The Faith Factor
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Freedom Faith Based Training

The Faith Factor
Personal Identity
The 12 Steps
A system of rules and customs based on orthodoxy that is generally imposed on individuals that are born into that system.

- Formalize
- Ritualize
- Legalize
Spirituality vs Religion

- Spirituality is not religion
- Religion is concerned with understanding and applying some form of spirituality to improve the human experience.
- Spirituality is far more fundamental than religion. It is highly personal and totally unique to the individual.
Spirituality vs. Religion

- Religion relies on standardization creating a homogeneous environment where everyone does the same thing (denominations).
- Religion is imposed from external sources. We were born into it.
- Spirituality emphasizes personal uniqueness. Arises from within the individual and is not imposed upon the individual from the system they were born into.
- Spirituality has its roots in the spiritual nature of the individual being itself.
- We are both spiritual and physical beings.
What is True Spirituality?

- Comes about when we are able to:
  - Recognize that there is a spiritual reality
  - Realize by personal experience that spiritual reality
  - Express that spiritual reality with others
- Relates to the 3 steps of AA (The Big Book)
  - The AA program is spiritual but not religious. It is the classic example of how to be fully spiritual without being religious.
1. We admit that we are powerless. Underscores the need for spirituality.
2. We believe that a power greater than ourselves can restore us. Underscores the nature of spirituality. Necessity
3. Expression of spirituality. Turn your will and your life over to the care of God as you understand him.
Step 1 - Need

- The seed of spirituality in the faith factor – you realize that your life is out of control.
- The aspects of the human spirit:
  - Ability to communicate with God
  - We have the spiritual capacity and ability to change, creatively manage our environment
  - We have the spiritual capacity to develop a self-consciousness
Step 2 - Necessity

- After we hit the bottom, we come to believe a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. Comes from the need to be delivered from insanity to something better.

- Wayne Dyer – New Age writer – says there are 3 aspects that come as a result of step 2...3 R’s
Step 2 - Necessity

3 R’s

- Recognition that there is a spiritual reality and presence that corresponds to and goes beyond this current present reality.
  - We live in 2 realms / worlds at the same time: physical reality universe and spiritual reality—not physically discerned.
  - A realization of a spiritual presence that surpasses all intellectual reasoning—for personal direction and empowerment.
Step 2 - Necessity

- 3 R’s (cont.)
  - A Reverence for the fact that we are one with the spiritual force that we know as God our higher power. You worship God because of the personal benefit we get from him.
  - The nature of true spirituality consists of our ability to recognize a spiritual force that creates and sustains our life.
Foundational Beliefs
That Form an Attitude of Spirituality

1. Belief that there is a God or higher power outside of ourselves that exists, creates and sustains us.

2. I am more than just a physical being just living in a physical reality. I am also a spiritual being.

3. A higher power is needed for recovery and personal well-being.
Foundational Beliefs That Form an Attitude of Spirituality

4. I can access and experience the higher power (critical belief)
5. Such spirituality is as important as abstinence in recovery. You cannot recover without including the spiritual component.
6. There is a difference between spirituality and religion.
7. I can be spiritual without becoming religious.
Step 3 - Expression

- We’ve turned our will and our life over to God as we personally understand in order for it to help in recovery.

- Danger Point – you have a tendency to try and conform to someone else’s understanding, i.e. origin of Toxic Faith.
Origin of Toxic Faith

- Imposed on an individual from outside.
- Violates freedom of choice of the individual.
- Coercive means used to influence an individual.
Origin of True Faith

- True Faith is not imposed
- True faith arises from within the individual
- True faith is spontaneous, arising from within in response to love, compassion, forgiveness, etc. No coercion.
Focus of Faith

- Toxic Faith focuses on self-effort of the individual
- True Faith focuses on divine provision.
Expression of Faith

- Toxic faith is always expressed in manipulation—seeking power and control over other people.
- True faith is always expressed in ministry—love, compassion, tolerance, acceptance.
The Role of the Faith Factor in Cognitive Restructuring

- The reason we act is because of the way we feel. The reason we feel the way we do is based on the way we think.
- In order to understand a behavior, you must understand the emotion.
- Assumption: emotions are based on circumstances. Albert Ellis developed the Rational Emotive Theory (ABC Theory).
ABC Theory

A
What Happens to Me

B
What you Believe about What Happened (self-talk)

C
Emotional Consequence
How I Feel
ABC Theory

- Forces me to accept responsibility for what I’m believing. If I will accept responsibility for what I’m feeling and believing, then I have a key to emotional freedom and liberty. I can change my beliefs and change how I feel.
Cognitive Restructuring

- Cognitive means thinking
- Restructuring means changing.
- The most critical thing that has to change in an addict's mind is how they think...not in general, but what they think about themselves.
Personal Identity

- Who are you?
  By giving an individual a healthy self-identity or self-concept, they have the ability to restructure / change their thinking.

- The Faith Factor is central here. A powerful tool to help manage and redirect behavior in a positive and constructive way.
Cognitive Restructuring - The Faith Factor

- The change in recovery must come from the inside out.
- Only 2 religions in the world have given man the capacity to have a personal relationship with God—Judaism and Christianity.
Impact of Christianity

- The primary benefit of the faith factor is that it offers hope to the hopeless.
- The Bible is a powerful tool in cognitive restructuring as a therapeutic tool in recovery.
The Identity Factor

- Robert McGee’s Book – Search for Significance
- 4 basic lies / false assumptions that people develop as they grow up about themselves that are countered therapeutically by the Bible as a therapeutic tool to enhance the personal worth of the individual.
4 Basic Lies

- 1st lie – Worth: Our worth as persons depends upon things like personal performance, i.e. how you act.
- 2nd lie – Blame Game: When we fail to perform well. Those who fail are not worthy of love and are worthy to be punished.
The Continuum Between Guilt and Shame

- Guilt is the natural response to our failure to meet up to certain standards that we consider to be important, i.e. values and morals.

- Shame is when we no longer think of ourselves as making a mistake, but we now begin to think of ourselves as being a mistake.
4 Lies (cont.)

- **3rd Lie - Approval Addiction:** I must have the approval of certain others in order to be worthy.

- **4th Lie – Shame:** I am what I am...a worthless person. I am a mistake and I’ll never change.
The Bible vs. the 4 Lies

- These lies are inconsistent with the Bible.
- McGee says the Bible is the therapeutic tool to help with cognitive restructuring.
- The Bible tells us:
  - 1. Performance trap – Concept of Justification. God has declared us righteous. It has nothing to do with our performance.
The Bible vs. the 4 Lies

The Bible tells us:

2. The Blame Game – Propitiation: God is satisfied with us. All hostility between us and God is gone. God doesn’t blame us.

3. Approval Addiction – Reconciliation: God totally accepts us based upon his performance for us.
The Bible vs. the 4 Lies

- The Bible tells us:
  - 4. Shame: Regeneration is the Biblical term.
    - The technical term for rehab means to get back to where you were before you were an addict.
    - The term regeneration means brand new, dramatically different life.
Warning

- Beware of toxic / inappropriate use of the Bible. The Biblical tool can be used for good or for harm.
How Problems Develop

- Unless you know how problems develop, we can’t really begin to fix what is wrong.

- Reference model: Based upon Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. Bottom needs must be met before you can advance up the hierarchy. Otherwise you get stuck.
Needs

- Human beings exist in 3 parts: body, soul, spirit. Soul equates to personality.
  - Physical needs
  - Personal needs
  - Spiritual needs
- All problems stem from trying to get our needs met.
Needs

- **1st Set of Needs**: Physical needs relate to our body: Air, food, water, clothing, shelter. Summarized by the word – healthy.

- **2nd Set of Needs**: Personal needs. Every bit as important as our need for health. Need for worth and to be validated as a person.
3rd Set of Needs: Spiritual needs. Only when our personal needs are met can we begin to pursue our spiritual needs.

Physical and personal needs are things we must receive. A spiritual need is a need to give, i.e. the need to love others, an expression.
Deficit Motivation

- Trying to meet what is missing. We are driven / motivated to fill up on what is missing in our lives. The physical is a model for the personal. The great message of the Bible is that God satisfies our personal needs
Faith Factor

- What are we going to exercise faith in? What does the faith factor have to do with addiction? It deals with your personal needs, your identity. Who are you--worthy or worthless?

- Consider false assumptions about you or about another person. When deficit motivation is channeled through false assumptions, we come up with the lies that McGee identified.
Self-Centered Behavior

- All self-centered thinking behavior has a false goal that is based on a false assumption.
- Faith Factor: Using the Bible as a therapeutic tool to build up a person’s self-esteem and sense of worth, we must understand its message.
What Will You Believe?

- The fundamental message of the Bible is that God has done everything necessary to make you worthy and secure and significant.

- If we fail to believe what God said, we will continue to strive under false assumptions trying to achieve false goals. False goals give temporary satisfaction which will wear off and force you to begin to strive falsely again.
Overcoming Obstacles

- God in his mercy puts obstacles in our way of reaching our false goals. This forces us to look at our false assumptions.

- In counseling the most common complaint is about the obstacles.

- Change only happens through cognitive restructuring...i.e. changing false assumptions to true assumptions has to be done.
Repentance

- Repentance is not a change in behavior or feelings, but rather is a change in your thinking.
- Repentance means a 180 degree change in the way of thinking...which is called cognitive restructuring.
Power of the Faith Factor

- When you begin to change the way you think and begin to feel worthy, then you are able to begin to give love to others...and develop healthy relationships with others.

- The faith factor builds you up personally in a new identity and helps you to see yourself as worthy.
“We Agnostics”

- Chapter in the AA Book
- Warning to believers not to impose their beliefs on others.
- The job of the Christian counselor is to tell people the truth whether they believe or accept it or not. The job of the patient is to want to know the truth. God’s job is to make you believe it.
Borrowed from Carl Rogers

- 3 images of ourself
  - Our self-image the way we see ourselves
  - The way others see us (some overlap and some areas that don’t overlap)
  - How we really are (some overlap also)
- The Faith Factor deals with the reconciliation of these 3 ways of seeing yourself.
Chart of 3 Circles

Congruency:
The less there is congruency, the greater tension there is both personally and relationally.
The more the circles come together, the more congruency and the less there is tension.
The Faith Factor

- How do we know who we really are? The source of the truth is divine revelation. Ask the person who made us. Problem for agnostics and atheists.
  - 1. Find out who we really are from the source.
  - 2. Line up my image of myself with who I really am.
  - 3. As these two come together it has a tendency to bring other people’s views in line with who I really am.
AA vs. the Church

- Underlying ignorance involved
  - Some people have never read the Big Book
    - They have contempt prior to investigation
  - Some people have never read the Good Book
    - The result is collective ignorance
- If you read both you’ll see they come together.
Review of the First 3-Steps

1. Admit we are powerless
2. Come to believe that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity
3. Turn my will and life over to God as I understand him. Expression of faith (Programs that don’t use faith in God have people put faith in themselves)
12 Step Program

- Step 4: Fearless moral inventory of myself...
- Requires utmost honesty about self
- This is where many people fail and drop out of AA.
The person is dysfunctional.

God creates a new person and puts him / her within a new structure.

The new person is in the same physical body...there's a conflict between the dysfunctional body and the new body.
The 12 Steps of AA

- **5th Step** – Confess to God, self and another person our wrongs.
- **6th Step** – Entirely ready to have God himself remove my character defects...moral imperfections (the flesh). They can’t do this without the Faith Factor.
- **7th Step** – Asking God to remove these defects...also requires the faith factor.
The 12 Steps of AA

- **8th Step** – (We begin to deal with others). Make a list of people I’ve hurt.

- **9th Step** – When possible, make amends to those people I’ve hurt. We begin to assume responsibility for our actions. Ask forgiveness which is an act of compassion.

- **10th Step** – The addiction has been removed. The desire is gone. God removed it.
  - The actual practice of step 10 is to do the first 9 steps every day. That way it becomes a lifestyle.
Step 11 – is a further development of that spirituality identified earlier...a recognition and a realization of a higher spiritual power...and the establishment of a deeper more profound relationship with the higher power.

Step 12 - is the fulfillment of your recovery and your purpose and meaning in life.
The AA Book

- Will give you an appropriate model of the non-offensive, non-toxic faith factor to integrate into recovery either personally or in your service to others...It is a solid way to become spiritual without becoming religious.
What Works – 2 Facts

- You had just as good a chance of getting better from talking to your neighbor as you do by going to a professional.
- The more you paid for professional help, the quicker you got better.
In Summary

There was no particular methodology that works across the board with all problems. Eclectic position—draws from every resource the best of what fits with the faith factor. Don’t restrict your thinking to one of the other. Take the best of both and blend them together.
Emphasis in the AA program is in authentic faith...i.e. spirituality not religiosity.

Basic text references God 135 times...but does not espouse any religion.

The faith factor is interwoven through and replicated in and demonstrated by the 12 steps of the AA program.

Must realize the essential difference between true faith and toxic faith.
Question: Integrating the 12 Steps with the Faith Factor

- Starts with the personal needs...recognize that a recovering addict or alcoholic has personal needs that must be met daily.
- Use and abuse of substances takes the edge off of the pain from not having those needs met.
- You must begin to take steps to meet those needs...try and find out what it will take to begin to meet those needs.
God wants you to get security and significance and satisfaction from him, not through what you’re able to get from a substance yourself.

The Bible has been used as a club to scare people into obedience.

The Faith Factor, when used appropriately, is the most powerful recovery tool ever seen. But, it does not work for everyone.
Questions: Identity Issue

The identity issue is so vital. Greatest example in the Bible is Jesus himself. One thing recorded about his childhood other than his birth. He was 12 years old, went to Jerusalem, in the temple, and said “I must be about my father’s business.” At 12 years old he knew who he was, why he was here and where he was going.
Question: Identity Issue

- 3 times Jesus was affirmed in his identity during his ministry. This is the key to the faith factor. When you hear God say you are his beloved child in whom he is well pleased, your life changes. Until then you are performance based, running around doing things trying to please God, and you’re scared that he’s going to swat you.
Closing Comments

- Knowing that gives you security, significance and meets your needs. God does for you what you can’t do for yourself. That’s the faith factor.

- The most critical thing is who you are, what is your identity. Once you get that recovery will follow. You are no longer a dysfunctional person, you are a brand new person who is no longer dysfunctional. The new person is like God.