

Recovery Without Relapse Summaries

Recovery without Relapse is a book written by Dr. George C. Crabb, DDO and Benjamin Burks, International Director for Reformers Unanimous Recovery Ministries. The following lessons are excerpts from that book. You are encouraged to purchase a copy and read the entire book.

Section 1: Freedom, not sobriety, is the goal.

Steve Curington, co-founder of Reformers Unanimous Recovery Ministries used to say addictions are “anything that is bad for you that you continue to do”. That is true. A more technical definition of an addiction is the compulsive, physiological need for and use of a habit-forming substance or behavior; characterized by tolerance and well-defined physiological symptoms upon withdrawal. It is a dependence on substances or destructive behaviors to cope with underlying conditions.

There are published statistics that state there are over 23 million Americans over the age of 12 that struggle with addictions. The problem is epidemic and a large majority of addictions may never find the solution to their problem. Most addictions seek sobriety instead of seeing complete freedom from their addiction.

Sobriety is the state of being sober. While the individual may be doing the right thing by staying sober, they still have a strong appetite to partake in their addiction. Simply put – it is right actions on the outside, but wrong thoughts on the inside. The desire to use can be just as binding as the addiction.

In the Reformers Unanimous program the focus is on freedom, not sobriety. Freedom is the state of exemption from power or control of another. With freedoms, the desires have changed and the appetites have ceased. A healing from underlying conditions that caused coping mechanisms takes place. When sobriety is the goal we deal with behaviors. To gain freedom we must seek the root cause(s) for the binding behaviors.

Is freedom possible? Great question! The answer is a resounding YES! However, you must separate the problem from the symptom. In *Recovery without Relapse*, a made-up term called “Bondagitis” is used. Bondagitis (bondage itis) is a word to accurately describe addictions. Addictions are the **symptom** and not the problem. Addictions can be very problematic for certain – but they are the fruit of the real problem; they are a way to cope and to mask the pain. The problem is not the addiction, but what is causing discomfort or hurt that needs to be masked.

To be freed from bondagitis you must find and correct the root cause(s) to the binding behaviors. If the real issues behind bondagitis are not treated usually one of two things will happen: (1) Return to addiction or (2) Develop a substitute addiction (changing one addiction for another).

Any individual who worked through the Reformers Unanimous curriculum and has walked out with

complete recovery was not cured from alcoholism or an addiction, but they were cured from the condition that was causing them to use alcohol, addictive drugs, or destructive behavior to make life bearable.

Identifying and then healing the underlying causes of bondagitis is all about restoring one's spirit, soul, and body to their God-ordained balance. A just balance is the desire of God:

- Proverbs 16:11, *“A just weight and balance are the LORD’s: all the weights of the bag are his work.”* We find that false balances (or an unbalanced life) are detrimental.
- Proverbs 11:1, *“A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.”*
- Proverbs 20:23, *“Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good.”*

It is Reformers Unanimous’ mission to help each student regain that balance between spirit, soul, and body (the spirit being the foundation). We want and desire to teach each student how to obtain that balance without the use of substances by correcting whatever is causing the imbalance.

The RU slogan is “the Truth will make you free”. This slogan represents not only the goal of RU – FREEDOM – but it also states the source of that freedom: the Truth. Jesus says this in the book of John 8:32, *And ye shall know the truth, and **the truth shall make you free.*** Yes! Complete freedom is available through the Truth. The next several challenges will focus on introducing you to that Truth.

Why settle for sobriety when you can be FREE?!?!?

Section 2: Relapse is not part of recovery. (Find the Truth.)

The national relapse rate for all drugs is nearly 80% and even higher for alcohol and heroin. Most addictions relapse not just once, but many times. Many attend programs where harmful philosophies exist such as publically declaring oneself an addict; admitting to be powerless over the subject of their addiction; and relapse is part of recovery. Relapse is NOT part of recovery, but part of failure. Relapse is a return to bondagitis (coping instead of healing).

RU has been dramatically more successful by rejecting such harmful ideas and demonstrating that staying sober is a natural byproduct of walking in the Truth of Jesus Christ with the underlying conditions, which were responsible for bondagitis, healed.

Relapse is harmful, not helpful, nor acceptable.

Relapse is not part of the recovery process. That mindset gives permission for failure. Relapse is a failure during the recovery process. It is a return to bondagitis by masking or coping with the root cause instead of dealing with it. A return to coping and masking is a return to bondage and at the bottom of every person's bondage is pain.

Ask yourself this question: If relapse being part of recovery actually worked – why not go for moderation instead of sobriety? It doesn't work. We need to seek freedom.

The Truth will make you free!

Freedom is walking completely FREE of the need to use addictive substances or behaviors to cope: no more bondagitis. John 14:6, *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* Jesus Christ is the Truth that can change your life and make you free from the bondagitis. When you know Jesus as your Savior and walk with Him each day, you will learn a way of life that brings freedom through Jesus Christ.

Remember: Failure will only come when you fail to follow the Truth. After RU introduces you to the Truth, it will teach you and equip you to follow the Truth. Freedom is not a destination: it is a way of life!

Section 3: It can be you! (Understanding Triggers)

What you believe affects your recovery.

What you believe about your addiction or stronghold and recovery without relapse are key factors in determining if you will overcome your bondagitis to addictive substances and behaviors. At Reformers Unanimous, we believe there is hope; we believe that freedom is the norm! There is recovery without relapse through Jesus Christ. You can experience lasting triumph over life's triggers.

Part of recovery is learning to properly respond to triggers in a positive and healthy way.

What are Triggers?

Triggers are things in the individual's daily life that tempts them to return to their addictive or destructive behavior. They are events that initiate thoughts, feelings, and sensations, leading to cravings to engage the addictive behavior.

Trigger examples:

- Negative thoughts and emotions: sadness, guilt, anger, anxiety, rumination (deliberation), and catastrophizing (imaging mishap, misfortune, or failure).
- People and places: seeing someone that you used to participate in substance abuse with; seeing certain people that excite passions; going to a place where these exist.
- Pictures: the images get stored in our mind and are easily recalled to be used excite.
- Things or Items: paraphernalia; items that resemble.
- Sounds: music; certain sounds.

What happens to a Trigger?

A trigger, when nurtured, takes on a life of its own. The thought generated about engaging in the addictive behavior and the emotional reward resulting from the addictive behavior becomes a preoccupation. The triggering event leads to a thought that begins to “fire off” these euphoric memories, and if not dealt with properly, lead us into cravings. These physiological responses in the brain and body are both real and powerful.

If these responses are not handled appropriately, they will lead to addictive behavior. The thinking turns to craving and the craving to activity. Trigger → thought → craving → Activity.

During a craving, the body and brain are looking for an excuse to use again. Often the craving produced by triggers is our longing for things to be different than the way they are in the moment. If we give in to the craving produced by a trigger, it does not make anything different; it only masks what we want to be different.

Anytime we allow a trigger to produce a thought and then a craving, leading to addictive activity, it will affect our relationship with others and God. Never play around with triggers of your addiction.

Section 4: It can be you! (Dealing with Triggers)

Identify your Triggers:

Proverbs 22:3, *A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.* Forseeth means to look ahead and regard. This verse tells us that it is great wisdom and caution to look ahead and regard evil (bad things). Identifying your trigger will allow you to avoid exposure to the trigger when possible.

It is important to identify triggers. Some triggers can and should be avoided at all costs; other triggers cannot be avoided, so you must learn to properly defend yourself against those triggers. It is possible to get victory over certain triggers so they are no longer a temptation or seed to destructive meditations.

Setting a strategy

A trigger can be the beginning of an individual’s worst nightmare. Knowing those triggers and making a plan of escape, based on the Truth, is a key to your recovery without a relapse. A successful strategy to obtain victory must meet this criteria:

1. It must be founded on the Truth.
2. It must be immediately available to the individual.
3. It must be something possible to do in the real world.
4. It must be something that will be successful when done properly.

5. It must be something that the individual is capable of doing.
6. It must be able to work for all triggers.

God's strategy for successfully dealing with triggers:

God outlined a plan in the Bible that, if followed properly, will give us victory over triggers:

1. Thought Captivation - *2 Corinthians 10:5, Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ***; The best way to allow God's Word to gain momentum in your life is to meditate on the seven things He tells us in the Bible to do every day:
 - Daily search the scriptures: Read, study, memorize and meditate. (Acts 17:11)
 - Daily take up your cross: Look to help others. (Luke 9:23)
 - Daily exhort: Look to encourage others. (Hebrews 9:13)
 - Daily die: Ask God for His will and way to be done and not ours. (1 Corinthians 15:31)
 - Daily perform your vows: Make sure you are doing what you promised God you would do. (Psalms 61:8)
 - Daily praise God: Meditate on how great God is. (Psalm 119:164)
 - Daily pray: Spend time throughout the day communicating with God. (Psalm 86:3)
2. Avoidance or Escape – God promises a way of escape. (1 Corinthians 10:13)
3. Remembering – Remember what your addictive behavior cost you and your loved ones in the past.
4. Accountability Partner – Find a spiritual leader who will help you and guide you.
5. Live in the moment – Be content. (Philippians 4:11)

Section 5: Ending Appeal

The Truth makes free

The Truth is Jesus Christ; the Truth is the Word of God. To walk in freedom, your personal belief system **MUST** be based on truth: THE TRUTH. In RU, you will learn to live according to the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit of God in your life. Through the Spirit-led life you will develop sensitivity to the internal and external triggers that stimulate our addictive, destructive behavior.

In reality, all addictions and destructive behaviors are a search for relief and answers. But, the answers are never to be found out there. The answer is the following: JESUS IN YOU AND YOU IN JESUS. Unless you allow God to heal the underlying conditions that have created and maintained your dependency, those problems will lead you back to the alcohol, drugs, and destructive behaviors over and over again.

Jesus is the Truth that will heal and make you free!

Testimony of Victory

In the appendix of *Recovery without Relapse* there is a wonderful testimony of a young man who once lived a defeated life, bound with a crippling addiction. I would again encourage you to get the book and read this complete testimony. He found freedom using the tools of Reformers Unanimous utilizing these important truths:

1. Meet with God consistently every morning and throughout the day. As you do, your Spiritual armor that you put on will become increasingly thicker and stronger day by day as you consistently cast down lustful thoughts Satan will throw at you.
2. Surrender triggers to God. Stop holding on to them.
3. Continue, daily, Christ-empowered love to encourage fellow believers to be generous and kind and reach out to others with compassion and Godly love. (Hebrews 3:13)
4. Willingly seek to endure whatever adversity or trials necessary to be taken to a place where you can be transformed the most. Cling to the Lord during these times.

Enter Not into Temptation

There is a pattern of a vicious cycle that starts with a wound. We all have wounds that come into our lives. These are difficulties, injustices, and hurts. The word *wound* means, “damage, a grievance, a harm, an injury.” In essence, it is saying, “I’ve been wronged,” or “I’ve been hurt,” or “I’ve been abused.”

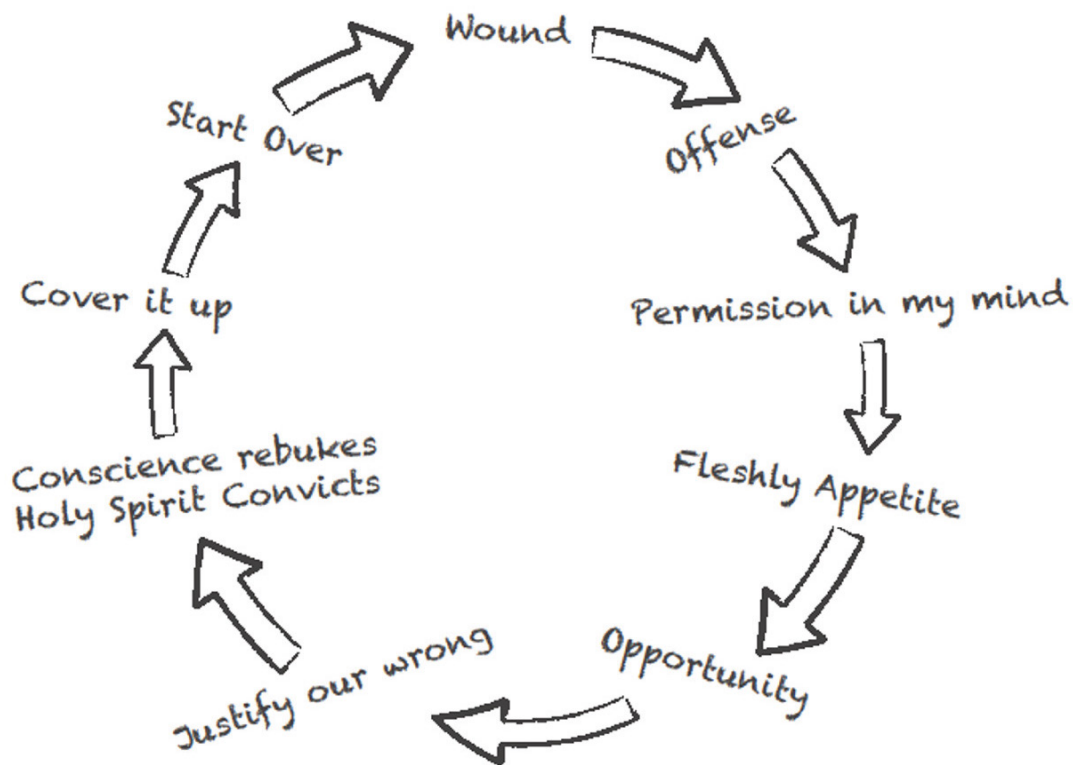
The word *offend* means “to push toward a transgression; to make to stumble.” This is what happens in our Christian lives. We have wounds and problems that we have not dealt with properly and appropriately. We are walking along, and, all of a sudden, we get wounded; we get hurt.

Once you start tripping your way through life, it’s hard to break it after the offense. Then, the fleshly appetite kicks in, and it is hard to stop the flesh. Isaiah 53:5 says, “*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*”

WOW! There are not 12 steps or 10 steps to be healed from our wounds and offenses. There is only ONE step! That ONE STEP is Jesus Christ.

Forgiveness is a BIG KEY to healing the hurts in your life. Forgiveness says, "I'm going to release you. I'm not going to bring it up to you. I'm not going to bring it up to others. I'm not even going to allow myself to meditate on it. I am releasing you." Forgive those who offend you, and forgive those who hurt you.

Only when you forgive and forget can God start working in your life with a power that is so dynamic. FORGIVE AND START WALKING IN GOD'S POWER!



The exit to this cycle of destruction is developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He is the Truth that will heal your hurts and free you from bondage!