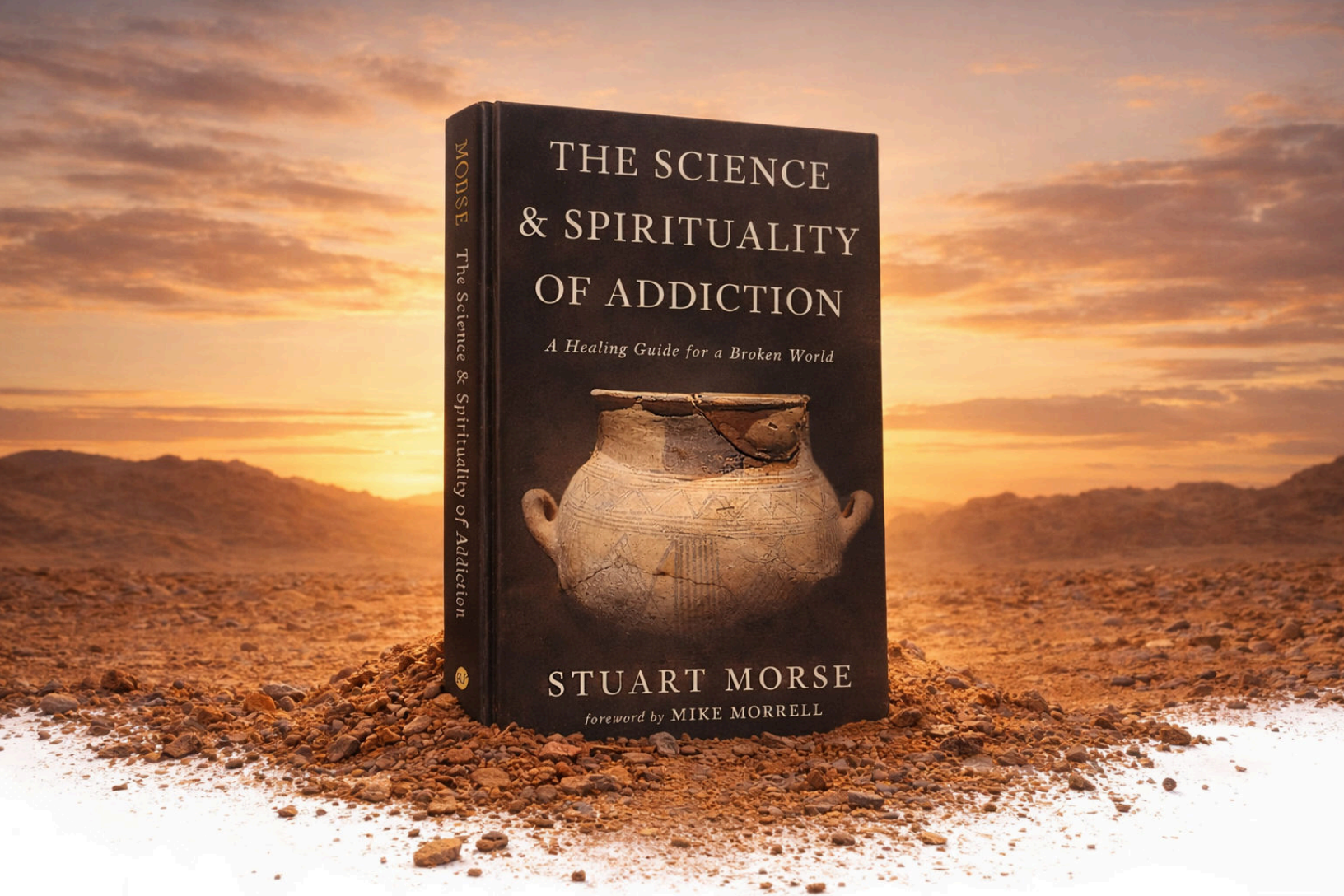




THE SCIENCE & SPIRITUALITY OF ADDICTION

A Healing Guide for a Broken World

STUART MORSE

foreword by MIKE MORRELL

Wipf & Stock Publishers

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THE DAWN OF MAN

Personal Transformation

Forgive me for invoking some tongue in cheek metaphors inspired by Arthur C. Clark's 1964 novel *2001 A Space Odyssey*. Linking the role of a mere book with the monolith of that Sci-Fi masterpiece (as I have done in the header image above) would be highly presumptuous were I not using only a shallow association. You could just as easily substitute my book, in this image, with any tome that encourages its readers to make the next great leap forward in their personal development. In contrast with the movie, I am not talking about the dawn of mankind in general, but the emergence of a new manifestation of the self.

Recovery as a Gift

Unlike the monolithic star of that classic novel, no book can influence its audience without their active participation in the process, and for this reason the heroes of this work are neither author nor protagonist, but the readers themselves. It is the responsive reader that powers their own evolutionary journey, as they move towards what Abraham Maslow termed Self-Actualization (becoming real). Theirs is the labour, but there are many who benefit from the effort they expend. Far from being a selfish endeavour, embarking on a recovery journey benefits the addict and all those in their social orbit—family, friends, colleagues and the community at large. Recovery is a gift to the world.

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MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

Book Title:

The Science and Spirituality of Addiction:
A Healing Guide for a Broken World

Author: Stuart Morse

Publisher: Wipf and Stock (Eugene, OR)

Publication Date: January 2026

Website: stuartmorse.com

Overview

The Science and Spirituality of Addiction bridges the gap between the laboratory and the human spirit, offering a compassionate yet scientifically grounded guide to recovery. Integrating neuroscience, psychology, and spirituality, it reveals how addiction arises not from moral failure but from a complex interaction of neurochemical reward systems, emotional wounds, and existential disconnection.

Drawing equally on empirical research and lived experience, this book maps the terrain of recovery as both a physiological recalibration and a spiritual reintegration. It explores how ancient traditions, modern psychology, and post-modern insight converge to form a comprehensive understanding of human healing. Readers will discover how dopamine, trauma, and conditioning shape compulsive behavior—and how awareness, compassion, and connection can transform it.

By uniting science and soul, it invites readers to integrate their fragmented selves and rediscover wholeness in a fractured world. The book was inspired, in large part, by the work of Gabor Maté.

Key Ideas

Addiction as brain dysregulation rather than moral failure: Focus on dopamine, stress systems, and habit circuitry.

The role of stress and modern life: Links workplace pressure, social isolation, unresolved trauma and technological change to rising addictive behaviours

Spiritual recovery reframed: Interprets principles from Alcoholics Anonymous and biblical texts in psychological and neurobiological terms.

Integration model

Combines evidence-based practices with meaning-focused recovery approaches and shadow integration.

Practical application: Offers tools for individuals, families, and professionals.

Why This Book Now

Rates of substance use, behavioral addiction, and mental health challenges have risen alongside rapid social and technological change. The book situates addiction within this broader context, including emerging pressures such as digital overload, economic uncertainty, and workplace disruption.

It is written for a general audience but aims to be credible to clinicians, policymakers, and recovery professionals.

About the Author

Stuart Morse is a former software engineer with a 37-year career in technology. He now works in the addiction recovery field and is the founder of Emergent Horizons, a coaching and education practice focused on addiction, mental health, and behavior change.

Interview Angles

1. Is addiction a brain disorder, a trauma response, a social issue, or a spiritual crisis?
2. Why is waiting to hit “rock bottom” a flawed strategy?
3. How modern work and technology may be shaping addictive behaviour.
4. Where traditional recovery models succeed—and where they fall short.

5. Bridging science and spirituality without diminishing either.
6. Practical approaches to quitting and staying quit.

Availability

Available through major online retailers, by order through bookstores and from the author direct.

BOOK FACT SHEET (Quick Reference)

Book Title:

The Science and Spirituality of Addiction:
A Healing Guide for a Broken World

Author: Stuart Morse

Publication Date: January 2026

ISBN: 979-8-3852-6470-4 (Paperback)

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direct from author.

Where to Buy Locally: In Victoria: Russell Books, Bolen Books, Munro's Books, Direct from author.

Where to Buy Online: stuartmorse.com, Amazon, Indigo, Wipf and Stock.

Publisher: Resource Publications, an imprint of Wipf and Stock (Eugene, OR)

Website: stuartmorse.com



Sam Norman

KEY QUOTES AND SOUND BITES

"The goal of this book is to harmonize the scientific, secular and religious tapestries that portray the addiction experience."

"Our attachment to addictive chemicals stems from their role as proxies for relationship."

"Ultimately there is only one addiction—the addiction to dopamine—and this is the common thread that links all behavioral and chemical dependencies."

"You can't get a bigger reward than the biggest reward your brain can give you, and that reward is not as expensive as you might imagine."

"As the movement of skillful fingers brings a stringed instrument to life, so the flow of dopamine propagates resonant frequencies through pathways that drive us to action and reward us for doing so."

"Addiction is the attachment to destructive strategies that avoid the feelings that flow from unmet needs and produce feelings that normally arise when needs are met."

"Recovery emerges as the process of calming the turbulence [of the mind]."

"The felt-sense of human intuition has the capacity to bestow deep understanding, even in the realm of science."

"We can consider the consciousness manifested in humanity as a kind of material / electro-chemical metaphor of the ultimate spiritual reality."

"The key to non-addiction is maturity."

"To be psychologically whole and build resilience against our addictive tendencies we must accept the contribution each level

of psychological development has made to our lives."

"Recovery from addiction requires the exploration of new subjective landscapes and the construction of a map that leads out of the desert and into a promised land."

"To embrace these authentic values, we must turn our focus away from dopamine's pleasure response and incentivize ourselves towards the pursuit of meaning."

"With an awareness of the physicality of consciousness, we can detach our sense of self from how we feel in the moment (it is just chemistry) and view our feelings as acts of consciousness over which we have some control."

"The conscience draws on that part of our memory that is accessible to both the limbic and pre-frontal regions, and which mediates between our impulsive and regulatory functions."

"By depending on God, we are filled from within and become self-inflating [Christmas] snowmen and rigid plants rather than wilted ones."

"The strength of the individual as a conscious entity depends on the extent to which previous levels of psychological development have been integrated into the whole."

"Expectation (reward prediction) is like a unidirectional tide—it flows ahead with ease but abhors anything that might cause an ebb."

"The aversion felt by modernists towards the Bible might be at least partially ameliorated by viewing it as an early psychology textbook."

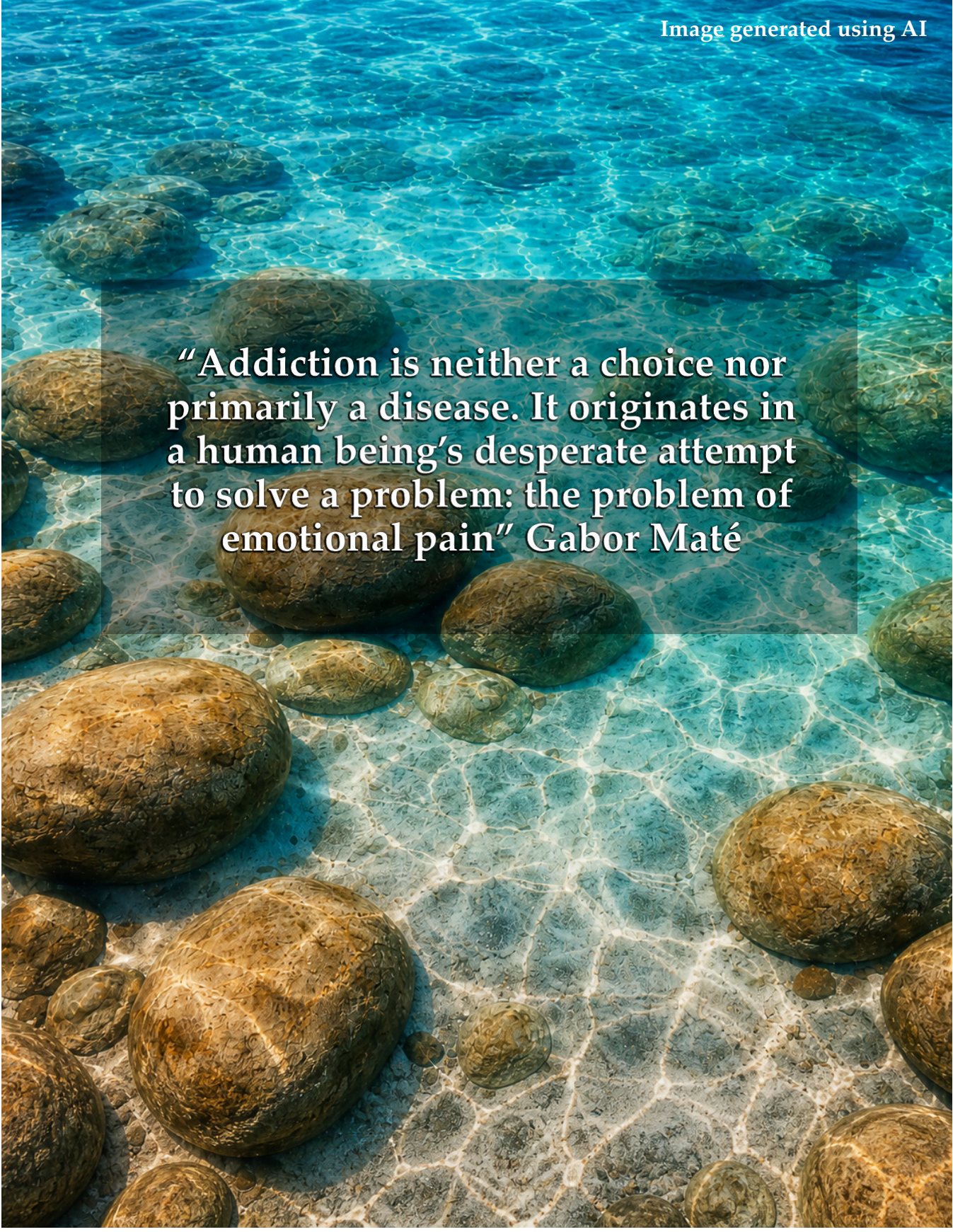
An AI-generated image showing a collection of smooth, rounded, brownish-grey rocks submerged in clear, vibrant blue water. Sunlight filters through the water, creating a complex pattern of bright, shimmering highlights and darker, shadowed areas on the rocks and the sandy bottom. The water's surface is slightly rippled, adding to the dynamic feel of the scene.

Image generated using AI

“Addiction is neither a choice nor primarily a disease. It originates in a human being’s desperate attempt to solve a problem: the problem of emotional pain” Gabor Maté

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The Personal Journey & Hook

- 1. Your book is described as a "deeply personal exploration" rather than a clinical tome. How did your own journey with recovery influence your decision to write this book as a guide for its readers' recovery?**
- 2. You have a professional background in Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence. How do your tech skills help you explain how the human brain operates in addition to your readers?**
- 3. The foreword mentions you are involved with "Celebrate Recovery" and work as an "Addiction Recovery Coach." How does your "boots-on-the-ground" experience differ from an academic perspective on addiction?**

The Science of the Brain

- 1. You use the metaphor of "psychic turbulence" to describe your experience of addiction. Why is Vincent van Gogh's *The Starry Night* such a powerful illustration of the mental state you are trying to heal?**
- 2. You argue that, ultimately, there is one ultimate addiction—the "addiction to dopamine." Can you explain why this tiny molecule is the common thread between chemical substances and behaviors like gambling or technology use?**
- 3. Why is it essential for people to understand that "more" reward signaling eventually leads to anxiety rather than pleasure.**

Integrating Faith & Spirituality

- 1. Many see a conflict between faith and science, yet you describe the Bible as an "early psychology textbook." How can ancient spiritual wisdom offer insights that modern neuroscience is only just beginning to confirm?**
- 2. How does a relationship with a "Higher Power" act as an internal support structure to prevent what you call "self-structure-disintegration"?**
- 3. You discuss "Christian Hedonism"—the idea that worship and service should be deeply pleasurable. How can understanding the brain's reward system actually enhance a person's spiritual life?**

Psychological Maturity & Coaching

- 1. You say that connection is the opposite of addiction. How do you help someone move from depending on outside support to really feeling in control of their own life?**
- 2. Your work looks at thoughts, behaviour, and environment together. How does that bigger-picture approach help people stay in recovery long term?**
- 3. You talk about "shadow integration." What does that mean in plain terms—and why is it more effective than just trying to fight cravings with willpower?**
- 4. You've said recovery isn't one-size-fits-all. How does the way someone sees the world affect what kind of recovery approach will actually work for them?**

BIOGRAPHIES



Short Version: (75 words)

Addiction recovery coach **Stuart Morse** brings more than three decades in the technology sector to *The Science and Spirituality of Addiction* (Resource Publications, C\$39.99), a cross-disciplinary exploration bridging neuroscience, wisdom traditions, and lived experience. With a Master's in Computer Science and a background in artificial intelligence and complex systems, Morse draws on his own recovery journey to present an accessible, deeply human view of addiction as disconnection—and recovery as reconnection with self, others, and community.

* Long Version: (220 words)

Addiction recovery coach **Stuart Morse** brings more than three decades of experience in the technology sector to *The Science and Spirituality of Addiction* (Resource Publications, an imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, \$39.99), a cross-disciplinary exploration that bridges neuroscience, wisdom traditions and lived experience. With a Master's degree in Computer Science and a background in artificial intelligence and complex systems, Morse examines addiction through a lens shaped by a longstanding curiosity about how humans think and behave—while grounding the work in his personal experience of addiction and recovery. Rather than an academic analysis, the book offers an accessible, deeply human account of addiction as a disruption of connection, and recovery as a process of reconnecting with self, others and community.

Born in England and influenced by its drinking culture, Morse's early life informs his perspective on social norms and substance use. Before transitioning into his current work in addiction and recovery, he worked as a forester, dabbled as a heavy metal musician, and later built a long career in software. An avid gardener, he continues to draw on ecological perspectives in understanding growth, environment and interdependence. His writing reflects a synthesis of analytical rigor and lived insight, offering readers a perspective on addiction that is scientifically informed and grounded in real-world experience and spiritual awareness that aid in the recovery journey.

* Print quality image available on request.

Mariah Burchell



EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK

Introduction

British TV shows are among the most engaging you can find. They distinguish themselves from the pack through storytelling, character development, excellent acting and their focus on substance rather than glamour. Thanks to the Internet, viewers around the world can binge-watch their favorite productions through streaming services like BritBox and Acorn TV. While you are enjoying the show, you might notice the frequency with which a glass of wine or beer comes into frame. This emphasizes the important role alcohol plays in the social fabric of British culture—the environment in which I was raised. As a teenager I spurned alcohol's influence in my life, seeing it as shallow and unnecessary, but as time passed, I realized it was an almost unavoidable component of British social life. Alcohol contributes positively to the relational endeavors of the healthy individual. While alcohol is merely one of many substances of abuse, it will remain the focus of this introduction.

Going beyond the role of alcohol as social lubricant it also stands as a signifier of

manliness. As a male, your ability to consume large quantities of the stuff while remaining functional adds greatly to others' perception of your masculinity, while the term "he can't handle his drink" is among the worst insults. Drinking also starts early in England. At Christmas and on occasion throughout the year my high school friends would smuggle hard liquor onto the school grounds where it was consumed surreptitiously. If you looked old enough it was also common to begin your drinking career in public establishments long before the legal drinking age of eighteen.

In my late teens I had an ambivalent relationship with alcohol (I couldn't decide if I liked it) but in the first year of university I began to notice its calming influence. Alcohol's soothing presence helped fortify me against the academic rigors of a four-year degree in Computer Science. After a long day of classes followed by hours of homework, I experienced a feeling of disquiet that was completely extinguished by a pint or two of my favorite adult libation. This became my nightly practice, a pursuit that supported my psyche for the remainder of the program.

EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK (Continued)

Image generated using AI

Out in the working world I was introduced to the concept of the “liquid lunch.” This was usually a menu option on Fridays or during holiday seasons, but it was also pursued by some on a more regular basis. I still remember my boss consuming three imperial pints (1.7 liters or sixty oz) of beer (without food) over the lunch hour and returning to a functional afternoon of work at the office. This was impressive and relatively normal for the culture of the time. Yes, there were a few weekday hangovers involved in that lifestyle, but they were seen as badges of honor and humorous adjuncts to the workday world.

How Much Is Too Much?

Could these behaviors be the markers of addiction? One way to assess this might be to measure consumption against the health guidelines of your local jurisdiction. Having lived in Canada for over thirty years, it was Canada’s Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines (LRDGs) issued in 2011 that first caught my attention. They claim that for men, consuming fifteen standard drinks a week is safe, while for women the limit is ten. In this context a standard drink is twelve oz (355 ml) of beer, five oz (148 ml) of wine or 1.5 oz (44 ml) of spirits.

As middle age approached, I was still managing my evening feelings of disquiet by consuming half a 750 ml bottle of wine

(2.5 standard drinks) six nights a week, which falls within the 2011 healthy range for men. I asked my doctor for his opinion on this to which he responded, “that’s nothing, you should see how much some of my patients drink.” Perhaps he was referring to people like a gardening acquaintance of mine. I noticed the smell of alcohol on his breath as we rode the bus together one morning, so I asked him how much he had already consumed that day, “three beers” was his reply (it was 7:45 am.) Being somewhat surprised by his response I asked what his normal daily consumption might be, to which he replied, “a couple of cases, twenty four.” That amounts to a total of 168 standard drinks per week.

Could consuming twenty four cans of beer a day be regarded as an addiction? Probably, but this is likely the wrong metric to use in making this determination. If we define addiction as any habitual behavior that brings harm to the self or others, addiction might involve far smaller amounts. This reframes the threshold for addiction from a measure of volume to the question of why the user is drinking in the first place—why is their drinking a habitual behavior and what needs does it meet? Consuming half a bottle of

wine a night might not result in the existential crises of familial collapse, loss of employment or jail time, but it does incur a cost.



EVENT INFORMATION SHEET

BREAKING THE CYCLE

A Fresh Look at Addiction & Recovery

2-Hour Introductory Course

Overview

Are your habits working for you—or against you?

Addiction is not always obvious. It often shows up in subtle, socially accepted ways: stress, overwork, screen time, avoidance, or substance use. For many, it exists in a “grey area”—not severe enough to demand immediate action, but persistent enough to quietly shape daily life.

Breaking the Cycle is a practical, non-judgmental introduction to understanding these patterns. Drawing on neuroscience, behavioural psychology, and real-world experience, the course offers a grounded framework for recognizing how habits form, why they persist, and how meaningful change can begin.

What Participants Will Learn

- What addiction is—and what it isn’t
- The “grey area” where most people operate, but rarely examine
- Why willpower alone is often ineffective
- How behaviour patterns are formed and reinforced
- Practical ways to interrupt and reshape these patterns
- An overview of modern recovery approaches, including peer coaching, motivational methods and nature-based therapy.

Why This Course Matters

Waiting for “rock bottom” is a flawed strategy.

This course is designed to help individuals recognize patterns early, understand the true cost and benefit of their habits, and explore change in a way that respects autonomy and personal values. It provides a clear, accessible starting point for those seeking greater clarity, alignment, and control in their lives.

Who This Is For

- Individuals questioning their own habits
- Family members seeking understanding
- Professionals interested in a broader perspective on addiction
- Anyone curious about behaviour change beyond traditional models

Course Format

Duration: 2 hours

Format: In-person or virtual

Style: Presentation with guided reflection and discussion

Group size: Flexible (small groups to organizational settings)

Facilitator

Stuart Morse is the author of *The Science and Spirituality of Addiction* and founder of Emergent Horizons. With a background in technology and a focus on behaviour, resilience, and recovery, he brings a practical, non-judgmental approach to understanding addiction and change.

Approach

This course is grounded in the belief that people are not broken—they are adaptive.

Meaningful change begins with insight, not pressure. Participants are encouraged to explore their own patterns in a way that is respectful, self-directed, and grounded in real-world understanding.

Booking & Availability

This course is available for:

Community events

Workplace wellness programs

Professional development sessions

For booking inquiries or additional information: stuart@emergenthorizons.ca

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local Author Explores Addiction Through Science, Spirituality and Lived Experience

Victoria, BC — A new book by local author and addiction recovery coach Stuart Morse is offering a fresh, deeply human perspective on addiction and recovery. *The Science and Spirituality of Addiction* brings together neuroscience, wisdom traditions, and lived experience to explore a central idea: that addiction often arises as a substitute for connection, and that recovery depends on rebuilding connection with self, others, and community.

Drawing on more than 30 years in the technology sector, including a background in artificial intelligence and systems thinking, Morse combines analytical rigor with personal insight. The result is not an academic text, but an accessible and engaging exploration of why people become disconnected—and how meaningful, lasting recovery can take shape.

The book's release coincides with a growing public conversation around mental health, loneliness, and belonging. Its focus on connection aligns with current efforts across Canada to address the social dimensions of mental health and addiction, making it particularly timely for readers seeking practical understanding as well as hope. Morse frames addiction as an attempt to address the emotional pain arising from unmet human needs.

Stuart Morse (stuartmorse.ca) is available for interviews, commentary, and guest articles tailored to your audience, exploring topics such as the neuroscience of addiction, the role of connection in recovery, and the intersection of science and spirituality in healing. Review copies of *The Science and Spirituality of Addiction* are also available upon request.

For media inquiries, interview requests, or to request a review copy, please contact:

Debra Morse (organicislands@gmail.com)

PHOTOS



Sam Norman, Stuart Morse

HOW TO ENGAGE

Media & Interviews

For journalists and podcasters:

Available for:

- Interviews
- Podcast guest appearances
- Expert commentary on addiction, behaviour, and recovery

Contact:

Email: stuart@stuartmorse.com

Phone: 250-661-2008

Coaching & Services

For individuals:

Services include:

- One-on-one coaching
- Behaviour and habit change support
- Recovery-oriented guidance

Learn more: emergenthorizons.ca

Email: stuart@emergenthorizons.ca

Phone: 250-661-2008

Speaking & Workshops

For organizations:

Available for:

- Workplace sessions
- Conferences
- Community events

Programs include:

- Breaking the Cycle (2-hour course)
- Custom talks for technical/professional audiences

Booking inquiries:

Email: stuart@emergenthorizons.ca

Phone: 250-661-2008

The Book

For general readers:

The Science and Spirituality of Addiction

Available Now

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