



Do No Harm: Transforming Addictions

Shoshana Kobrin MFT

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"Do No Harm" is for people trapped in an addiction and for those who love them. It's also geared for people in the helping professions. Today so many of us struggle with addictive substances and behaviors: illegal or prescription drugs, alcohol, food, gambling, sex, overspending, nicotine, or caffeine. For instance, one out of eight Americans is a heavy drinker or abuses drugs. With the proliferation of mobile phones, Internet addiction has reached epidemic proportions. "Do No Harm" covers all the major addictions. Our culture fosters addictions. Economics is the mark of human achievement. The word "affluenza" ("affluence" and "influenza") refers to the dramatic increase of stress, overwork, and debt from obsessively pursuing the American Dream. Economic pressure, climate change, wars, shootings, terrorism, and assault erode our sense of security. We're becoming more guarded, more disconnected from our surroundings. We use addictions to calm our fears. Most books on addictions deal only with symptoms. "Do No Harm" explores the underlying causes, aiming at total recovery. Understanding the deeper layers of our struggle is necessary for the addiction to lose its hold. Kobrin's approach is holistic, encompassing our whole self and our relationship to self and the world. Kobrin says, "Addictions are an unconscious effort to survive a lack of meaning in ourselves, others, and our lives. We believe we're undeserving and insignificant. I call this belief system 'the Dark Spiral.' When we're lost in its inner emptiness, our lives feel mundane and useless." The antidote for the Dark Spiral is "the Satisfied Soul" – positive connections with our emotions, body, family, relationships, community, vocation, living situation, and our environment. Connecting with the "Inner Core Self" – our authentic self – and what gives meaning to life is vital. Our Satisfied Soul enables mindfulness of the present moment instead of obsessing on past misfortune or anxiety about the future. To change the dysfunctional pattern of an addiction, we need the power and energy of a Satisfied Soul. "Do No Harm" is user-friendly and designed for a quick start. It's divided into three parts. The first part, Overture, outlines and defines the features of an addiction. It includes an overview of the book's basic ideas and concepts. It surveys the most important points of each type of addiction. The second part, Causes, explores underlying factors causing the addiction. Appreciating how and why the addiction developed is vital for releasing guilt and self-blame. There are clear-cut reasons that brought us to this point. Knowing them frees us from the false belief that we're doomed to struggle with the addiction forever and ever. The third and major part of the book, Solutions, offers new concepts and practical tools for recovery. "Do No Harm" contains useful statistics and research. (Readers wishing to focus on the practical side of healing addictions are free to glide over this.) In the text are two types of boxes. One contains points made by a specialist whom Kobrin has interviewed. Each specialist has considerable expertise with a particular addiction and methodology. The other type of box contains vignettes or case histories – vividly written stories that illustrate the text and powerfully aid the healing journey. "Do No Harm" is for those of us wishing for more gratification in life than a double scotch, a hit of coke or nicotine, frosted pastries, excessive texting, casual sex, multiple casino games, perusing catalogs for the latest toy, or numerous cups of joe to keep us going. It's for those of us longing for something deeply satisfying, nourishing, and fulfilling, for discovering unknown aspects of the self – our hidden potential, talents, gifts, and capabilities. Do No Harm gives us permission to step into rich, joyful, and prosperous living. "You contain within you a multitude of gifts to be unwrapped" – Kobrin

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