



## Flipping the Script on Addiction

**Introduction (Read)** - So often in substance use treatment we focus on all the harm caused by addiction. It is not unusual to discuss the damage caused by substance use and the consequences suffered by a pattern of addiction. This can be helpful because the desire to avoid future consequences can be very motivating. However, another important way to build motivation is to seriously consider how **life without substance misuse can be so much better**. Focusing on the **positive aspects of lifestyle change** can be extremely beneficial. This is the focus of this exercise.

**Next** - Start by watching one of these two videos as a group. Both have a lot of the same content. For this exercise, while watching the video, please focus primarily on the part about “**Rat Park**” - After the video, the group will be discussing the rat park experiment and making real life application

### **Keep in mind the following points when watching the video:**

1. It is not necessary to agree with every detail of the video. Addiction involves a complex array of biological, emotional, experiential (trauma) and genetic/hereditary factors, in addition to the social factors mentioned in the video.
2. What the group will focus on discussing after the video is improving one’s “cage”, which can be an essential part of making positive progress when dealing with addiction and mental health issues.

**Choose one of the following videos and watch as a group –** (There is a short or a long version):

### Video links:

- *Shorter* – “**Addiction**” – 5 minutes 41 seconds - - <https://youtu.be/C8AHODc6phg>



- *Longer* – “**Everything You Think You Know About Addiction is Wrong**” – 14 minutes 31 seconds - [https://www.ted.com/talks/johann\\_hari\\_everything\\_you\\_think\\_you\\_know\\_about\\_addiction\\_is\\_wrong?language=en#t-862452](https://www.ted.com/talks/johann_hari_everything_you_think_you_know_about_addiction_is_wrong?language=en#t-862452)

- (Same video – YouTube Version) - <https://youtu.be/PY9DcIMGxMs>





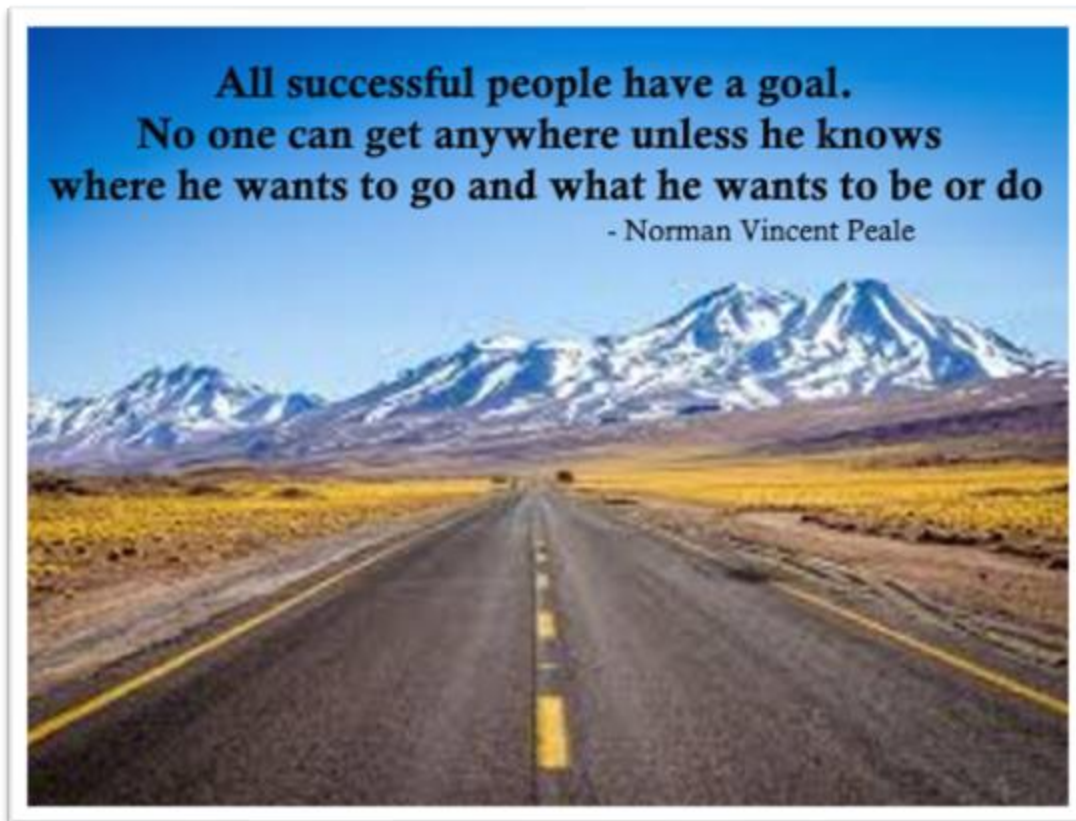
**Process – Discuss the following as a group:**

- What are some aspects of the video you can identify with personally?
- The part of the video about “Rat Park” emphasizes the value of improving our surroundings and our connections (our “cage”) as a positive way to escape addiction – ***How do you think this can help with the recovery and positive change process for you personally?***

**Improving My “Cage”** (Improving my day-to-day lifestyle, my surroundings, my environment, and my connections)

Read: Obviously, improving our surroundings, connections and overall lifestyle can be challenging especially when you may have limited resources. Still, it is important to set goals to have something to strive for even if things may be difficult right now. Think about what is worth reaching out for

**Discuss the following quote below as a group:**



**Next –** Discuss as a group the following question: **What do I need in order to improve my “cage”?** (For example, consider your surroundings, connections, environment) – Keep your personal goals in mind. Be creative and open minded. The sky is the limit. Consider a wide range of key life areas such as: Family, social life, employment, education, health, meaning, purpose, etc.... **To improve: *What do you need?***



## Keeping it Real

Read – Achieving goals will take time and effort, but it is well worth it if your goals are positive. Discuss the following:

- From the previous discussion question, pick one or two of your goals that you can start working on today in order to improve your “cage”. Even if your actual goal may seem a far way off, think about the smaller steps you can start moving forward with. Think about:
  - What can I realistically start doing right away?
    - Example – Goal: **“I want to be financially independent”** – Maybe that this is still a long way off (perhaps due to a lack stable housing and employment) – Then a **realistic goal** may be **“I can enroll in a Supported Employment program to start getting help looking for a job which can be a start toward financial independence. I can work with a case manager to find a more permanent housing situation than my current boarding home I am living in”**
  - **Discuss as a group some realistic things you can start doing to achieve your goals and improve your cage**

**Closing discussion question** – How does it feel discussing these positive life goal for the future? (Hopefully, it feels inspirational, encouraging, motivational, which is the purpose of this exercise) – What is your plan to start making some of these positive changes you have discussed?

### Some additional quotes about goal setting to discuss if there is time:

“If you want to be happy, set a goal that commands your thoughts, liberates your energy and inspires your hopes.” —*Andrew Carnegie*

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.” —*Pablo Picasso*

“Success is the progressive realization of a worthy goal or ideal.” —*Earl Nightingale*

“The trouble with not having a goal is that you can spend your life running up and down the field and never score.” —*Bill Copeland*

“Goals. There’s no telling what you can do when you get inspired by them. There’s no telling what you can do when you believe in them. And there’s no telling what will happen when you act upon them.” —*Jim Rohn*

“If you set goals and go after them with all the determination you can muster, your gifts will take you places that will amaze you.” —*Les Brown*

“I think goals should never be easy, they should force you to work, even if they are uncomfortable at the time.” —*Michael Phelps*

“The thing about goals is that living without them is a lot more fun, in the short run. It seems to me, though, that the people who get things done, who lead, who grow and who make an impact... those people have goals.” —*Seth Godin*