

Your Path to Healing Starts Here

Be ready to be set free from your bondages!

With the honesty that we've come to expect from Bo, he shares how even as a religious leader, he was a porn addict and approval addict. He details his harrowing experience — the uncontrollable urges, the insanity, and the ugly shame that ruled his life.

More importantly, in this life-changing book, you'll learn Bo's path to healing — and how you too can be healed. You'll learn the seven powerful secrets that can set you free — and give you the power to reclaim your life and fulfil your dreams:

- Secret #1: Discover What You Really Need
- Secret #2: Focus on Your Ambition, Not on Your Addiction
- Secret #3: Love the Sinner and the Saint Within
- Secret #4: Create a New Outer World
- Secret #5: Redefine Yourself
- Secret #6: Get Rid of Toxic Faith
- Secret #7: Take Charge!

Read this book and change your life forever.



www.shepherdsvoice.com.ph

ISBN 978-971-93671-6-1



9 789719 367161



From The #1 National Bestselling Author of
Your Past Does Not Define Your Future

BO SANCHEZ

7 Secrets to Real Freedom



BO SANCHEZ

7 Secrets to *Real* Freedom



*How to Stop
Hidden Addictions
and Achieve
Great Success*



Learn to live a fantastic life. Log on to www.bosanchez.ph

The Tale of the Princess Slave

THIS IS MY STRANGE WAY OF WRITING THE *DEDICATION* OF THIS BOOK
— BY FIRST TELLING YOU A STORY.

In a far away Kingdom, a beautiful Queen gave birth to a lovely baby.

And how the parents loved their little Princess! She was such an adorable baby. She was all they ever wanted or hoped for.

But alas, the royal couple had an enemy, an evil Witch, who schemed on stealing their joy. And one night, this Witch entered the Palace and kidnapped the baby.

This infant grew up with the Witch and she was treated as a dog.

Oh, the poor Princess! As a child, she walked about dressed in dirty rags. She only ate the crumbs left on the floor. And she worked almost the entire day.

But through the years, the King and Queen never gave up searching for their lost child. And finally, after 18 long years, the soldiers caught the Evil Witch!

And with the King and Queen leading their men, they rescued the Princess. The Royal Parents were so happy when they saw her!

They threw a lavish party to celebrate her freedom. They gave her beautiful clothes. They gave the best jewelry. They gave her an army of servants...

But alas, the Princess didn't attend the party.

She didn't wear the clothes.

She didn't wear the jewelry.

Instead, the Princess insisted on wearing her old rags.

The Princess insisted on sleeping in the dark dungeons of the Palace.

The Princess insisted on eating the crumbs that fell from the dining table.

Because deep down, she didn't see herself as a Princess.

Deep down, she saw herself as a slave.

I dedicate this book to all the Princess Slaves in the world.

Through this book, you will learn how to stop living as a Slave.

You will start living as a Princess (or Prince).

See you at your freedom party.

From The #1 National Bestselling Author of
Your Past Does Not Define Your Future

7 Secrets to *Real* Freedom



*How to Stop Hidden Addictions
and Achieve Great Success*

BO SANCHEZ

7 Secrets to Real Freedom

How to Stop Hidden Addictions and Achieve Great Success

ISBN- ISBN 978-971-93671-6-1

BO SANCHEZ

#1 National Bestselling Author of
Your Past Does Not Define Your Future

Copyright © 2007 by Eugenio R. Sanchez, Jr.

Requests for information should be addressed to:
SHEPHERD'S VOICE PUBLICATIONS, INC.
#60 Chicago St., Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines 1109
P.O. Box 1331 Quezon City Central Post Office
1153 Quezon City
Tel. No. (+632) 411-7874 to 77; Fax. No. (632) 726-9918
e-mail: sale@shepherdsvoice.com.ph

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, except for brief quotations, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Layout and design by Rey de Guzman

Table of Contents

Introduction: You Can Be Free	i
Secret #1: Discover What You Really Need	1
Chapter 1. Do You Have a Hidden Addiction?	3
Chapter 2. Why Do You Have Hidden Addictions?	11
Chapter 3. The Ways of Getting Rid of Addictions	15
Chapter 4. Walk Towards Your Freedom Now	19
Secret # 2: Focus on Your Ambition, Not on Your Addiction	21
Chapter 5. The Illogical Thinking That We All Do	25
Chapter 6. Don't Focus on Your Pink Elephant	29
Chapter 7. Make Your Dreams M.A.G.I.C. Dreams	31
Chapter 8. Wise Exchange, Anyone?	33
Secret # 3: Love the Sinner and the Saint Within	35
Chapter 9. I Loved God Yet Still Felt Miserable	37
Chapter 10. Why Don't We Pray to St. Judas Iscariot?	39
Chapter 11. Step #1 on Loving Yourself: Forgive Yourself	43
Chapter 12. What Happens If You Don't Forgive Yourself	47
Chapter 13. Step #2 on Loving Yourself: Accept Your Weaknesses	51
Chapter 14. Step #3 on Loving Yourself: Feel Your Feelings	55
Chapter 15. Step #4 on Loving Yourself: Trust Your Needs	59
Chapter 16. What Is Draining You?	61
Chapter 17. Celebrate Your Goodness	65
Secret # 4: Shape Your Outer World Before It Shapes You	69
Chapter 18. What Are The Two Most Powerful Forces That Shape Your Life?	71
Chapter 19. Step #1 on Recreating Your Outer World: Say No to Toxic People	73

Chapter 20. Step #2 on Recreating Your Outer World: Say Yes to Terrific People	83
Chapter 21. Step #1 on Recreating Your Outer World: Control Your Media	89
Chapter 22. Are You the Good Samaritan?	91
Secret # 5: Redefine Yourself!	93
Chapter 23. Check the Self-Portrait in Your Heart	95
Chapter 24. Lesson #1: Get Your Self-Portrait from God, Not from Anyone Else	99
Chapter 25. Your First Self-Portrait: You're More Important Than the Universe Because You're a Child of God	101
Chapter 26. Your Second Self-Portrait: God Talks to You Each Day Because You're a Friend of God	105
Chapter 27. Your Third Self-Portrait: You Can Do All Things Because You're a Champion of God	107
Chapter 28. Lesson #2: Focus Your Eyes on Your Divine Self-Portrait	111
Chapter 29. Lesson #3: No Matter What Happens, Never Give Up Your Divine Self-Portrait	113
Chapter 30. Use the Power of Pictures in Your Heart	115
Secret # 6: Get Rid of Toxic Faith	117
Chapter 31. The Facts That Tell Us There's Something Terribly Wrong	119
Chapter 32. Symptom #1 of Toxic Faith: You Have a Distorted Image of God — He's Judgemental	123
Chapter 33. Symptoms #2 of Toxic Faith: You Have a Distorted Understanding of Faithfulness — You're Legalistic	127
Chapter 34. Symptoms #3 of Toxic Faith: You Have a Distorted Image of Self — You Feel Condemned	131

Chapter 35. Symptoms #4 of Toxic Faith: You Have a Distorted Faith — You Practice Hyper Faith	133
Chapter 36. Symptoms #4 of Toxic Faith: You Have a Distorted Faith System — You Become Spiritually Abused	137
Chapter 37. Choose Real Faith	141
Secret # 7: Take Charge!	145
Chapter 38. What's Common Among All Successful People	149
Chapter 39. First Favorite Thing to Blame: Another Person	151
Chapter 40. Second Favorite Thing to Blame: the Devil	153
Chapter 41. Third Favorite Thing to Blame: God	157
Chapter 42. Learned Helplessness vs. Learned Power	159
Chapter 43. Break the Rope One Strand at a Time	161
Chapter 44. If You're Not Going to Blame Others, Should You Blame Yourself?	163
Epilogue: Allow Love to Heal You	167
About the Author	171

OTHER BOOKS BY BO SANCHEZ

THE BOSS Series

How to Be Really, Really, Really Happy (First Collection)

You Can Make Your Life Beautiful (Second Collection)

You Have the Power to Create Love (Third Collection)

Fill Your Life with Miracles (Fourth Collection)

SIMPLIFY Series

Simplify and Live the Good Life

Simplify and Create Abundance

PRAYERBOOKS

Embraced

The Way of the Cross

Special Prayers for the Holy Rosary

Your Past Does Not Define Your Future

How to Find Your One True Love

How to Find Your One True Love Book 2

8 Secrets of the Truly Rich

Epilogue

Allow Love to Heal You

Let me share with you a story that blessed me deeply. I read it from the *Chicken Soup*¹ series, but let me paraphrase it for you here.

One day, Abbie, a social worker, received a call from an orphanage.

Could she find foster parents for a particular baby, they asked.

Abbie visited the orphanage and saw a cute little baby standing on the crib. The baby smiled at her and she smiled back. When she knelt down in front of the baby, that was when she discovered that the baby had no arms. The person in charge of the orphanage asked Abbie, “Do you think there’ll be parents who would want this child?”

For the next four months, there were many couples that visited that orphanage, looking for a child. But no one wanted Baby Freddie.

One day, Abbie got a call from a Mr. and Mrs. Pearson. They said they wanted to adopt a child. She paid them a visit.

“We don’t have much money, but we have much love to give,” the couple said.

“Any preferences?” Abbie asked.

“A boy,” Mrs. Pearson said, “my husband will play basketball with him. He’ll be good for a boy. How long will it take before we can adopt a baby?” Mrs. Pearson asked.

“Well, perhaps in a year,” Abbie said.

“Isn’t there a baby we can adopt now?” Mr. Pearson asked.

¹Canfield, Jack, et. al, *Chicken Soup for the Soul* (Florida: Health Communications, Inc., 1997).

Abbie sighed. She opened her bag and pulled out the photo of Baby Freddie.

“He’s an adorable child,” she said, “except that he has no arms.”

The couple looked at the photo for a long time.

It was Mr. Pearson who spoke first. “What do you think?” he asked his wife.

“Football,” she said, “He can play football with you.”

“Sports isn’t really that important,” he said.

“No, it is. A boy needs to have a sport.”

They kept on talking as if Abbie wasn’t around.

Finally, Abbie interrupted, “Do you want the baby?”

Mrs. Pearson said, “Want? Want the baby? Abbie, you don’t understand. This baby is ours!”

So Abbie brought Mr. and Mrs. Pearson to the orphanage.

She presented Baby Freddie to them. And Mr. and Mrs. Pearson saw him, rushed to him, and embraced their son into their arms.

He Sees You Differently

I’ve met a lot of people who believe they’re like Freddie.

Do you feel defective? Deformed? Lacking?

Deep within you, you think that you’re not normal. That there’s something wrong with you.

Well, God doesn’t agree.

He’s like Mr. and Mrs. Pearson.

He doesn’t think you’re defective at all.

He says, “You’re mine. You’re my child.”

Today, allow God to embrace you.

And in that embrace, be healed.

I remain your friend,


Bo Sanchez

PS. Get a weekly blessing! Subscribe to *The Bo Sanchez Soulfood Letter* for FREE by logging onto **www.bosanchez.ph**. You will be nourished.

PS2. I preached the same powerful message of this book to a live audience of thousands. I preached eight talks with passion — and I regret that sometimes, that passion doesn't get expressed when you read a book. I urge you to get my 8 Teaching Audio CD set entitled, "How to Get Rid of Bad Habits." You'll further deepen your understanding of the messages you read in this book. And I guarantee that these powerful truths will grip your heart more. For details, call tel. (632) 725-9999 or go to **www.stophiddenaddictions.com**. Don't delay!

Prevent Soul Malnourishment.

Receive a Mountain Load of Blessings for Your Spiritual Life by Joining KerygmaFamily.com FREE!

Here's what will happen to you when you join the Kerygma Family...

- 1.You shall receive *Kerygma* Magazine each month to inspire you to grow closer to God...FREE!
- 2.You shall receive Bo Sanchez's Novena to God's Love...FREE!
- 3.You shall receive daily emails of God's Word — *Didache, Gabay, Companion*...FREE!
- 4.You shall receive the KFAM Insider Notes to let you know what's happening in the ministry that you are part of...FREE!
- 5.You shall receive surprise gifts from Bo Sanchez at different times during the year — his way of saying Thank You to your support... FREE!
- 6.You shall belong to a borderless, global, non-physical community spread all over the world connected through prayer and the desire for personal growth...FREE!
- 7.You shall have the special privilege of supporting this expansive work of the Lord, which includes Anawim, a ministry for the poorest of the poor, and Shepherds Voice, a media ministry that uses TV, Radio, print, and the internet to broadcast God's love to spiritually hungry people worldwide.
- 8.You and your intentions shall be included in our intercession team's prayer.

To join the Kerygma Family, log onto www.kerygmfamily.com or call up Tel. (632) 7259999. Don't delay God's blessings for your life.



About the Author

Bo Sanchez is the author of nine bestselling books and publisher of seven magazines. Bo also has a weekly TV show, a daily radio program, and a daily internet TV show. He travels extensively around the world as a powerful speaker. So far, he has addressed audiences in 14 countries, including 37 cities in North America.

He founded many organizations, such as *Anawim*, a special home for the abandoned elderly, and *Shepherd's Voice*, a media group that publishes the widest read inspirational literature in the country.

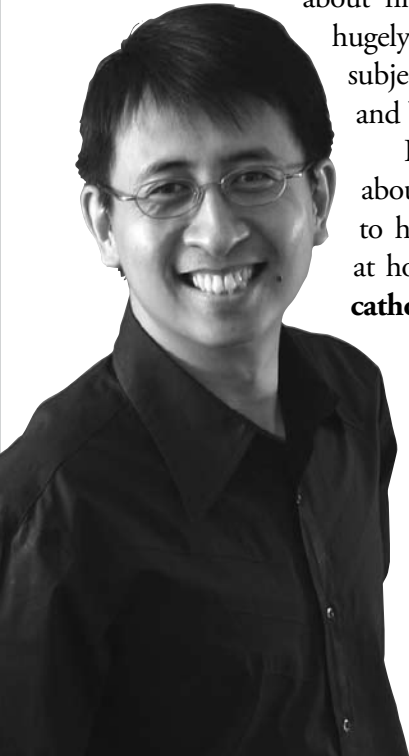
He was also named a TOYM 2006 Awardee and, most recently, the 2007 CMMA Serviam Awardee.

Privately, Bo is also a micro-entrepreneur. He engages in small business and real estate not only for his family's needs and for his various projects, but also from his firm belief that one of the most important solutions to his country's economic problems is to raise up more micro-entrepreneurs among his countrymen. He frequently teaches and writes about financial literacy, believing that our poverty is hugely a product of people's low financial I.Q. on subjects such as debt-management, saving, investing, and business.

In another endeavor he's very passionate about, Bo started the *Catholic Filipino Academy* to help parents who want to teach their children at home. For more information, log onto **www.catholicfilipinoacademy.com**

But above all these, Bo believes that his first call is to be a loving husband to his wife Marowe and a devoted father to his sons Benedict and Francis. They live in Manila, Philippines.

For more information, log onto his website **www.bosanchez.ph** or email him at **bosanchez@kerygmfamily.com**.





Learn to live a fantastic life. Log on to www.bosanchez.ph

Introduction

You Can Be Free

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

– John 8:32

We're all hypocrites.

We're all wearing masks.

We're all hiding something.

Believe me, I've met very religious people in the world who seem so holy on the outside, yet deep within, are hiding something. Perhaps it's pornography. Or adultery. Or a drinking problem. Or gambling. Or an approval-addiction. Or a huge temper problem. Or food addiction. And if it's not a hidden addiction, perhaps it's a crisis of faith. Or a depression. Or a debilitating self-doubt. Or an ugly resentment. Or a crippling insecurity. Or a financial crisis. Or a marriage breakdown.

And from my experience, the more spiritually arrogant, judgmental and self-righteous a person is, the darker his secrets are.

All of us are hypocrites. It's just a question of what kind.

There are three types:

- The hypocrite who doesn't know he's one and so judges others as though it's part of his job description.
- The hypocrite who knows he's one, but has become comfortable to this life of fraud.
- The hypocrite who knows he's one, and has the guts to take the lifelong journey of unmasking the darkness within him. In the process, he blesses the world with his brokenness.

My Authority for Writing This Book

For years, I was a porn addict.

I was serving in Church, preaching in prayer meetings, and everyone thought I was pretty holy — but unknown to them, I was a porn addict.

In the middle of the night, I'd wake up and look for porn. At 3 A.M., I'd walk on the streets searching for porn magazines to get my "fix." (For my full story, read my book, *Your Past Does Not Define Your Future*. You can download an e-book version at www.stophiddenaddictions.com)

But lust wasn't even my primary addiction.

Stronger than my sex addiction was my approval addiction.

Some of you don't know what it's like to be an approval addict, so let me describe to you my crazy world.

Because of my hunger for love, I was willing to die to get you to like me. I'd jeopardize my health, my wealth, my reputation — just to get you to think well of me.

I had no spine. I would rarely speak my opinion. I'd let you speak first and then agree with whatever you'll say. I'd morph my opinion to whatever opinion you have, just so that you won't add to my enemies. Because of this, people praised me for being humble. Not so. I was a coward.

I would give you my money, I would give you my time, I would give you my smile — so long as you would be my fan. Again, incorrectly, people thought I was generous. On the contrary, I was trying to buy their love. It was a selfish act.

This was me. Not a very pretty picture.

But knowing this was my first step to healing.

Both my sex and approval addictions were once uncontrollable 50-foot monsters.

Today, I have befriended these beasts. I have tamed them and continue to tame them. I have blunted their fangs; I have clipped their claws. And whenever they roar, I listen to what they're really trying to say. Always, it is a desperate cry for love.

The Lock in Your Mind

Have you heard of the great Houdini?

As a young boy, I loved reading about him. Houdini was probably the most famous escape artist in the world.

Houdini boasted he could escape any jail cell in less than an hour. One day, a small town in the British Isles built a new jail cell and they were proud of it. “Come, give us a try,” they said to Houdini, and he agreed.

He walked into the prison cell bristling with confidence. After all, he had done this hundreds of times before.

Once the jail cell was closed, Houdini took off his coat and went to work. From his belt, he got a flexible but tough ten-inch piece of steel. He knelt in front of the door and started working on the lock.

At the end of 30 minutes, his confident expression had disappeared.

At the end of an hour, he was drenched in perspiration.

After two hours and totally exhausted, Houdini literally collapsed against the door. And the force of his weight was enough to push the door open!

Because in reality, the door had never been locked.

It was locked only in one place: *in his own mind*.

Which meant only one thing — it was firmly locked.

Because whatever your mind says is locked — is locked.

Even if it isn't.

Push the Door Open

Friend, you can get rid of your bad habits.

You can be free from your addictions.

The Bible says that you have been called to live in freedom.¹

Like Houdini, I tinkered with the “lock” of my jail cell and lost hope because I couldn't unlock the door.

But one day, I had a powerful realization. I discovered that the door wasn't locked — except in my mind. I realized that at any time, I could push hard and the door would swing open — and I could

¹ Galatians 5:13

simply walk out. And *stay out!* And that's what I did.

My friend, you can get rid of your addictions.

By the way, there is no ONE singular way to get out of an addiction. There are many ways to do so — and in the next few pages, I'll tell you why.

Dear friend, turn this page and take your first step to freedom.

I remain your friend,



Bo Sanchez

P.S. Do you want a weekly blessing? Receive my weekly email called *The Bo Sanchez Soulfood Letter* for your personal growth. Subscribe at www.bosanchez.ph for FREE!

P.S.2. I preached the same powerful message of this book to a live audience of thousands. I preached eight talks with passion — and I regret that sometimes, that passion doesn't get expressed when you read a book. I urge you to get my eight-teaching audio CD set entitled, *How to Get Rid of Bad Habits*. You'll further deepen your understanding of the messages you read in this book. And I guarantee that these powerful truths will grip your heart even more. For details, call tel. (632) 7259999 or go to www.stophiddenaddictions.com. Don't delay!



SECRET #1

Discover What You Really Need

All Addictions Are Painkillers.

I TRY TO AVOID TECHNICAL WORDS BECAUSE MY BRAIN FREEZES UP. So let me share with you my simple definition of an addiction. It's any action that (1) you do repeatedly, (2) can't stop doing, and (3) that's harmful to your life.

This book is serious stuff, but it doesn't mean I can't start with a joke.

One day, two guys are playing golf on a sunny day.

In the distance, they see a funeral car pass by — with a train of cars following it.

One of the golfers stops playing. He bows his head for a moment of silence.

The other golfer is very impressed. He says to his golfing partner, “Wow, I didn’t know you’re religious.”

“Not really,” says the other golfer, resuming his putting. “But after all, I was married to that woman for 28 years.”

There’s nothing wrong with golf. It’s a healthy sport. But that widower was clearly addicted to it.

All of us agree that alcoholism, drug addiction and compulsive gambling are serious forms of addictions. But what about hidden addictions? They too destroy our life and the lives of our loved ones.

Do you have a hidden addiction?

CHAPTER I

Do You Have a Hidden Addiction?

In all my adult life, I can remember only two times that I ate because I was actually hungry.

– A Food Addict

I wasn't addicted to illegal drugs.

I was addicted to other people's approval.

Not very toxic, right?

Wrong.

I was destroying my life.

I was also addicted to pornography.

Again, some people think that's harmless.

I beg to disagree. It consumed my life, sucking my time, my attention and my energy. It affected how I saw women and robbed me of healthy relationships.

Here's a sample list of other hidden addictions that can harm you. Check if you have any of them...

- **Do you eat compulsively?**

This is the number one way people try to feel better. I know of someone who eats at the slightest discomfort in life. If she's angry, she eats. If she's depressed, she eats. If she's anxious, she eats. The truth however is that she isn't really hungry for food. She is hungry for something else. Unless she sees this, she will continue snacking and pigging out, endangering her health.

- **Do you eat too much sweets, ice cream or chocolates?**

I listed this separately just to impress upon you that chocolate is the number one “Quick Fix” that people crave for when they’re going through painful emotions. When a choco addict feels hurt, or sad, or angry, or worried, she’ll reach for her stash of choco bars. She has them in her desk, in the ref, in her bedside table, in her bag — for those “just in case” emergencies. Again, there’s nothing wrong with sweets. (I love dark chocolate and ice cream.) But in excess, it’s harmful. More importantly, you won’t address the real, deep hunger inside you if you keep popping candies into your mouth.

- **Do you go yo-yo dieting?**

A few years ago, my friends were crazy about the “After Six” diet. And then Atkins took over the dieting crowd. Soon, “No Carb!” became the battle cry of millions of women. After that, South Beach conquered the world by storm. (My friend says that today, he’s into the North Park diet. For a moment, I thought he was serious, until I realized that his favorite Chinese restaurant was named North Park.)

Personally, I don’t believe in quick diets. I believe in changing one’s eating habits *permanently*. I believe in changing one’s lifestyle forever — not just for 10 days or 30 days or three months.

That means eating right and exercising regularly.

By the way, the broomstick-thin super models found in fashion magazines comprise only 3% of the world’s population. So I presume 97% of those reading this book has a body structure that resemble clunky vacuum cleaners instead of broomsticks. *And it’s okay!* You see, the goal is not to look like these super models and weigh less. The goal is to love your body (no matter what body structure you have) and be healthy inside and out. If you don’t watch it, dieting can be an addiction, and its severe form is the next item I’ll discuss.

- **Do you starve yourself?**

I met a young girl who was exceedingly thin. She was so thin, she could stand sideways and be invisible. Yet when I talked to her, she told me, “Uncle Bo, I’m so fat!” She grabbed her reed-like arm, touched non-existent fat, and said, “See?” This young woman has *anorexia nervosa*. Starving herself (to death) is the only way she can control her seemingly uncontrollable life. *Bulimia*, on the other hand, is when a person gorges himself with food and vomits it all out. I know of others who are addicted to diet pills and are harming their bodies.

- **Do you shop too much and have buying sprees?**

Lots and lots of women shop to feel better. They feel happy, beautiful, and alive when they buy a new pair of shoes, new stockings, a new blouse, a new perfume, a new watch... But if this is done repetitively and excessively, it’s a destructive habit. Do you want to know if you’re a shopaholic? Check your house. Is it full of stuff that you don’t use? Count how many shoes you have. Do you have 30 pairs that you haven’t used in the past year? Do you have as many bags that you also haven’t used in a year? Many people are drowning in debt because they can’t control their shopping. In reality, deep within, a shopaholic isn’t looking for “something.” There’s an emptiness that can’t be filled up by a dress, a scarf, a bracelet, or a new pair of high heels. Ultimately, they’re looking for something they can’t buy.

- **Do you compulsively smoke?**

Today, I see a lot of young people sitting in coffee shops — but instead of sitting inside where there’s air-conditioning, they sit outside under the sweltering heat of the Philippine sun — because they want to smoke. Isn’t that absurd? Today, I also see young people standing outside their offices during their breaks — again underneath the hot sun and breathing in the pol-

lution of our smoke-belching buses — because they want to smoke. I tell you, it's illogical. But like the golfer in my story, addicts don't think logically anymore. Nicotine is one of the most addictive substances in the world today. It's a chemical that gets into your brain and at the first inhale, fights fatigue, suppresses appetite, and lifts your mood. It's been proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that smoking can cause lung cancer, painful emphysema, bad breath, ugly teeth and dark lips. But to a smoker, who cares?

- **Do you get angry, yell too often, and throw temper tantrums?**

For a rage-aholic, anger is his all-around tool. He uses it for every situation. It's the only tool he knows how to use. When he's afraid, he gets angry. When he's worried, he gets angry. When he's sad, he gets angry.

I compare anger to a hammer. Using anger for everything is as silly as using the hammer for sewing a shirt, drawing water, healing a wound, and cooking food. It simply won't work. If you need to sew a shirt, you need a needle, not a hammer. If you need to draw water, you need a pail, not a hammer.

Because of this, anger-addicts are ineffective parents, spouses, friends, and business partners. Some of them argue too much, pick petty fights, and leave a trail of broken relationships. Others are more quiet and demure outside their homes because they bottle up their anger with their friends and in their workplace, but unleash their toxic anger on their kids.

- **Do you complain habitually?**

It's a silly bad habit. (But come to think of it, what bad habits aren't silly?) You fill the room with your negativity. More importantly, you fill your life with negativity. And it attracts more of it, so you multiply the stuff you can complain about.

Believe me, no one would like to be with a complainer except fellow complainers.

- **Do you worry too much?**

God gave us the ability to panic in emergency situations where we need to act quickly. But for a worry addict, almost every situation is an emergency situation. So throughout the day, she's in constant panic mode. If the anger addict uses the hammer for everything, the worry addict uses a needle for everything. She "needles" every situation, looking for what may go wrong, always imagining how everything will go awry. And because our fears are powerful, we end up creating the imaginary monsters into existence.

- **Do you drink too much coffee (or cola)?**

I know a human being (yes, he's a human being) who drinks 10 cups of coffee every single day. My other friend drinks six cans of diet cola every day. Because it's diet, she argues that it's no longer bad for her. I told her that because she's drinking too much artificial sweeteners, she may end up with artificial diabetes. She didn't get my joke, nor my message to quit.

- **Do you sleep too much?**

Naps are great for your health. But you'll know if sleep has become an addiction. Usually, too much sleep is a sign of depression or being overwhelmed by our problems. These people don't want to wake up in the morning. And during the day, they want to crawl back into bed, under their covers, shielding themselves from the seemingly hostile world around them.

- **Do you watch too much TV?**

Telenovelas should be watched in moderation. But the problem is that *telenovelas* are designed to be addicting. They always end with great cliffhangers: The child will finally know who his real

father is, or the young woman will now find out if she's pregnant or not, or the man will finally meet the man who killed his mother 20 years ago...

Studies suggest that if you sit down in front of the TV set for three hours each day instead of spending time with your spouse or your kids or other endeavors, there is a great probability that you're addicted. (I'm talking of normal, active people who have jobs, families, etc., not aged, bedridden or sick people.) Another sign that you may be addicted is if you have a fantasy relationship with some stars you watch on TV. This is normal for kids, but not very normal for adults.

- **Do you clean the house compulsively?**

I know a mother who cleans her house the way nuns clean their convents, except that she does the work of 15 nuns all by herself.

When I visited her home, I discovered everything was polished, sparkling and perfectly clean. I wondered if germs thought twice of stepping on her floor because it was just too clean.

She'd spend the entire day scrubbing floors, washing curtains, dusting furniture and picking up after her kids. Everything was in order. Even the kids had to be clean and pretty all day. (I pitied the kids.) Why was she like this? Because if the house wasn't perfect, *she felt people will talk against her*. Bottom line: She was a very insecure person. In reality, I felt that she wanted to clean something inside her, but couldn't, so she just went about cleaning her house instead.

- **Do you lust compulsively?**

One day, a young father of two kids confessed to me that he watches two to three hours of Internet porn a day. He says he has to wake up at 1 A.M., while his wife was sleeping, to watch his pornography. "I hate it, Bo. I hate what it's doing to me. I

wake up groggy the next day and curse myself for doing it. But I can't seem to stop..." I told him, "I know exactly what you feel. I got out of this prison and so can you. Anyone can." This is the reason for this book.

- **Do you work too hard?**

Working hard is good. But when your family and your health suffers, you automatically know that it's an addiction. The problem with workaholicism is that it's rewarded. People pat us on the back and tell us that we're dedicated, loyal and industrious. We get bonuses. We get promoted.

Let me tell you a very sad story. There was one popular Christian leader who traveled the world expanding his ministry for the poor. One day, his wife called him up and said, "Come home immediately. Your daughter committed suicide." Thankfully, it was a failed attempt. But instead of going home that day, he went to Vietnam to continue his ministry work.

A few years later, that daughter committed suicide again — and succeeded. This Christian leader died years later, fired by his own ministry leaders, estranged from his own wife and children. His mistake was that he was addicted to his work.

- There are many other hidden addictions...

Compulsive gossiping. Phone calls every hour of the day. Daily trips to the beauty parlor. Even religious addiction — for people whose families are breaking apart because they spend their entire time in church. Etcetera.

What is your hidden addiction?

Why do you have it?

And what can you do to get out of it?

I'll help you answer all these questions in the next few pages.

CHAPTER 2

Why Do You Have Hidden Addictions?

*Those who enter the gates of heaven are not beings who have no passions
or who have curbed the passions,
but those who have cultivated an understanding of them.*

– William Blake

One day, I felt a sharp pain in my abdomen.

Was it gas? Or was it something I ate? Or were my ulcers acting up again? Or was it something worse like appendicitis?

After 30 minutes of pain, I suddenly had this crazy idea.

I released my belt buckle.

Immediately, the pain subsided. A few minutes more, it was gone.

So it wasn't gas, or food, or ulcers, or appendicitis after all. It was just my belt fastened too tightly! (Okay, it wasn't my belt. It was my vain desire to shrink my tummy.)

There are people who swallow a painkiller at the slightest pain.

Pretty dangerous, if you ask me. Especially if the pain was caused by ulcers, or a ruptured appendix, or a belt buckle.

Because pain is only a messenger from the body telling us there's something wrong.

It's foolish to kill the messenger. But that's what we do when we swallow painkillers. Pain looks like bad news, but it's not. It's just the messenger telling us that there's something wrong in our life.

Avoiding Painful Feelings

All addictions are painkillers.

Every single one of them.

Instead of facing the pain, we escape through our addictions so we won't feel the pain.

What are these negative emotions?

- Hurt: "I feel rejected."
- Depression: "I feel low." "I feel old." "I feel ugly." "I feel fat."
- Despair: "I feel my life is meaningless."
- Guilt: "I feel I'm bad." "I feel I can't meet the needs of my husband/kids."
- Anxiety: "I feel worried that bad things will happen."
- Fear: "I feel afraid that I will get hurt."
- Hate: "I feel angry at myself." "I feel angry at others."
- Shame: "I feel I'm not worthy to even exist."

My Biggest Emotion Was...

Let me share with you the emotion that ruled my life.

For years, I had this predominant feeling that was my constant companion. I really didn't bother to identify it. All I knew was that I felt sad. I felt lonely. I felt empty. I felt ugly and unworthy and separated from others... But for the longest time, I couldn't put a name to what I was feeling. All these words just didn't define the emotion that was eating me up.

Each morning, I woke up with this dreaded "nameless" feeling gnawing within me. Because this went on for years, I got so used to this empty feeling. I thought it was normal.

But here's what I knew. My thoughts were always about my humiliating mistakes — real and imagined. Like a guy who played one movie in his DVD player, and did nothing else except press the "rewind" button, I compulsively paraded my past embarrassing failures before me. And then I'd imagine how this or that person doesn't like me and is angry with me. And that same dreaded feeling would explode in my gut. It was my constant companion. It never left me.

Years later, after reading about someone's story who had exactly the same problem, I finally identified what it was all along: It was *shame*.

In psychological jargon, I had a shame-based personality.

I was ashamed that I existed.

I was ashamed that I was alive.

Everything I did was because of shame.

That was what my entire life was based on.

And so to escape my intense shame, I drowned myself in porn.

At least, these girls were smiling and disrobing for me. They must like me. My sexual fantasies were the same — these women were attracted to me.

For a moment, my shame disappeared.

But, after indulging in porn and masturbation, my shame deepened.

How could I, a servant of God, do such things?

But I couldn't control it. I kept doing it for years.

So I threw myself into Christian work — work that would make the world like me. As I said, my approval addiction was even more powerful than my sex addiction.

But 20 years ago, I took my first awkward steps towards healing.

It has been one long and exhilarating journey.

And this is what this book is all about.

What Is Your Core Need?

At the bottom of all addictions is this statement: "I don't love myself."

At the core of an addict's heart is an empty **love tank**.

Because every addiction is a hunger for love.

The addict doesn't value himself.

The addict doesn't like himself.

The addict doesn't love himself.

That is why I believe that only love can heal an addiction.

CHAPTER 3

The Ways of Getting Rid of Addictions

Remember to cure the patient as well as the disease.

– Dr. Alvan Barach

This may surprise you, but I believe that there is NO one particular way of healing your addiction. Why? *Because there are many ways to fill up an empty love tank.*

Because once your love tank is filled, you realize you don't belong in the jail cell. Here are some of the ways people push open that jail door to freedom:

1. Spontaneous Maturity

There are those who got rid of their bad habits by growing up emotionally. In their younger years, they took drugs and abused alcohol. As they grew older, got married and had kids, their self-identity changed. They kicked their addictions and grew in self-confidence. Somehow, their love tanks were filled in the process.

Not all experience this maturity. I know of a 56-year-old man who's been taking drugs for 40 years now. Marriage didn't change him. Kids didn't change him.

2. Spiritual Conversion

My friend Tim is a classic story of a spiritual conversion that healed addictions. After attending a Life in the Spirit Seminar, he stopped smoking and drinking on that very same day —

cold turkey. Prior to that, Tim had been a heavy smoker and drinker for the past 30 years. What happened on that day? Aside from the power of God, he felt these vices no longer fit his new identity. He saw himself as God's son, no longer an alcoholic or smoker. Emotionally, he liked the new Tim.

Ultimately, God's love filled his love tank.

However, not all people who go through religious seminars experience this instant freedom. And like everyone else under the sun, even Tim continues to battle other hidden addictions. So what else can we do?

3. "Go Back to Your Past" Psychology

I'm going to commit a crime. (Forgive me.) This is terribly simplistic, but I believe psychology is divided into two major camps — those who believe healing comes from the past and those who believe healing come from the present. I know it's more complicated than this but let's imagine it's not.

Followers of Sigmund Freud are in the first camp. They'll insist that for you to get free from your addictions, you need to go back to your past and deal with your unresolved issues. To do that, you need a trained psychotherapist to listen to you as you explore your unhealed wounds.

I used to believe that this is the *only* way to really help a person change.

Not anymore. My belief is now more nuanced. Personally, I believe that psychotherapy works, and it's NOT because of the brilliant, earth-shaking insights that one derives from psychotherapy. (These insights help, but I don't think they're key to our healing.) Instead, I believe psychotherapy works because of something quite simple: That another human being is listening to you — and that human connection *fills up your love tank*.

Why do I believe so?

From experience, *when another human being listens to you,*

doesn't judge you, and loves you, you get healed.

That's why Christian Psychologist Larry Crabb says that the Christian Church *should* be the best place for healing in the world. Why? Because it *should* be the most loving place on earth — where listening, acceptance and respect is practiced. (Two “shoulds” that aren't happening!)

I still believe that “Go Back To Your Past” Psychology is great for diagnosis. But therein lies its weakness. Now that I know my sickness, how will I heal it? After I found out that because I was sexually molested at age 8 and 13, I was more open to sex addiction, now what? The question remains — how do I cure it? I still had to deal with my present reality. And here lies the strength of the second division of psychology...

4. “Deal with the Present” Psychology

The other “division” of Psychology doesn't believe that this “unearthing of the past” is the key to healing. It helps, but it isn't essential to healing. Instead, they believe that the real cure is dealing with the NOW.

For example, Reality Therapy pioneered by Dr. William Glasser helps people identify what they want in life and practice their power of choice.

The entire Positive Thinking genre made popular by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale falls in this category. Even NLP or Neuro-Linguistic Programming is included here. And many more. These approaches believe that by changing your present thinking and acting upon your choices, you change your life.

5. 12-Step Group Approach

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and the entire recovery movement have touched millions of people. Today, you can almost be sure that there's a support group out there for your addiction, whatever it may be. From Narcotics Anonymous to Sex Addicts Anonymous, from Food Addicts Anonymous

to Shopaholics Anonymous. Some of its most staunch practitioners believe it's the *only* way to help people, which again, I disagree.

But when it does work, why does it work? Sorry for saying this again, but I believe that the program helps you fill up your love tank. First, the effort you give in attending meetings are baby steps towards recovery, making you gain self-confidence. Second, the power of a loving community surrounding you fills you with love as well.

6. Practical Approach

A friend of mine stopped smoking by jogging, sucking menthol candies after meals, and staying away from smoker friends. His wife and kids were also very supportive. He swears by this route, and I don't doubt him. I think every time he took a baby step towards his goal, he felt good about himself. This feeling translated into greater self-respect, which meant that his love tank was getting filled up.

My Approach? **All of the Above**

In other words, I believe in the Spiritual-Psychological-Positive-Group-Practical Approach. Because I will use anything that will fill up a person's love tank.

However, each person has different needs.

And each person is built differently.

So your way of filling up your love tank may be different from how I filled up mine. And I need to respect that.

The important thing is to start our journey towards freedom now.

CHAPTER 4

Walk Towards Your Freedom Now

The moment we choose to love we begin to move towards freedom...
— Bell Hooks

For the longest time, you've been in a prison cell.
You're tired. You're desperate.
You've been tinkering with that impossible lock on the door.
But in reality, there is no lock.
You think there's a lock, but there's none.
You've been deceived. Cheated.
The lock is in your mind, not on the door.
What is that lock in your mind?
I call it your "homing instinct."

That means an unconscious part of you would like to stay in that dirty prison because you've become used to it. It's been your home for years. Something within you — the defeated you, the failed you, the unloved you — wants to go back to that dungeon. A part of you feels that's what you deserve. This drive within you is called the "homing" instinct. Hurting people recreate their home, no matter how painful those homes were. Because that's where they feel safe.

Like my story at the start of this book, the Princess saw herself as a slave and wanted to live like one — even if she was a true-blue

Princess. But as you fill up your love tank — as you value yourself more and as you receive love from God and others — *you realize that you deserve a new home*. You realize that you don't belong there anymore. With a full love tank, your “homing” instinct no longer drives you to your past home. Instead, it drives you to your *future* home. Instead of a “homing instinct” you begin to develop a “vision instinct.”

And speaking of vision...