

Analysis:

Looking at the vows you made as a result of your worst moments, is there a commonality or theme you can identify?

Now, look at the answers you provided on the Last Relapse Table in your *Conquer Series Journal*. Are any of the actions or steps that contributed to your relapse as the result of a vow you made when experiencing one of the worst moments in your life? Do you recognize any connection between vows you have made and your relapse?

3. THE DOUBLE BIND EXERCISE

Many people who struggle with addictive behaviors are continually faced with difficult choices to make. Throughout the day, perhaps several times a day, they find themselves at a crossroad; they have a decision to make and all their options lead to a negative consequence. They are faced with a double bind.¹

A double bind is a lose/lose situation that often involves risk and fear. We've all heard the saying, "Stuck between a rock and a hard place." This saying sums-up a double bind. The challenge we face is choosing the lesser of two evils; making a choice that may result in immediate consequences, but will inevitably benefit us. For example, if I tell my wife about my pornography use and masturbation, she will feel angry, hurt, and betrayed. But, I also can't continue living a lie; the guilt and shame I feel on a daily basis is eating me up inside. This is a lose/lose situation. I have a difficult choice to make. I can risk telling my wife the truth and suffer the consequences of hurting her OR I can keep quiet and continue to carry the weight of my sin, trapped by my own fear. If I tell my wife about my behavior, although it will hurt her, I will be free from this secret and have the opportunity to restore my marriage OR I can continue to lie to her and try to stop my behaviors on my own. This is a double bind.

When faced with a double bind, the struggle is not with identifying the right thing to do. We know what the right choice is; we know what we should do. However, that doesn't make the choice any easier because of the risk and fear involved. If we choose to do the right thing, we give up something; we have to make a change. If we don't change, or choose to ignore the problem, then we are choosing to stay a prisoner to our addiction. As Michael Dye has said, "The right thing to do is usually the hard thing to do."²

This week, your 7-Day Mission includes the following double bind exercise.³ In the space below, work through a few recent situations where you experienced a double bind as a result of your addictive behaviors. Answer the corresponding questions pertaining to the specific situation and the choices you made. Follow up by determining the "right thing to do" and the strategies to help you succeed.

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Example:

Situation/Issue: *I was recently "friended" by an old high school girlfriend on Facebook. We have been chatting on Facebook and texting for the past month. It started off casually, but has escalated to sexual conversations. She wants to have an affair. Initially I felt excitement, but now I struggle with feelings of guilt and shame.*

Choice #1—Necessary change: *I love my wife and know this relationship would hurt her. I really should tell her about it and break it off with my old girlfriend. If I tell my wife, it will damage our relationship, possibly beyond repair. I know she will feel betrayed and not trust me.*

Choice #2—No change: *I can maintain a friendship with my old girlfriend. It won't go any further than that. If I keep my interactions with her to a minimum, my wife will never know. I can manage the guilt and shame I feel. This is not really a betrayal.*

The right thing to do: *I need to tell my wife and discontinue my relationship with my old girlfriend. I know there will be consequences, but I can't continue to live a lie.*

Strategies for success: *I will meet with my pastor for advice before telling my wife. I will limit my Facebook friends to male friends only. I will do whatever my wife needs me to do, so that she can feel safe and so that we can begin to build trust in our marriage.*

Your Turn

Situation/Issue:

Choice #1—necessary change:

Choice #2—no change:

The right thing to do:

Strategies for success:

Situation/Issue:

Choice #1 – necessary change:

Choice #2 – no change:

The right thing to do:

Strategies for success:

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Choice #2—no change:

The right thing to do:

Strategies for success:

Processing a double bind can be challenging. It can feel emotionally exhausting and can bring up feelings that you have kept hidden for many years. However, it is a tool that you must master; it will help you identify the behaviors that lead to relapse. As you work through this week's double bind exercise, pay close attention to where you're at on the FASTER Scale. If you find yourself sliding down the FASTER Scale, identify the double bind you're facing and work through it. Practicing this double bind exercise on a regular basis will help you to be more aware of what drives your addiction and how to avoid relapse.

One final note: As you use the tools you've been given to process your addictive behaviors and move toward healing, watch out for HALT. When you're feeling Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired, the enemy will use this to set you up; pulling you away from health and driving you deeper into your addiction. This is the danger zone. If you feel this happening, call one of the men in your Conquer Group for support.

4. USE THE FASTER SCALE IN YOUR CONQUER SERIES JOURNAL

The FASTER Scale in your Conquer Series Journal will help you identify where you are at on a daily basis. It is imperative that you make an honest and accurate self-assessment of your behaviors. The goal is to recognize where you are at and the direction you are headed, so you can change direction before relapse occurs. Connect with the members of your Conquer Group when you need support.

¹ Dye, M. (2012). *The Genesis Process: For Change Groups, Book 1 and 2, Individual Workbook*. Auburn, CA: Michael Dye. 57.

² *Ibid.*, 270.

³ Dye, M. (2012). *The Genesis Process: For Change Groups, Book 1 and 2, Individual Workbook*. Auburn, CA: Michael Dye. Adapted and used with permission.