have the occasional line of cocaine, so I did too. However, I began to notice this habit was becoming more regular. On my nights in alone, I'd open a bottle of red wine, order a takeaway and watch TV. My mind would wander to how great it would be to have a line of cocaine too, and it would make me feel less lonely.

'Often, I'd finish off the bottle late at night on the sofa and, I'm ashamed to say, I would sometimes fall asleep and wake up cold around 2.00 a.m., just as my father used to do. But I hardly ever felt hung over. Sometimes I'd go on a detox and not drink at all for a few days, or I would take myself off to a health farm and listen to like-minded individuals who were following the same pattern of behaviour as I was.

'But it didn't last long – this promise to myself of a “new me” – oh no, not much longer than a few days, and I would soon be going out again and I'd have to drink. Everyone was; it was part of the lifestyle. A friend and I were comparing and counting the units we drank in a week and I realised I was regularly consuming 40 or 50 units of alcohol a week – way over the recommended limit. That didn't stop me, I thought I knew better and even found it amusing that I could drink so much. We began to have drunken hysterical drinking competitions . . . until one day, I overheard someone say that I was a “cokehead and a drunk” and I was lucky to keep my job, and it came as no surprise that I was single. I was totally devastated – I had to stop this behaviour and I had to do it right now.'

After treatment:

'Hypnoquit helped me to turn my life around. I didn't feel that I needed to change my job or move away, as I felt confident that I could easily never drink alcohol again. Cocaine was no problem either, as that only ever accompanied alcohol. However, I did decide to have a complete change and to move away. I don't think my drinking pals would want me around them anymore and, quite frankly, I didn't really want to be around them. I am having fun, but a clear-headed type of fun. I don't blame anyone but myself, but I don't dwell on the past either, I am moving forwards and really enjoying my life more than ever, and I couldn't have done it without Hypnoquit.'

**Stopping completely or relearning
to be moderate?**

To break some addictions you will have to stop completely. Smoking is an example. For other addictions, however, you will need to change your relationship so that whatever you were overloading on can be part of normal living once again. Food, for example, is essential to life, so you need to relearn how to eat in moderation. You can also learn how to use the Internet sensibly and to shop for things you need rather than buying for its own sake.

ARE YOU READY TO START?

Addiction can be scary and confusing. You may feel guilty, despairing and exhausted. You've taken the first huge step towards breaking free and finding a life without addiction.

Now, ask yourself if you are ready to begin. If you are not quite ready to quit right now, start an addiction diary. It will give you a clearer idea of what keeps your habit going.

EXERCISE: keep an addiction diary

If you are not ready to quit right now, it can help to keep a note of when, how and why you indulge in your habit.

- 1 Keep a small notebook in your pocket or handbag to use as your addiction diary.
- 2 When you feel the urge to indulge in your habit, write down how you are feeling, physically and emotionally, and what you are doing at that time. For instance, if you are addicted to alcohol, make a note of what you drank, where, and how much, and also how you felt at that time.

Your addiction diary helps you to build up a picture of how your addiction works for you. Every addiction is different. Usually there are emotional triggers that cause the impulse or urge. Keeping a note of your feelings at the time you get that urge can be enlightening. It helps you to understand your addiction, and therefore helps you to conquer it, from the inside out.

*Addictions begin with you
choosing to use.
Recovery begins with you
choosing to quit.*



I hope that this chapter has helped you to recognise that your addiction has far-reaching effects for your whole life, but all is certainly not lost. In the following chapter I will explain why it is that some people become caught in the trap of addiction whereas others keep control and, of course, I'll be paving the way to help you start on Hypnoquit.