

Are you Doing Addicted?

Notes on the Doing Addiction

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Doing (taking action) is a natural part of life similar to the necessity for eating. However, overdoing similar to overeating can also become an addiction.

An addiction is anything that we DO to excess in ways that are harmful to our health and wellbeing. There are obvious addictions such as drugs, alcohol, gambling, etc... Most of us might recognize a Doing Addiction as someone who is a workaholic. However, the Doing Addiction often shows up in subtle ways that are more challenging to spot.

For example, the most philanthropic work a person might engage in doing, may be driven by a Doing Addiction as a way to avoid feelings or having a personal life.

Underlying the Doing Addiction are three primary fears.

- Fear of not having enough
- Fear of not being good enough (or having to prove yourself)
- Fear of Facing your Fears and having to really Feel your Feelings...

Fear of not having enough is part of the cultural program that can trap us into striving to have more money, bigger houses, nicer cars, more stuff, more that distracts us from a deeper connection to ourselves, to our beloved others and to what is really important, meaningful and fulfilling. For about why this is see this 21 minute video on *The Story of Stuff* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLBE5QAYXp8>

Fear of not being good enough expresses as having to prove to others you are worthy, you do have value and worth often determined by how much you accomplish and achieve. This is usually driven by a desire for approval and acceptance from others at a high cost to your own happiness and wellbeing.

Fear of Facing your Fears and Feeling your Feelings can drive a Doing Addiction so that there is no time to be with how you really feel. This can look like the most philanthropic endeavors that keep a person so busy doing and giving that they have no time to be with their feelings, especially the feelings they might have about how they are living life.

We are a culture that has been taught to avoid any feelings that are NOT what we might consider *good* or *happy* feelings. We can even be discouraged from expressing excitement and enthusiasm especially when we are too exuberant making others uncomfortable. Or some might even use depression, being a victim, or passive aggressive behavior to get attention – often coming across as a poor me. So how does our behavior reflect what we are feeling or not feeling and how does that drive a doing addiction? This TedX talk has some helpful insights.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKy19WzkPxE>

The Doing Addiction can also be based in the limited belief that our happiness is determined by how successful we are according to society's standards including how much money we make, how much recognition we get, how much respect we command. Rather than the other way around, meaning coming from the knowing that when we are happy from the inside out first - then that is what determines what we do - leading to truly living a joyously, fulfilling, successful life.

How do you know if you are Doing Addicted?

Considering the following helps to become more aware of how you might be operating out of a Doing Addiction or NOT.

1. You feel you must accomplish something worthwhile everyday as a way to have value and worth in the world.
2. AND you measure you're your worthiness based on how much you accomplish in a day, so getting a lot done, with significant quantifiable results equates to a good day.
3. All your thoughts tend to be about what to Do next. Or what is still left on your To Do list that hasn't been done yet.
4. You believe you must keep Doing (working long hours) to support your family and/or lifestyle even if a better choice for your health or your family's happiness is to scale back (not have the big house and expensive car) because your identity is connected to what you have and not who you are...
6. You Do what you do, NOT because its thrilling or satisfying or fulfilling, but because your Doing is defined by the cultural definition of how to live a worthwhile life or what you feel you must do in order to survive.
7. You worry your Doing is insufficient and you should be Doing more. OR You worry about what you didn't Do or that you are not doing enough.
8. You are doing what you do to impress others and to gain approval and acceptance.
9. You are doing, doing, doing believing you are making a valuable contribution and yet have no personal life and/or are exhausted as a result.
12. Your doing is driven by fear of failure, that you won't live up to the expectations you perceive others have of you and you have of yourself.

Sometimes, those who are doing addicted, with heavy judgments attempt to escape from their doing madness through (drugs and alcohol, unconscious sexuality, general irresponsibility, etc.) as a way to find some relief from the constant doing pressure. If these addictions get out of hand a person can be ostracized from social and cultural opportunities sanctioned by the "norm" of society. Meaning if you show up at work totally drunk, or high, or non-functioning from some type of irresponsible behavior you might get fired.

Questions to ask to determine if you are Doing from a driving insatiable Addiction or from the enjoyment and the pleasure of Doing.

- Do you enjoy what you do?
- Are you doing what you want to do, or what you feel you have to do?
- Do you do out of fear, i.e. that the world will fall apart, or it won't get done if you don't do it. Or do you Do from the enjoyment it brings in the process, as well as really enjoying the results of your Doing?
- Do you feel driven or compulsive about your doing ... eating right, exercising right, working long hours, doing spiritual practices in the right way. If you don't do these things in the "RIGHT" way, do you feel guilty?
- When you are relaxing do you really relax, or does your mind race with what you could be doing?