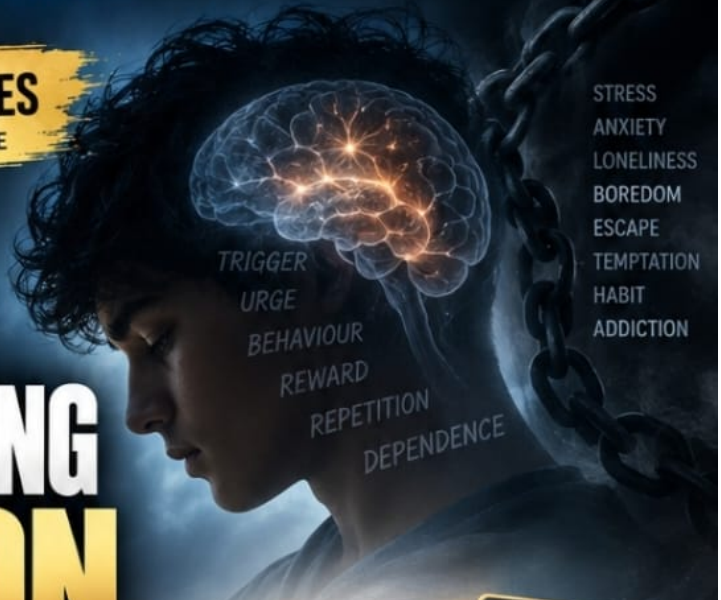
IHSAAN-DO
Way of Excellence

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KNOWLEDGE | CHARACTER | ACTION | CHANGE
PEOPLE FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

STRONGER INDIVIDUALS
STRONGER FAMILIES
A STRONGER UMMAH

ADDICTION & RECOVERY SERIES
EDUCATE | PREVENT | SUPPORT | RESTORE



STRESS
ANXIETY
LONELINESS
BOREDOM
ESCAPE
TEMPTATION
HABIT
ADDICTION

EPISODE 2

UNDERSTANDING ADDICTION

HOW HABITS BECOME COMPULSIONS – AND HOW WE TAKE BACK CONTROL

KNOW THE PROCESS
RECOGNISE THE SIGNS
UNDERSTAND THE CAUSES
BUILD PROTECTION
SUPPORT OTHERS
CHOOSE A BETTER PATH

AWARENESS
SELF-CONTROL
HEALTHY CHOICES
PURPOSE
RECPTATION

A BRIGHTER TOMORROW IS POSSIBLE

> *"You cannot effectively fight an enemy you don't understand."*
> KNOWLEDGE LEADS TO FREEDOM

ARTICLE BY
KANCHO ABDULLAH BAYETT

COMING NEXT
EPISODE 3

THE GATEWAY OF STIMULATION
VAPING, CIGARETTES & NICOTINE
Understanding Dependence, the Warning Signs & Where It Can Lead



DISCIPLINE | PURPOSE | A BETTER UMMAH

ONLY THROUGH IHSAAN

IHSAAN-DO ADDICTION & RECOVERY SERIES

Episode 2: Understanding Addiction

How Habits Become Compulsions — and How We Take Back Control

Article by Kancho Abdullah Bayett

Introduction

Addiction rarely begins with the intention to become addicted. It often begins innocently.

- “I'll just try it.”
- “I'll do it once.”
- “I'll watch one more.”
- “I can stop whenever I want.”

The danger is that repeated behaviour can gradually become a pattern. The brain begins learning what gives it pleasure, relief, excitement or escape. Eventually, the person may find themselves doing something almost automatically, even when they no longer truly want to.

This is why understanding addiction is so important.

“You cannot effectively fight an enemy you don't understand.”

SECTION 1

Habit, Dependence or Addiction?

Not every bad habit is an addiction.

We all develop habits. We check our phones. We eat certain foods. We follow routines. We seek entertainment.

A habit becomes concerning when control begins to weaken and consequences begin to increase.

Ask yourself:

- Can I stop when I decide to stop?
- Can I leave it for several days?
- Do I need more stimulation than before?
- Do I continue despite negative consequences?
- Does it interfere with my responsibilities?
- Do I hide the behaviour?
- Do I feel driven toward it when stressed, lonely or bored?
- Have I tried repeatedly to stop but returned to it?

The issue is not simply how often something happens. The deeper question is:

"How much control do I have over it?"

SECTION 2

How the Cycle Begins

Many addictive behaviours follow a repeating cycle:



For example:

A young person becomes bored. **TRIGGER:** boredom.

They pick up their phone. **URGE:** "Let me see what's happening."

They begin scrolling. **BEHAVIOUR:** social media consumption.

Something exciting, funny, sexual or emotionally stimulating appears. **REWARD:** temporary pleasure or relief.

The brain learns:

“When I feel this way, this behaviour makes me feel different.”

The next time boredom appears, the same pathway becomes easier to follow. And so the cycle repeats.

SECTION 3

The Brain Learns

Our brains are designed to learn from rewards. Pleasure, novelty, excitement, relief and anticipation can all reinforce behaviour.

This is one reason digital platforms can be so compelling.

- There is always another video.
- Another message.
- Another notification.
- Another image.
- Another opportunity for something new.

The person doesn't know what the next swipe will produce. That unpredictability can encourage repeated checking. Over time, reaching for the phone can become almost automatic. The hand moves before the mind has consciously decided.

That is the point at which we need to start paying attention.

SECTION 4

The Emotional Side of Addiction

Sometimes the substance, screen or behaviour is not the real problem. It may be the person's method of coping with something underneath.

- Someone feels lonely → they scroll.
- Someone feels rejected → they seek validation.
- Someone feels stressed → they escape into entertainment.
- Someone feels sexually frustrated → they seek pornography.
- Someone feels empty → they seek stimulation.
- Someone feels anxious → they seek temporary relief.

The behaviour provides an escape. But the relief doesn't last. So the person returns to the behaviour. This creates another cycle:



Therefore, recovery must ask:

“What are you trying to escape from?”

SECTION 5

Why Willpower Alone Is Not Always Enough

We often tell someone:

“Just stop.”

But if stopping were always that simple, addiction would not exist. Willpower is important, but environment, habits, triggers, relationships and support also matter.

If someone is constantly exposed to the same triggers, stays isolated, sleeps poorly, has unrestricted access and has no alternative activities, they are fighting an unnecessarily difficult battle.

We therefore don't simply tell people:

“Be stronger.”

We teach them to build a stronger system.

SECTION 6

Change the Environment

If something repeatedly causes you to fall, stop making it easy to reach. Change the surroundings.

- Remove triggering applications.
- Block harmful websites.
- Change routines.
- Keep devices outside bedrooms.
- Avoid being alone during vulnerable periods.
- Stay away from people and environments that encourage destructive behaviour.

Don't keep the temptation within arm's reach and then expect unlimited willpower to defeat it every time.

Wisdom is not merely resisting temptation. Wisdom is also learning how to avoid unnecessary temptation.

SECTION 7

Replace … Don't Just Remove

One of the biggest mistakes in recovery is removing a behaviour without replacing what it provided.

If someone used…	…they need
Pornography to escape loneliness	Connection
Gaming to experience achievement	Meaningful goals
Social media for validation	Healthy relationships and real accomplishment
Substances to numb emotional pain	Appropriate support and healthier coping mechanisms
Their phone because they were bored	Something meaningful to do

We don't simply empty the space. We fill the space with purpose.

SECTION 8

The Power of Delay

One practical technique is learning to delay the response to an urge. An urge can feel like an instruction:

“Do it now.”

But an urge is not a command. Try:

“Not now. I'll wait ten minutes.”

Then:

- Stand up.
- Leave the room.
- Walk.
- Make wudu.
- Exercise.
- Call someone.
- Read.
- Start another activity.

The objective is to create space between:

URGE → **ACTION**

That space is where self-control begins to grow.

SECTION 9

Build Discipline in Small Things

Recovery is not only about defeating one enormous temptation. It is about strengthening the ability to choose.

- Wake up when you said you would.
- Train when you don't feel like training.
- Put the phone away.
- Finish your work.
- Keep your promises.
- Control your tongue.
- Control your appetite.
- Guard your eyes.
- Complete your salah.
- Do difficult things voluntarily.

Every time you exercise disciplined choice, you strengthen the identity:

“I am someone who can control myself.”

SECTION 10

Islam Teaches Self-Mastery

Islam does not teach us that every desire is evil. Rather, it teaches us that desires must be governed.

Allah says:

> *“And those who strive for Us — We will surely guide them to Our ways.”*
> **— Qur'an 29:69**

And the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught us that true strength is not merely physical strength, but the ability to control oneself in moments of anger. This principle extends into our entire lives.

Strength is: seeing something and choosing not to take it.

Strength is: feeling an urge and not obeying it.

Strength is: being alone and still choosing what is right.

That is mujahadah — striving against the lower self.

SECTION 11

Don't Wait Until the Damage Is Severe

Parents and leaders should learn to recognise changes early. Watch for:

- Secrecy
- Sudden withdrawal
- Dramatic changes in sleep
- Falling academic or work performance
- Neglect of responsibilities
- Loss of interest in previous activities
- Increasingly defensive behaviour
- Excessive private device use
- Unexplained financial problems
- Sudden changes in friends
- Repeated failed attempts to stop a behaviour
- Continuing the behaviour despite obvious harm.

These signs do not automatically prove addiction. But they tell us:

“Something needs attention.”

The response should be curiosity, conversation and appropriate support — not immediate condemnation.

SECTION 12

Recovery Is a Process

There may be setbacks. There may be difficult days. There may be relapse. But a setback does not erase every step forward.

Instead of saying:

“I've failed.”

say:

“What happened, and what can I learn from it?”

Identify:

- The trigger.
- The thought.
- The opportunity.
- The behaviour.

- The consequence.

Then strengthen the recovery plan.

If someone cannot regain control despite repeated attempts, or the behaviour is seriously affecting their health, relationships, education, work or safety, professional help should be sought. Addiction is not a character defect, and needing professional support is not a sign of weakness.

The Ihsaan-do Recovery Principle



We cannot build a better generation simply by telling young people what not to do. We must teach them what to do instead.

- Give them movement.
- Give them knowledge.
- Give them responsibility.
- Give them brotherhood and sisterhood.
- Give them mentors.
- Give them meaningful goals.
- Give them faith.
- Give them service.
- Give them purpose.

Because a person with purpose has something greater to protect.

A Message to Everyone Struggling

If you are struggling with an addictive behaviour, don't tell yourself: “This is who I am.”

Say: “This is something I am struggling with and I can work toward changing it.”

Seek Allah. Seek knowledge. Seek support. Remove the triggers. Build better habits. Get professional help when necessary. And keep getting back up.

Your struggle does not have to become your identity.

Ihsaan-Do

“Don't simply break the habit. Build the character that no longer needs it.”

Knowledge. Character. Action. Change.

Stronger individuals. Stronger families. A stronger Ummah.

Coming in Episode 3

The Gateway of Stimulation — Vaping, Cigarettes & Nicotine: What Parents and Youth Need to Know.

Then we progressively move from there into cannabis, alcohol, prescription misuse, hard drugs, warning signs, intervention, treatment, relapse and rebuilding.

Article by Kancho Abdullah Bayett

Stronger Individuals | Stronger Families | A Stronger Ummah