

The Non Using Addict

(A Description of Attitudes & Behaviors)

What is a Non Using Addict?

The behaviors associated with the Non Using Addict belong to the individual who is currently not engaging in their addictive behavior of choice and not engaging in the recovery process. The recovery process requires the addict to understand the motivation behind his or her behavior, thoughts and actions. Why do they behave the way they do? What do they seek from others or themselves? Addictive behaviors include:

- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Sex
- Gambling
- Food
- Manipulating Others to Get Own Way
- Computers/Internet
- Pornography
- Work
- Exercise
- Angerholics
- Shopping
- Idolizing
- Spiritual Obsession
- Cutting
- Victimholics

This guide is also for the family and friends of the addict. It is important that these people be able to identify the typical motivations, thought patterns and behaviors of the addictive personality.

The Non Using Addict: Getting High without Using

Addiction: *“The state of being enslaved to a habit or practice or to something that is psychologically or physically habit-forming, as narcotics, to such an extent that its cessation causes severe trauma”.*

Addiction comes from the Latin word for a giving over or surrender. This is appropriate because the Non Using Addict utilizes attitudes, behaviors and actions that destroy their welfare. Even when one is “sober” they still display the traits of an addict. It is an indication that their lives are not in balance.

The term addiction is used to describe a recurring compulsion by an individual to engage in some specific activity, despite harmful consequences, as believed by the user himself to his health, mental state or social life.

Stop Judging or Berating Yourself

When reading about the Non Using Addict, leave your feelings of judgment or blame behind. What’s important to understand is that this condition describes a problem, not a person. The point is not to condemn ourselves but to admit the truth and move on. The thoughts, feelings, and actions that the Non Using Addict has, don’t have to linger. **He or she can develop new patterns of thinking**

and feeling and make a fresh start in life. What happened in the past is over, humans often make mistakes but the beauty of life is that they can reflect and learn from them.

The Non Using Addict is found in all walks of life. It is not an indication of failure or worth. A CEO of a major company caught in a traffic jam leans on her car horn in a frenzy of irritation. The single parent resents doing the family wash and blames her children for getting their clothes dirty. Both instances show beliefs and behavior that are neither realistic nor appropriate.

The Attitudes of a Non Using Addict

These attitudes represent emotional and mental instability and are impractical to the rational thought process. Emotional and mental instability are reflected in our attitudes.

The following are typical attitudes displayed by the Non Using Addict:

Pomposity

Pomposity simply means exaggerating their importance. It can apply to their strengths or weaknesses. Either way, it puts them at the center of attention—the "big me" who has all the answers or the "poor me" whose cup of self-pity runneth over.

Criticism

Criticism and pomposity go hand in hand. The result is that they feel they have the right to size up others as either good or bad. Sometimes these judgments contain a kernel of truth; often they are simply off base. At the same time, they judge their own using harshly, and others can usually sense how unworthy they feel.

One way to disguise this feeling of unworthiness is to judge their families, friends, colleagues and employers as harshly as they judge ourselves. They find faults in others. Even as they admit their own shortcomings, they catalog the sins of family, friends, employers, and people in authority. This is one way to get off the hook and avoid change—by saying, *"Look, I am not so different from anyone else."* These people may dismiss the Non Using Addicts criticism, which is not surprising.

Intolerance

Intolerance means that they are unwilling to see things from any point of view other than their own; they want to satisfy every desire now. When they're intolerant, their priorities get confused: they give more attention to whims or passing fancies than to genuine personal needs.

Impulsiveness

Impulsiveness follows intolerance. When they're impulsive, they ignore the consequences of their behavior. For example, they buy things they can't afford. Pomposity gets mixed in here, too—such as having a new car in the driveway when they really can't afford the old one.

Indecisiveness

Indecisiveness and impulsiveness are close kin. When they're impulsive, they don't consider the results of their actions; when they're indecisive, they often fail to take any action. They exaggerate the negative things that might happen. They waver between all the options. Usually nothing gets done.

What are the Results of Their Attitudes?

When any of these attitudes take over the Non Using Addict's thinking, they may find certain things happening to them:

Their Moods Swing. Often these have nothing to do with the events they're upset about. The real reason for their moods can go much deeper than those events—or it can be the most minor irritation. Any excuse will do.

Their Feelings Get Dull. They lose their "spark," the ability to express their emotions freely and naturally.

They Find It Hard To Look Inside Themselves. It becomes difficult to examine their thoughts and feelings.

They Become Aloof And Withdrawn. They're indifferent. They don't care one way or another about anything, and they express no special likes or dislikes. Nothing really matters to them anymore.

They Dwell On Themselves, Calling Attention To Their Accomplishments. To put it bluntly, they act like pompous asses.

They Fail To Enjoy Activities That Can Bring Them Pleasure, Such As Music, Reading, Conversation, Athletics, And Art. Nothing satisfies them. Joy and fulfillment elude them.

They Become Disorganized, Distracted, And Bored. Nothing seems to fit for them.

They Become Nostalgic. They Yearn For A Past That Seemed Free Of Cares—An Illusion. They long for the good life, better times", their relationships, home, security or a time when things made sense.

They Become Desperate For Escape. They fantasize, daydream, and get lost in wishful thinking. In the process, they slip farther and farther from the real world.

They Narrow Our Options. They do and think the same things over and over again, locking themselves into predictable patterns.

The Behavior of a Non Using Addict

The Non Using Addict not only affects their thought processes but how they act. The following is a list of these behaviors:

Denying

The Non Using Addict is often uneasy without knowing why. The discomforts of the past hover about them and cloud their present feelings. They agree with society that certain behaviors are selfish and destructive, yet they do not control such behavior in themselves. Rather than face reality, they guard their self-esteem, telling themselves, "That behavior was not and cannot be true of me."

This strategy of denial fails them time after time. They still brush up against feelings and thoughts that trouble them. They still sense, however dimly, memories and wishes that they'd prefer to silence.

It's hard for anyone to hold up under this kind of inner conflict, so we do what we can to protect ourselves. Much of the time, we simply deny or downplay the truth.

Rationalizing

Like denial, rationalizing boosts their self-esteem for a little while. When they rationalize, they derail criticism and justify themselves at every turn. They even find reasons for avoiding actions that will help them. Our reasons sound so logical, but they only sidestep their need for help.

Projecting

The Non Using Addict ascribes his or her own feelings, thoughts, or attitudes to others. Projection means finding in others the things they can't accept about themselves. They may accuse others of being highly critical, although this describes their own attitude toward themselves and others. All of these are ways to get around the thoughts and feelings that trouble them.

Overreacting

One characteristic of the Non Using Addict is overreaction. He or she gets worked up over minor events or resent others for no apparent reason; they may get violent after losing a hand at bridge or missing a phone call. Friends and family members may brush off this behavior and say that he or she is just blowing off steam. But overreacting often keeps the Non Using Addict from facing a bigger problem in their life. What's more, overreacting can be dangerous to them and others.

Complying

The Non Using Addict seems know all the answers and is rarely at a loss for words. Their knowledge sounds impressive, their insight convincing. They become compilers—people who comply, who seem to play by the rules.

In truth, however, their words and deeds grow farther apart. They seem to accept criticism and even speak at length about their defects. *Others sense that they're about to change for the better.* Yet they do not translate words into action. The Non Using Addict's performance still falls short of their promises.

Again, they do these things to avoid feeling discomfort and making decisions. They slide onto the path of least resistance, both at home and at work. They know what they could do—what would be constructive, what would really help them. Yet their old attitudes and actions still win out.

An example of compliance is where the Non Using Addict uses his or her Twelve Step program to become compliant. Using the "correct" jargon, they can speak loudly about their "moral inventory" or "conscious contact." They pay lip service to the program's principles, and that frees them, for the moment, from doing anything about them.