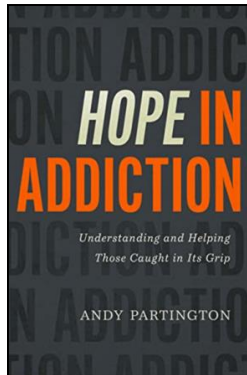


HOPE IN ADDICTION

Understanding and Helping Those Caught in the Grip

by Andy Partington

International Treatment Ministry Leader Offers Insight on Making a Difference in the Lives of Anyone Involved with Addiction or Recovery



Chicago, IL: Addiction is a worldwide epidemic affecting one in every five people. According to the CDC, drug overdoses are the leading cause of death among Americans under the age of 50. The number of Americans with a substance use disorder exceeds the population of California.

Although addiction manifests itself differently, be it substance abuse, gambling, sex, or social media, it does not discriminate in leaving addicts with feelings of desperation, loneliness, failure, and shame.

From the age of three, **Andy Partington** grew up in a residential rehabilitation center where his parents worked, and he witnessed the destruction of addiction on addicts and their loved ones. Andy now leads the work of Novō Communities, an international organization that empowers partners around the world in creating communities that offer healing, renewal, and hope.

Andy reminds us that a person becomes vulnerable to addiction as a result of adverse childhood experiences, isolation, broken relationships, or a sense of hopelessness. He believes that when we understand addiction and recovery, we can effectively implement innovative prevention strategies, impact public policy, provide support, and offer hope and healing through a relationship with God.

In his book, ***Hope in Addiction: Understanding and Helping Those Caught in the Grip*** (Moody Publishers), Andy provides answers to common questions, such as “What causes addiction? Why is addiction so prevalent? What can I do as Christian to help?” Written for counsellors, educators, pastors, and the family and friends of those battling addiction, at risk of addiction, or in recovery. Andy brings personal stories, compelling research, and frontline experience on tough topics, including:

- **The Underlying Causes of Addiction:** Hopelessness, emptiness, adversity, and disconnection characterize modern life and create a potential for addiction. Addictions develop when people discover the self-medicating effects of substances and activities that help them cope with the challenges of life. Addictions reinforce feelings of despair and emptiness as they relate within the context of family, community, society, and culture.
- **The Habit of Addiction:** Desire, not pleasure, is at the heart of addiction. What makes addiction so difficult to break is that the brain cannot distinguish good habits from bad habits and experiences immediate, satisfying pleasure from addictive activities like drugs, gambling and pornography. Repetitive, habitual consumption rewires the brain to desire more of the activity, trapping a person in a vicious cycle.
- **Recovery:** Recovering from a substance or addictive habit requires learning and practicing new positive thoughts and actions. Change can happen but it takes time, support, and commitment. Temporary medication can help normalize brain chemistry, and counseling can help an addict discover the pain or problem that led to their drug use.
- **Spiritual Needs/Church Commitment:** As church, we can become addiction-preventing, recovery-promoting communities. There are practical means to create Recovery Capital that helps people find and sustain recovery. We also need to move beyond superficiality in our spirituality and relationships. The church needs to establish healthy partnerships with addiction specialists and community services and support recovery services.

Hope in Addiction dispels harmful misconceptions of addiction, explains the science behind the brain and the body's experiences during addiction and recovery. It provides understanding and encouragement for those vulnerable to addiction and is a valuable prevention and recovery resource for the church and recovery organizations.

Andy continues to pursue his calling in working with **Novō Communities**, a Christ-focused recovery ministry based in Bolivia. Additionally, Novō Adventures is an adventure tourism company based in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, offering motorcycle adventure tours south of the equator and whose profits fund the life-changing work of Novō Communities.

About the Author:

ANDY PARTINGTON was raised in a residential rehabilitation center. After high school, he spent a year traveling with Youth with a Mission (YWAM) before continuing his education and earning a PhD from the London School of Theology, where he also served as Director of Training. He further served local church leadership in the United Kingdom and Bolivia and as the CEO of Yeldall Manor, an addiction treatment center in southeast England.

Andy leads the work of Novō Communities and Novō Adventures. Novō Communities' vision is to bring new life to individuals, peace to families, and hope to communities gripped by addiction by empowering local teams in developing nations to create transformational communities that offer healing, wholeness, and hope.

Andy is married to Michaela and the proud father of Daniel, Jemimah, Phoebe, JJ, and Miah. To learn more about Novo, visit novocommunities.org and novoadventures.com. Find Andy on Twitter @partington_andy and Instagram @andypartington.

Suggested Interview Questions:

1. Andy, share with us an overview of your book, *Hope in Addiction*, and what compelled you to write it? Who should read your book?
2. What was it like growing up in a rehab facility in England from such an early age? What did you learn about addiction and those hoping for recovery?
3. As a young adult, you traveled with YWAM (Youth with a Mission) and earned your PhD in Theology, before pastoring an international church in Bolivia. Why did you decide to shift your focus to working with those struggling with addiction?
4. Your work in addiction rehabilitation and outreach has brought you around the world. Although cultures differ, what are some commonalities in addiction you have witnessed?
5. Why do you think addiction is so prevalent today? What factors leave us vulnerable to addiction? Can someone engage in addictive behaviors without being an addict? If so, how?
6. How can we best understand recovery and ensure it's successful and lasting? What is your advice to someone struggling with sobriety?
7. What role does the church have in promoting recovery? If a church wants to become an addiction-preventing, recovery-promoting community, what should it do?
8. What is your involvement with Novō Communities and its vision to help people in addiction in the developing world?
9. Tell us about Novō Adventures, the motorcycle tour company, and the response you have received.
10. Where can we learn more about your work and ministry?

Notable Quotes from *Hope in Addiction*

The issues that make us vulnerable to addiction develop in the context of family units (nuclear and extended), community, and the broader society and culture. As addictions advance, they damage whatever lies in their path, causing the habitat to deteriorate further. As a result, the need for addiction's enslaving solutions intensifies, the downward spiral into shame and despair tightens, and the inner resources needed to fight back drain away. The better we understand the underlying causes of addiction, the better we will be able to shape public policy, design prevention strategies, reach and help those who are struggling, and become communities whose life together with God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—fosters healing, wholeness, and hope. (p. 55)

Vast numbers of us are drawn to this form of hibernation we call addiction because when we look forward, we feel hopeless; when we look within, we find emptiness; when we look behind us, we see personal stories characterized by abuse, neglect, dysfunction, and regret—adversities that have left us deeply wounded—and, when we look around us, we find we're disconnected from others, detached from a sense of community and belonging, bereft of close relationships. We use drugs and alcohol, and we keep using them even when they start to do us serious harm because we're hurting, hopeless, empty, and alone. The same is true of gambling, porn, food, shopping, work, and more. The objects of addiction offer a dependable, immediate, and immersive alternative to the harsh reality of life (p. 81)

The prized asset of addictive experiences is the capacity to eliminate pain, not provide pleasure. Addictions begin as solutions to problems. They arrive as answers to unspoken prayers. They engage us in a whole-person experience that's profoundly rewarding because it meets, or masks, deep needs for things like inner peace, self-assurance, emotional soothing, life purpose, a sense of identity, tribal belonging, and spiritual experience. We develop such strong attachments to these experiences because the rewards they deliver are instantaneous and consistent. (p. 93)

In the objects of their addiction, the addict experiences something analogous to a relationship with a wife, lover, friend, colleague, or therapist. These relationships engage us emotionally, physically, psychologically, and spiritually. Like all idols, addiction turns heads because the false god promises to meet our deepest needs—for things like security, certainty, significance, connection, and purpose. Like a passionate love affair, the all-consuming relationship we call addiction is a potent force. No matter how the flame starts, once the fires of addiction are burning, they are not easily extinguished. They take on a life of their own. Unchecked, this fire of relentless desire burns up everything in its path until, be it sooner or later, it burns itself and its host out. (pp. 105, 107)

In recovery, we develop the ability both to choose not to go after the addictive experience and to pursue a range of alternative priorities that align with the fundamental desires, beliefs, and values that represent who we want to be and what we want to do. In recovery, we stop allowing these desires to be trampled underfoot by the immediate rewards offered by the addictive behavior. As we do so, we experience a multiplicity of benefits related to our physical health, relationships, place in society, the inner world of our intellect and emotions, and our spiritual life. We develop a growing sense of positive momentum and purpose. The benefits ripple out to our family, friends, and the wider community. (p. 128)

Is recovery possible? Absolutely. Is it easy? Not remotely. Recovery is an arduous journey, fraught with danger, that is best not tackled alone. It involves addressing the relationship with the object of the addiction, breaking a habit that has been hardwired into place, and tackling the underlying issues that made the individual vulnerable to the addiction in the first place. For long-term success, recovery capital—physical, personal, social, and community—must be bolstered to deliver the resources needed to operate without the rewards offered by the experience at the heart of their addiction. Animating it all, like yeast kneaded into dough, there must be hope: the desire for recovery, vision for the future, and belief that change is possible. (p. 143)

In the age of addiction, the heart of our calling is the call to proclaim the good news that through Jesus Christ, we can have a living relationship with the God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who transforms us, from the inside out. This gospel is good news for the world that we have described in the first section of this book—a world so hostile to human well-being that vast numbers of us hibernate in addictive experiences. Where the world rejects and withholds, the Father welcomes and protects. Where the world writes off, the Father never gives up. Where the world pulls away—often with good reason—the Father draws us close. How do we access all of this? Simply by responding to Christ's call to follow