

Foreword

Addictions are so messy and destructive. Man has been plagued by addictions, that is, misplaced worship, worshipping something other than God, or worshipping the created and not the Creator, since the beginning of time. Man so frequently got sucked into dysfunctional worship that God had to give us the first two commandments to serve as warnings and significant guardrails to exhort us to avoid this inevitable misplaced worship trap. Alcohol and substance misuse/abuse/addiction are the most visible addictions that wreak so much chaos, loss, and suffering. Even though we've struggled for thousands of years, we are only starting to see the need to identify addictions as deficiencies in all three spheres: spirit, mind, and body.

But there is good news! Rose Ann has wonderfully harnessed what she learned through her addiction struggle and subsequent psychospiritual healing journey to bring hope and victory to many. Her curriculum pulls back the curtain to show how addictions aren't as mysterious, complex, or overwhelming as we commonly think. By unpacking some basic psychological and spiritual principles to reveal what goes on inside an addicted person's head, she highlights the key treatment principle: that addictions are always secondary to a deeper psychospiritual issue. Substance use is the "remedy" we are tricked into thinking will "fix" our deeper psychospiritual issue, but using substances only worsens the underlying issue. We think we can fix the worsening with more substance use, and the vicious downward spiritual, psychological, and damaged brain circuit spiral accelerates and never reverses without intentional efforts.

Coming from my own personal struggle with anxiety, depression, and alcohol addiction that caused so much loss and damage, eventually landing me in jail for six counts of aggravated assault, combined with thirty-seven years as a psychiatrist treating mental health issues and addictions, I am so excited and encouraged by the simplicity and depth by which Rose Ann integrates all three spheres while using language everyone can understand and implement. This practical full-person integration that looks beneath the addiction at the psychospiritual issues and the circumstances that elicit the substance use response is exactly what I implemented when starting the acute residential treatment center, Honey Lake Clinic. Now, through Rose Ann's devotional and support groups, so many more can experience freedom and victory in the daily battles being waged for control of their mind and decisions.

Having worked with many clinicians over the last four decades, even those with extensive training often struggle to understand and treat those struggling with addictions. This is why we've seen a low ceiling of success over the last sixty years despite there being thousands of rehabilitation facilities. On the other hand, support group facilitators are usually ordinary people, some with a personal life experience with addiction and some not, who have a heart for helping those with addiction struggles. This awareness is where Rose Ann really rises to the occasion, creating an easy-to-follow guide that significantly prepares the facilitator, regardless of their level of training.

Rose Ann asks a lot of the facilitators, but she goes above and beyond in creating a highly structured, organized, and detailed manual to equip and empower the facilitators. She addresses key skills needed

such as having a gracious mindset, communicating empathy and compassion, bridge-building for caring connection to flow over, giving facilitators prompts to help the patient (yes, as a doctor, I always use *patient* to refer to people pursuing healing) self-reflect and self-assess, and being a cheerleader.

Most importantly, Rose Ann really prepares and equips the facilitator to navigate the two serious landmines patients face on their healing journey:

1. **Isolation due to stigma, embarrassment, shame, guilt, and feeling no one understands.** Rose Ann trains the facilitator with tools to create a safe, healing, caring community of people on a common journey. This safe community allows each patient to stop giving superficial answers that preserve their image and instead be transparent and vulnerable enough to allow the facilitator and other members of the group to see into their deepest inner space, stripping it back to the foundation and revealing all the cracks. That's when fear dissolves, and freedom begins.
2. **Substance use relapse.** Managing a situation when a patient slips and gives in to their substance can be a very difficult and dangerous fork in their healing journey, as shame, guilt, frustration, anger, or sadness can lead to giving up, hopelessness, despair, or other more serious self-sabotaging, life-threatening behaviors. Rose Ann carefully prepares the facilitator with a mindset, attitude, and prompts to encourage the patient to be open, self-reflecting, and feel cared for. She then coaches the facilitator to help the patient strategize the best option to get back on track: continuing in the group, professional therapy, a supervised treatment program, or some combination of these or other options.

When the group sees the grace and help the facilitator extends to a struggling member in the context of their tight-knit healing community, it accelerates all the members forward in powerful ways.

Lastly, nothing good ever happens randomly. God is an orderly God. His design for us is meticulous and detailed, with systems, laws, principles, and design protocols. He has strategies for everything. Thus, we all need a strategy to access psychospiritual healing that will, through neuroplasticity, rewire/renew our brain circuits. Rose Ann lays out her twelve Core Concepts as a wholistic strategy to move someone through twelve weeks of increased healing as they see themselves and God more clearly, understand their unconscious space, manage their emotions, make better decisions, unbind from their bondage to their substance, and build healthier habits and behaviors as they turn their worship to God and what He provides. By reading this book, you will use these principles to do the following:

1. Advance your own healing and psychospiritual maturation journey as you apply these principles to your own life.
2. See everyone around you with a more compassionate and helping mindset, being a brighter light in their lives.
3. Confidently facilitate a successful substance addiction support group and have a life-saving and eternity-changing impact on many.

4. Honor and glorify God as you worship Him with your faith and service in ways worthy of hearing, “Well done, good and faithful servant!”

Like the boy who offered up his five loaves and two fish to ultimately feed five thousand hungry people, God will also abundantly multiply what you offer up as a faithful facilitator. You will bring the essentials these hurting but searching patients need for healing and a powerful transformation process. Like the good servant in the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, if you put your talents into action, you will enter into the joy of your Lord. Rose Ann provides profound instruction to refine, focus, and strategically guide your talents. Enjoy both the blessing of helping people and the blessing God has for you for being some of His special forces in this spiritual battle.

By HIS grace,

Karl Benzio, MD

Board Certified Psychiatrist

Honey Lake Clinic, Co-Founder and Medical Director

American Association of Christian Counselors, Medical Director

PS ~ I could see Rose Ann adapting these same concepts to help people struggling with any life-interfering or life-controlling emotions, thoughts, or behaviors. So, stay tuned!