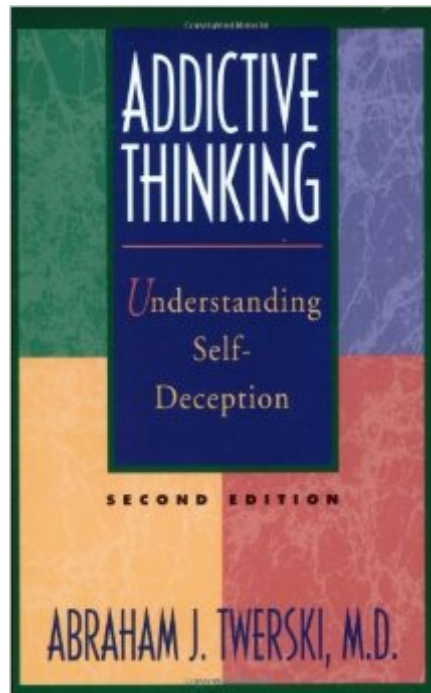


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# Addictive Thinking: Understanding Self-Deception



## Synopsis

Abnormal thinking in addiction was originally recognized by members of Alcoholics Anonymous, who coined the term "stinking thinking." Addictive thinking often appears rational superficially, hence addicts as well as their family members are easily seduced by the attendant--and erroneous--reasoning process it can foster. In *Addictive Thinking*, author Abraham Twerski reveals how self-deceptive thought can undermine self-esteem and threaten the sobriety of a recovering individual. This timely revision of the original classic includes updated information and research on depression and affective disorders, the relationship between addictive thinking and relapse, and the origins of addictive thought. Ultimately, *Addictive Thinking* offers hope to those seeking a healthy and rewarding life recovery.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I've read a lot of books about addiction, but "*Addictive Thinking: Understanding Self-Deception*" by Abraham J. Twerski is the only one that describes me to a tee. Addicts are malfunctioning human beings whose thinking and concept of reality are severely distorted. Addictive diseases resemble schizophrenia in many ways. The addict may suffer from delusions, hallucinations, inappropriate moods, and abnormal behavior. I one point in my addiction, I thought that I was schizophrenic. I knew that something was horribly wrong with me, but it couldn't have anything to do with the massive amounts of drugs I was ingesting. According to Twerski, addicts have a distorted self-image and they all have extremely low self-esteem. Even though they may have many

life-accomplishments and every reason to think highly of themselves, they still feel inferior. Addicts are also hypersensitive. They are emotionally sensitive to their environment the way a sunburn victim is sensitive to touch. Drugs and alcohol offer immense relief from this hypersensitivity, numbing the emotions that bring such discomfort. Twerski has also given me a better understanding of what is really happening when an addict reaches "rock bottom." Rock bottom is not necessarily an event, but a change of perception where sobriety is finally seen as more rewarding than continued use. This explains why I continued to use after my rock bottom experience. It took a while for my perceptions to change. Another new revelation for me was that many recovering addicts relapse because they mistakenly believe that life will be rosy once they've recovered. But life is a succession of peaks and valleys, a series of hurdles to overcome. I held this false belief until I read this.

I picked this book up off my colleague's desk in the counseling office, realized I shouldn't take it without asking permission, and made my amends right away. With permission, then, I read with some shame, and also guilt, about self-deception. The crux: distorted thinking is not just manufactured for others, but something that inhabits the inner person. As a result, we can see it, explore it, recognize it in others, and still struggle to make lasting changes in our own thinking. Twerski writes after 18 years running a clinic, and he has lots of the simple examples and plain talk that cut through the haze. He is a fan of AA's 12 steps and he believes low self-esteem haunts many an addicts' inner child. He has a website with a recent 40 minute reflection on his own struggle with self-esteem. He's now almost 80. As some other reviewers note, after the first couple chapters introducing and defining the distorted thinking he calls "addictive thinking," the chapters get short, like meditations, and topical, covering aspects such as distorted time, reason, and perspective, hypersensitivity, shame versus guilt, and admitting error. I think the point we could make is that this book seeks to identify and describe the distorted thinking common in chemical dependents. Believe me, I don't have to be chemically dependent to see myself in these vignettes and struggles. The reason for such a book is that we all need to pierce our own isolation and denial about our self-deception. Let me put it this way. If I don't deceive myself too much, it should be easier for me to admit that. If I deceive myself a lot, I just might find a way to distance myself from a book like this, maybe by putting myself above it or pointing it at someone else.

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