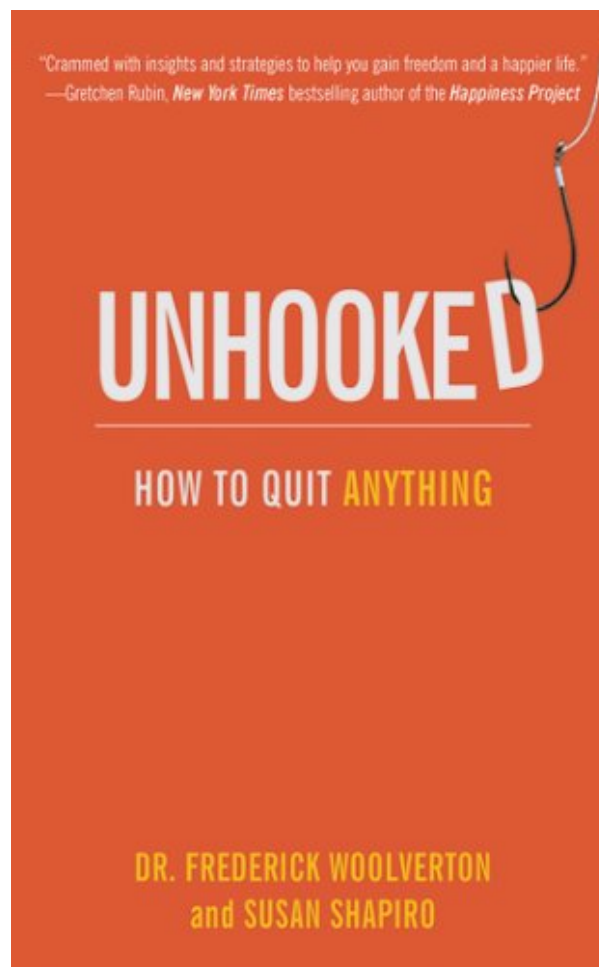


UNHOOKED: HOW TO QUIT ANYTHING BY SUSAN SHAPIRO, FREDERICK WOOLVERTON



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UNHOOKED



HOW TO QUIT **ANYTHING**

DR. FREDERICK WOOLVERTON
and **SUSAN SHAPIRO**

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Is smoking, alcohol, drugs, food, gambling, the Internet, or sex addiction holding you back from getting what you want most—in work and in love? We're all addicted to something—but when the crutch gets in the way of living a happy and productive life, it must stop. Over the past twenty-five years, renowned addiction therapist Dr. Frederick Woolverton has used his dynamic, empathetic approach to help thousands of addicts achieve long-term recovery—including himself. He sees the specific habit as less important than the underlying chaos and fear that motivate the urge to sooth ourselves with bad habits. The solution, he has found, requires only a better understanding of yourself and a change in attitude. *Unhooked: How To Quit Anything* is an intelligent, readable, and actionable guide to conquering any addictive habit. Using real patient examples as well as research and his own experience, Dr. Woolverton and coauthor (and former patient) Susan Shapiro show how to thrive without self-medicating. The approach involves an unorthodox blend of straightforward changes to behavior and open and honest conversation with another person. Woolverton's specific instructions do not require an expensive therapist, rehab, 12-step program, or a higher power (but he does make readers aware of those viable options). Let him help you kick your addiction and find what's missing in your world. When you conquer a toxic habit, you are leaving room for something more beautiful to take its place.

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Most helpful customer reviews

24 of 25 people found the following review helpful.

Worth hooking into

By Deb

If addiction affects your life, or that of someone close to you, *_Unhooked_* is a great resource to hook into. With its captivating case studies, the book reads like a novel; with its clinical rationales, insights, and guidelines, it informs like a documentary.

The author--a clinical psychologist and a recovered addict himself--presents a coherent synopsis of the factors underlying addictions and the approaches most effective in treating them. Reading through the book, I was continually struck by how well the author conveyed this wealth of information. Here's just a small sampling demonstrating his ability to effectively communicate overarching principles of addiction etiology and treatment:

Addictions are more about avoiding pain than about seeking pleasure:

***Often addictions bring no joy or amusement to the user whatsoever. Instead they take away intolerable pain, depression, and anxiety, and replace it with a numbness, or uneasy equilibrium that make mere survival seem possible. Substances often function as self-medication for an addict's usually undiagnosed distress. (p.63)

***Substances succeed in self-medicating only for short periods of time. A common misconception about addicts is that they are hedonistic pleasure seekers. This is not the case. Most addicts do not use to seek pleasure. They are people out to avoid terrible pain. They use not for fun, but often just to feel okay and get through the day. (p.113)

Substances serve as human stand-ins:

***Addicts often have an infantile need for the attention and safety they never felt from their parents. They have turned to their substances as a stand-in for soothing. So when they quit a substance dependency, they revert back to the age they were when they started using. A young and palpable hunger for love comes out. (pp.88-89)

***Many addicts were disappointed by adults early on and thus had no confidence that they were being protected. Since their own internal voices failed to reassure them or make them feel secure, they turned to substances to manage bad feelings. (p. 59)

***Many people with substance problems feel empty because they have not been nurtured or fed well at home. They yearn to feel love and cared for. Deep down, that's what they're really after. (p.82)

It's a paradox not uncommon to addicts who crave closeness but often give up on people in favor of substances, which are less likely to cause disappointment and are much easier to control. (p.121)

Addictions become barricades:

***Addictions inhibit emotional intensity, artistic urges, and love. They act as blockades, often keeping users from being deeply involved with the people they care about or from becoming as powerfully creative and successful as they could otherwise be. (p.107)

***[Addicts] artificially soothe themselves with a quick hit while stunting their long-term emotional growth and success. They miss opportunities that could lead to expanding experience, understanding, and greater intimacy with others in their world. (p.104)

What ultimately heals:

***Most addicts use substances because they don't want to suffer and hope to avoid feelings of anger, sorrow, pain and discomfort...Living well, even suffering well, are more attainable goals than being happy. (p. 109)

***Along with external changes, it is also essential to get to the inner roots of a substance problem. To stop it, you have to figure out what hurts so much that makes someone need to self-medicate many times daily, often for decades. (p.204)

***A large part of all addicts' recovery involves feeling intense sadness...They have to confront a huge empty space inside. (p.207)

***Once a specific addiction has ceased, if you don't deal directly with the underlying emotional problems that caused it, you'll simply switch addictions. (pp.147-148)

***The point of addiction therapy or AA is to give addicts the language and skills to unravel the rage and confusion brewing beneath their bad habits. (p.206)

***[Addicts] eventually have to transfer [their substance dependency] onto a human being that can be depended on. (p. 206)

***What hurts people most are secrets and lies, and what finally heals is honesty. One has to find a way to live **with** the truth, not fight against it. (p.110)

In order to get and stay happy and healthy, it is necessary to lead the least secretive life that one can. (p. 206)

***You have to start taking care of yourself the way you wish someone else would take care of you. (p. 118)

Unhooked is both a great read and a great resource. It's even a bit difficult to put down at times--quite appropriate for a book on addictions!

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

A Recovery Classic with Real Clout

By jerelle

If Amy Winehouse and Jimi Hendrix had read Unhooked, they'd likely be with us today. Both authors of this book are intimate with the terror of addiction and the triumph of recovery, so you trust them immediately.

Dr. Wooleverton, a former cigarette addict, is the eminent substance abuse shrink who helped author/professor Shapiro quit her 27-year, two-pack a day habit.

Unhooked delivers poignant tales of real people who've recovered from fierce addictions to everything from drugs and sex to tattoos and Facebook. Shapiro is candid about her myriad former crutches: dope, Diet Coke, shopping, shrinks, booze, gum, pills, and cupcakes. And many of the examples recounted here are extreme enough to make your own horrors feel conquerable.

The core theme--that all addictions are coping mechanisms for deeper psychic issues--is deftly documented. And the periodic self-quizzes are effective in helping us learn why we self-medicate. Unhooked's tight, lively writing; its solid, valuable advice; and its powerful, mesmerizing case studies had me hooked throughout.

25 of 27 people found the following review helpful.

Not a fan

By Not a Fan

I read this book because Susan Shaprio was the co-author. I was pretty disappointed. I had bought this book thinking it was more a self-help/reflection type of book. I found this book to be more about the author's case studies and personal achievements with his career and patients, rather than enlightening or inspiring on a personal level. Disappointed.

See all 76 customer reviews...

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