

## INTRODUCTION

The ideas and theories in this book have been used to help the people in my private practice as a minister, metaphysical counselor, teacher, and healer. My own personal recovery from dysfunctional thinking and behavior began in 1975, when I was asked to become a Reality Therapist with the Addiction Research Foundation in St. Catharines, Ontario. My background in psychology and social work and the fact that I was a clean and sober role model had qualified me for the job.

As I began to more fully understand the dynamic of addiction, I realized that I, myself, was physically addicted to several socially accepted substances, such as chocolate and soda pop, as well as many non-physical patterns of relating to my environment. However, I was too self-righteous to think that my addictions were as bad as drugs, alcohol, or gambling.

Gradually, I began to see that this wasn't true. I couldn't go anywhere without my stash. The belief that those substances were essential for my well-being was the same kind of belief that I heard from the people who were labeled addicts in the therapy groups that I led. I became painfully aware of the similarities between us rather than the differences. I became more aware of the feeling of addiction whether it was to a substance, person, or thing.

I began the habit of keeping a constant vigil to catch myself whenever I experienced that desperate, addictive feeling. Each time I had that specific feeling, I would consciously strive to prevent myself from acting on it and wakefully wait until I was able to establish a new, healthier pattern of relating to the situation.

My outlook on life changed dramatically after a massive spiritual awakening, when I began to realize that much of my daily confusion and emotional pain was the direct result of my old, dysfunctional patterns of relating to my environment.

As I researched the topic of addictions, I learned that much of the existing literature is focused on the addiction to certain substances, such as drugs and alcohol, the dysfunctional behavior of gambling, or the enabling behavior of partners or family members (codependency). However, many other aspects of dysfunctional thinking and behavior have been interfering with the possibility of healthy human relations throughout the known history of human

beings. I eventually came to believe the necessity for change is a worldwide challenge.

Aspects of dysfunctional thinking and behavior affect the entire scope of human dynamics and are responsible for most conflicts between people, groups, religions, and countries. It has affected every corner of the globe, and I am now convinced that a spiritual awakening to release us from its grip is necessary, if we wish to attain world peace.

I am convinced that the ideas expressed herein have the power to heal lives, because they have healed my life and the lives of many people with whom I have shared them. I hope that you find the concepts in this book as richly rewarding to you as I do as I live them.

Please do not think you can change your life just by reading this book. You can only change your life IF you are willing to conscientiously review and revise your old thoughts and patterns of relating to your environment until a new way becomes natural. Consider that anything that you have learned in the past can be unlearned and new habits and behaviors can be established. However, it takes time and perseverance and can only be accomplished if peace of mind and your future happiness are your goals.

Each of us has been living in dysfunctional, or ineffective, inefficient ways to a greater or lesser degree. These dysfunctional patterns were learned from a dysfunctional environment and have created a powerful archetype that we have used to survive in our culture.

Each of us has the personal power to make different choices and create a new way of being. By rethinking and readjusting the way you make your choices, however, it opens the possibility of change.

Your personal *Path to Wholeness*, one that leads you away from dysfunctional thinking and behavior, begins the day you decide to become your own person. This book was designed to guide, support, and encourage you along your personal *Path to Wholeness* to your true, authentic self.

Tashene Wolfe