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# The Untold Skill All Fitness Trainers Need

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By Pat Mesiti

There's no doubt in my mind you have experienced the following situation on some level and wondered what to do. You see, as a coach or a personal trainer you are thrust into the role of mentor either willingly or by default. It's a responsibility which must be considered whenever you are training clients.

Often at times we are faced with strange behaviours and we end up discovering we are dealing with people who are suffering from addictions. Whether it be eating addictions or addictions concerned with blame or excuses, these habitual obsessions undermine the effort put in during a gym session. When potential clients come to the gym or fitness centre they are looking for a physical result, but before the physical result can be realised there are often emotional blockages which hold them back.





**LOOK, I KNOW IT'S CONFRONTING BUT IF YOU ARE GOING TO DO THE BEST BY YOUR CLIENT AND HELP THEM TO REACH THEIR GOALS, YOU MAY NEED TO ASK THE HARD QUESTIONS.**

Let's have a look at addictions and why they exist.

Most addictions are caused by people trying to medicate something. They are essentially trying to heal something that's broken inside so they turn to endlessly repeating habits or continual avoidance, and in the extreme cases, drugs. Remember, an addiction is merely someone's cry for help in the midst of their pain. It could be divorce or a breakdown; it could be lack of self-worth, even escapism. As a fitness trainer or coach, the first thing you've got to realise is the problem isn't the problem. The problem isn't the addiction, either; the addiction is a symptom of something greater.

Now here's the good news: most addictions can be beaten through great mentoring and accountability.

By now you are probably asking yourself, "Who is this guy and how does he know so much about addictions?" Well, in a former role I was a director of a drug rehabilitation centre. If ever there was a place to hone your coaching skills, this was it! I discovered no matter how minor or how extreme an addiction is, the underlying patterns and rituals were basically the same. One of the best strategies I ever found for keeping young men and women accountable was the buddy system. As a fitness coach or trainer you would know this to be true as well.

It's really important to realise all addictions are based on a ritual. What I mean by ritual is some pattern or behaviour the addict does; for example, someone who overeats feels bad or sad about themselves, so they decide to go to the supermarket – that is a ritual. At the supermarket they just happen to go down the aisle where the chocolate biscuits are – another ritual. Other examples of a ritual include a person who has a pornography addiction and keeps driving past the Adult Store or the person who continually makes excuses for missing or cancelling appointments. Their excuses might be they have worked too hard and they're tired; the goals they've been set are far too hard; or "I'm so overweight, how can I possibly overcome this weight problem?" Whatever the ritual, the key to helping people break addictions is helping them break the cycle of the ritual.

This will not be solved in one session. It's a process and it's largely trial and error. But as you build a relationship with them the trust increases. Little by little they will reveal more of the puzzle giving you greater opportunity to direct them into a more beneficial fitness and health regime.

Remember to celebrate the wins, even the small ones. They may get it right most of the time but when they fall, nurture their self-esteem. It's a case of seeing them through the journey. Remember your role as a coach or trainer is to help them through the process and get them out the other side, but it's also important to remember to stay within your realm of expertise. If you feel the addiction or destructive habits are over and above what you can help them with, refer them to an expert in that area.

Keep in mind that if someone says to you, "Today is the day I completely stopped my bad eating habits or my bad behavioural patterns," understand it's a lie. Nobody changes overnight. Their direction can change in a moment but the destination of victory over addictions takes time. If you can hold them to a daily process or ritual you will do much to help them break their cycles of addiction.

Now, just as there are negative rituals, there are also positive rituals. You already know this to be true but if you can get them to be accountable to things like their eating plans and being on time, the change they are trying to achieve will begin to happen.

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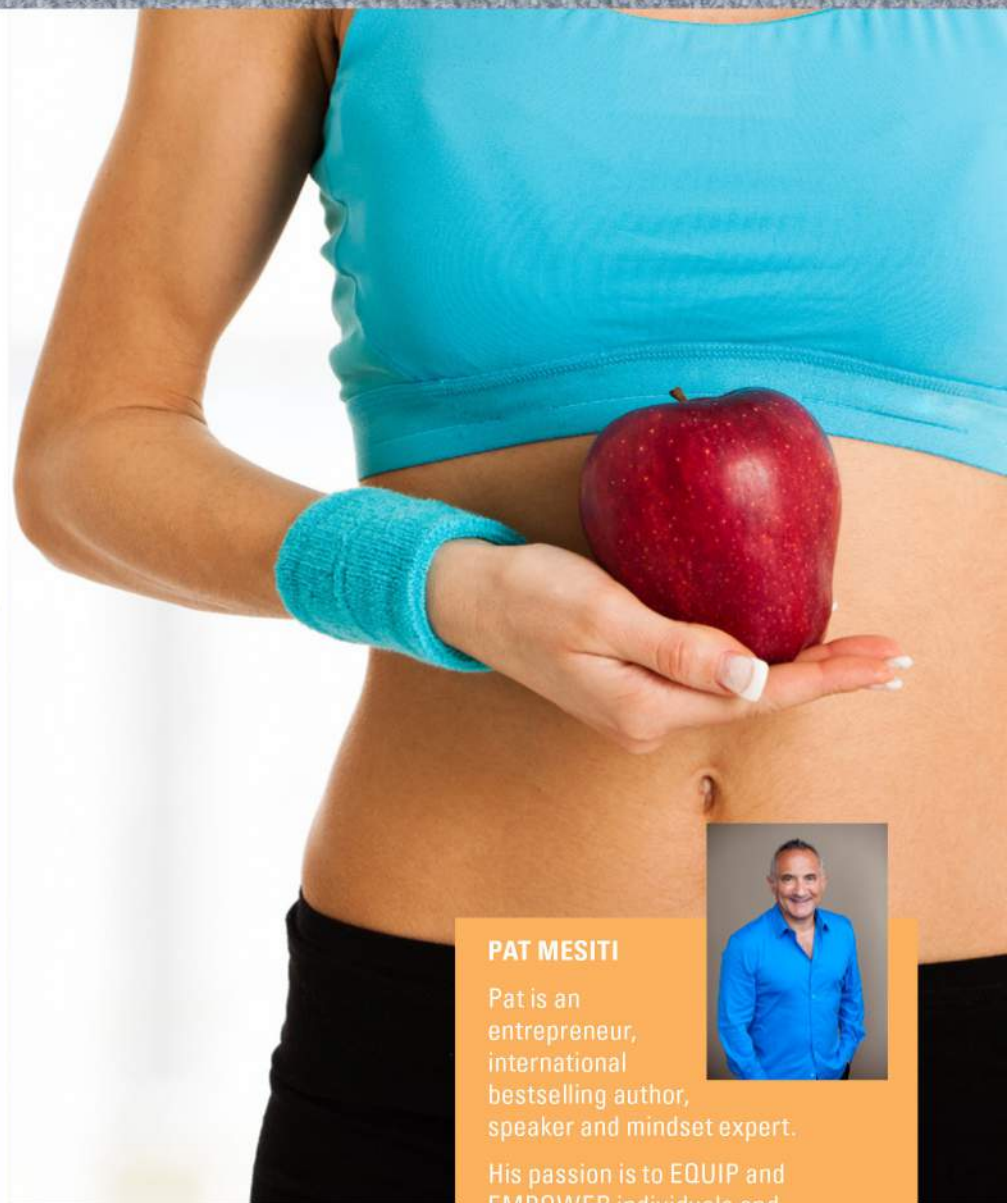


You see, most people who have an addiction problem have lives which are completely out of control. You can help them see bring their lives back into control. This can be done through teaching them structure. Create schedules with them. Establish patterns and timetables with eating plans and eating habits. Yes, this is a challenge but it is key to a great result. A person with an addiction basically has no structure; they act on impulse. Your role is to help them become structured – for eating, for time, for accountability and for life.

## LET'S LOOK AT THE CYCLE OF ADDICTION:

1. It all starts with temptation: tempted to eat, tempted to miss the gym, tempted to make an excuse.
2. The next level is the ritual: the behaviours which they go through before they act out.
3. The third level is the justification stage: they justify their eating or the excuse they're about to use. After all, no one acts out to feel bad. They have to feel right about this negative thing they are about to do.
4. Then they act out.
5. What happens next is actually the worst part: they self-condemn and feel they can never win.
6. They feel despondent and discouraged, and guess what? They want to act out to feel good again!
7. It's a terrible cycle which just repeats over and over, and over.

As a coach or a trainer I would strongly encourage you to discuss the ritual with your client because if you can break their ritual, you can break the justification.



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His passion is to EQUIP and EMPOWER individuals and businesses to experience growth and prosperity to their fullest potential.

An expert in the field of motivation and creating a millionaire mindset, business development, executive mentoring, international speaking, self-development, relationships, and accelerated mental and emotional transformation.

For more than 35 years Pat has worked and shared the stage with speakers such as Robert Kiyosaki, Jim Rohn, Donald Trump, Denis Waitley, Dr John Demartini, Sir Richard Branson and Mark Victor Hansen just to name a few. For more information, visit [www.mesiti.com](http://www.mesiti.com)

The temptation isn't the problem; it's the ritual and the justifying that's the problem. By breaking the cycle between the ritual and the justification you will break the addiction. If you can change the ritual, you won't get to justification or acting out.

You can help them see the long-term consequences of their bad behaviour. It's what I call the, 'I-shall-not-kid-myself-anymore day.' As the coach it's imperative you confront the issue lovingly and caringly but also firmly, because if they can't see the consequences of their bad behaviour, they certainly won't be able to see a light at the end of the tunnel. **UFM**