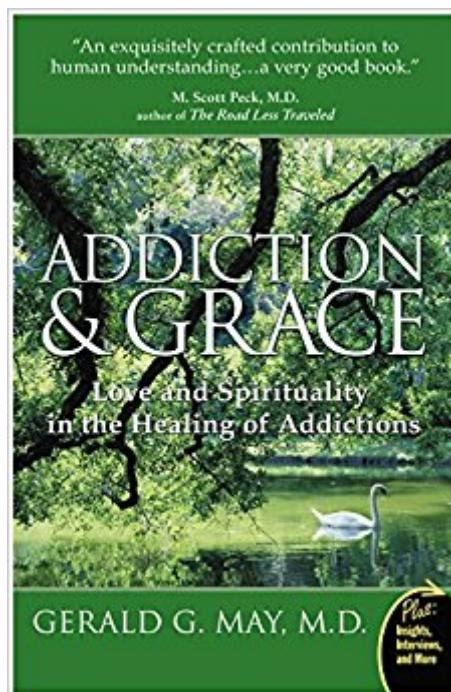


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# Addiction And Grace: Love And Spirituality In The Healing Of Addictions



## **Synopsis**

Addiction and Grace offers an inspiring and hope-filled vision for those who desire to explore the mystery of who and what they really are. May examines the "processes of attachment" that lead to addiction and describes the relationship between addiction and spiritual awareness. He also details the various addictions from which we can suffer, not only to substances like alcohol and drugs, but to work, sex, performance, responsibility, and intimacy. Drawing on his experience as a psychiatrist working with the chemically dependent, May emphasizes that addiction represents an attempt to assert complete control over our lives. Addiction and Grace is a compassionate and wise treatment of a topic of major concern in these most addictive of times, one that can provide a critical yet hopeful guide to a place of freedom based on contemplative spirituality.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Explores the psychology and physiology of addiction from the perspective of contemplative spirituality, describing the relationship between addiction and spiritual awareness. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gerald G. May, M.D. (1940-2005), practiced medicine and psychiatry for twenty-five years before becoming a senior fellow in contemplative theology and psychology at the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in Bethesda, Maryland. He was the author of many books and articles blending spirituality and psychology, including *Addiction and Grace*, *Care of Mind/Care of Spirit*, *Will and*

## Spirit, and The Dark Night of the Soul.

In just over two decades this book has become a classic in understanding what addiction is, how it works, why addictions occur, the ingredients of an addiction, and what must be done in overcoming one. Dr. May talks about addictions from coffee to the other end of the spectrum. He shows us that we all have them. They do not have to be life-threatening, although many are. As a medical doctor, he shows that addictions are not just a mental challenge that must be surmounted. There are physical, neurological and spiritual components that enter into the whole mix. I initially bought this book in the late eighties to try to better understand the problem of alcoholism in my family. I have to say, I got what I wanted. I also got to take a better look at myself and what makes me tick. Each reading of this is very new. However, it is also a great reference book to keep handy to help others in need. I have used it hundreds of times in this manner. I have likened it many times to *Â The Confessions of St. Augustine* *Â and his speaking of his own addictions.* To paraphrase him, he said addictions are a perversion of any of our passions, which then get out of hand: we go from an evil, to a habit, to a compulsion and then to a necessity. At one point, he calls it the "Law of Sin," which he gets from Saint Paul's Letters to the Romans (and Galatians). He gives a great definition too! He says, "the law of sin is the fierce force of habit, by which the mind is drawn and held even against its will, and yet deservedly because it had fallen willfully into the habit" (Book 8, 5 in the Frank Sheed translation shown above). Like Augustine, like any 12-step program, Dr. May shows that there is a dimension in recovery that is beyond ourselves. Augustine saw it as Christ, the "... Anonymous" programs see it as a Higher Power, Dr. May calls it "Grace." Because of this dimension, this is not only a helpful, but also a good spiritual read that can benefit almost anyone. I've liked the hardcover, because it serves one well over the years. It's not a bad idea to keep a few used paperback copies around to give away. They're cheap enough! I've given away dozens of copies along the way, and will probably continue to do so.

I will preface this review by saying that there is no "magic" cure to drug addiction, IMHO. However, I ordered this book and had send it directly to my brother who is in a drug-treatment program housed at our county jail facility. He has always been very resistant to help until he got in trouble with the law and hit rock bottom. My middle-class family has had a tendency to be enablers to his behavior over the years. I was the first to say "no" and provide support in the form of "tough love". It was a pivotal moment and one of the toughest things I ever had to do in my life (report my brother's crime leading to his arrest), the result of which was this court-ordered drug treatment program. That said,

it was THIS book that really got his attention. Having been raised in a Christian home, the values and principles of the Bible were inherently important to his recovery. After reading this book, my brother has had so much clarity in his thinking. I've literally watched the anger, resentment, and bitterness melt off of his face these past 2 months. I cannot attribute it all to this book, but I will say that it has gained quite a bit of popularity in the jail. Other inmates shared this copy and some have even asked their family members to order it for them because they've read pages or heard from others how wonderful it is. My brother has actually been able to discuss parts of the book and reference his own struggles and what it meant to him. His addiction counselors have taken an interest in the book as well. They see the difference in him, too. I recognize the changes are due to a combination of things: the book, the program, his surroundings (you obviously can't 'use' in jail), and, most importantly, his desire/willingness to get better. I've felt so good about what this book has done for my brother, I'm ordering a copy for myself. Other reviews have stated that this is helpful for loved ones of an addicted family member. I plan to share with my mother, father, and teenage daughter. I'm also purchasing a copy to donate to the jail facility/treatment program to have on hand in the library. One of the best purchases ever made!!

This book has a wonderful gentle spirit discussing a topic that is increasingly prevalent in society. This spirit made the book so enjoyable to read. Yes, I read it hoping to get a quick fix to the various addictions that have too great a hold in my life, however, having now read a number of books on the topic, have come to realise that indeed there is no quick fix. I loved May's view that in fact it's through our addictive natures that we can learn to depend on God more and through that dependence, can gain a degree of freedom from addiction whilst experiencing intimacy with our Creator. There were a number of points that I took away from the book:- everyone has addictions. It's inherent in our DNA, almost. Idolatry to something or somebody, which is what addiction is, is now part and parcel of being human.- just like Paul and his "thorn in his side", when we surrender our "thorn" to God, His "grace is sufficient" to overcome the temptation. In continually surrendering, we develop muscle that makes it a little easier to resist, that's the power of grace.- I particularly liked the stories about the 3 individuals who were able to go "cold-turkey" - they just chose to say no, they didn't entertain the temptation, didn't seek a substitute, just surrendered allowing "grace" to do its work. I did find it a challenging read and think I need to read a few more times to fully understand it all. I highly recommend it.

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Addiction: The Last ADDICTION RECOVERY Guide - The Infallible Method To Overcome Any

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