

EXERCISE: SOUNDTRACKING YOUR ADDICTION AND RECOVERY STORY



This exercise is designed to help you reflect on your journey through the lens of music. Music can evoke emotions, capture memories, and symbolize transformations.

You will select two songs:

- One representing your time in addiction
- One symbolizing your recovery

THE PROFOUND IMPACT OF MY ADDICTION SONG

LOOKING BACK ON MY INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT ADDICTION TREATMENT PROGRAM, THE IMPACT OF THIS EXERCISE WAS IMMENSE, ESPECIALLY THE SONG I CHOSE TO REPRESENT MY ADDICTION - "SOBER" BY TOOL.

THE LYRICS OF "SOBER" HIT ME HARD, LIKE A PUNCH IN THE GUT. A PARTICULAR SET OF LINES RESONATED DEEPLY WITH ME:

**"TRUST IN ME AND FALL AS WELL
I WILL FIND A CENTER IN YOU
I WILL CHEW IT UP AND LEAVE
I WILL WORK TO ELEVATE YOU
JUST ENOUGH TO BRING YOU DOWN."**

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THESE WORDS MADE ME THINK OF MY WIFE AND THE HELL SHE ENDURED BECAUSE OF MY DRINKING. SHE WANTED TO BELIEVE IN ME EACH TIME I PROMISED TO QUIT, BUT AS THE SONG PAINFULLY ILLUSTRATES, I PULLED HER DOWN WITH ME. IT WAS A CYCLE OF FALSE HOPE AND DISAPPOINTMENT, A PATTERN I DIDN'T FULLY GRASP UNTIL I HEARD THESE LYRICS.

BUT IT WAS THE CLOSING LINES OF THE SONG THAT REALLY UNDERSCORED THE ESSENCE OF MY ADDICTION:

*"I WANT WHAT I WANT
I WANT WHAT I WANT
I WANT WHAT I WANT
I WANT WHAT I WANT."*

THIS REPETITION LAID BARE THE SELFISH NATURE OF MY DRINKING. IT WAS ALL ABOUT WHAT I WANTED WITHOUT CONSIDERING THE IMPACT ON THOSE I LOVED.

THIS REALIZATION WAS A TURNING POINT. I MADE A FIRM DECISION THEN AND THERE - I WOULD NEVER DRAG MY WIFE THROUGH THAT HELL AGAIN. THOSE LYRICS AND MOMENTS OF PAINFUL CLARITY BECAME A PART OF ME. EVEN NOW, OVER FIVE YEARS LATER, "SOBER" STAYS WITH ME. IT SERVES AS A STARK REMINDER OF WHO I WAS WHEN I WAS DRINKING AND FUELS MY DETERMINATION TO NEVER REVERT TO THAT PERSON AGAIN. IN ALL ITS RAW HONESTY, THE SONG KEEPS ME ANCHORED TO THE PATH OF RECOVERY, CONSTANTLY REMINDING ME OF WHAT'S AT STAKE.

WHY SONGS?

Music holds a unique and profound power in human experience, making it an exceptional tool for reflection and expression, especially in the context of personal growth and recovery. Here's why songs are so influential in evoking emotions, capturing memories, and symbolizing transformation:

Emotional Resonance: Music has a direct pathway to our emotions. Different melodies, rhythms, and lyrics can evoke a wide range of feelings, from joy and hope to sadness and nostalgia. This emotional resonance makes music a powerful tool for reflecting on our innermost feelings and experiences.

Expression of Feelings by Songwriters: Songwriters often have a unique talent for expressing complex emotions and experiences through their lyrics. They can articulate feelings and thoughts in ways that resonate deeply yet may have eluded our own expression.

Symbolizes Transition: Music can mark different chapters of our lives, representing transformation and growth. A song that resonated with you during a period of addiction reflects different values, feelings, or perspectives than one that speaks to you in recovery.

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Contrast Between the Two Songs: The contrast between these songs highlights the changes in your outlook, priorities, and emotional landscape, offering a symbolic representation of your personal evolution in recovery.

STEPS TO COMPLETE THE EXERCISE

Choose a Song That Represents You in Addiction:

Think about your period of addiction. What emotions, experiences, and challenges characterized this time in your life?

Choose a song that encapsulates these feelings or experiences. It could be a track you related to during that time or one that retrospectively captures your state of being.

Write down why you chose this song and what it represents to you. How does it make you feel? What memories or thoughts does it bring up? Are there any lyrics that stand out?

Name of the Song: _____

Why did you choose it?

EXERCISE: SOUNDTRACKING YOUR ADDICTION AND RECOVERY STORY (CONTINUED-3)

Choose a Song That Represents You in Recovery:

Now, reflect on your journey through recovery. Consider the struggles you've overcome, the growth you've experienced, and the hopes you have for the future.

Select a song that represents this phase of your life. Look for a track that resonates with your feelings of recovery, hope, and resilience.

Name of the Song: _____

Why did you choose it?

Reflect on the Exercise

After completing the exercise, take some time to reflect on what these songs and their transition signify about your journey. What insights have you gained about your growth and change? How do these songs inspire you to continue on your path of recovery?

INTEGRATING THE TWO-SONG EXERCISE INTO RECOVERY

The two-song exercise, involving the selection of one song that represents your time in addiction and another that symbolizes your recovery, is a reflective tool that can significantly enhance your recovery process. It's not just about the songs but the introspection and insights they facilitate.

STEPS TO INTEGRATE THE EXERCISE INTO RECOVERY

Regular Reflection: Set aside weekly or monthly time to listen to these two songs. Use this as a moment of reflection on your journey from addiction to recovery.

Journaling: After listening to each song, journal about your feelings, thoughts, and memories that surface. Note any new insights or realizations about your journey.

Sharing in Support Groups: If you're comfortable, share your chosen songs and their significance in your support group or therapy sessions. This can lead to

meaningful discussions and shared experiences.

Mood Tracking: Observe how each song affects your mood and emotions. Does the addiction-themed song bring up feelings you need to address? Does the recovery song uplift and motivate you?

Mindfulness and Meditation: Use the songs as a focus for mindfulness or meditation sessions. Concentrate on the lyrics, melody, and how they resonate with your current state.

Creating a Personal Playlist: Expand on this exercise by creating a playlist that captures various aspects of your recovery journey. Include songs that bring comfort, inspiration, or empowerment.

Setting Goals and Intentions: Let the recovery-themed song be a tool for setting goals and intentions. Reflect on the aspects of recovery the song highlights for you and how you can work towards these in your life.

Emotional Release and Catharsis: Allow yourself to fully experience the emotions brought up by these songs. Music can be a powerful tool for emotional release and healing.

By integrating this two-song exercise into your recovery journey, you allow music to become a companion and a mirror to your inner world. It's a way to acknowledge where you've been, appreciate where you are now, and envision where you're headed. This practice can offer comfort, insight, and motivation, becoming an integral part of your ongoing path to healing and growth.

"WHERE WORDS FAIL, MUSIC SPEAKS." – HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.