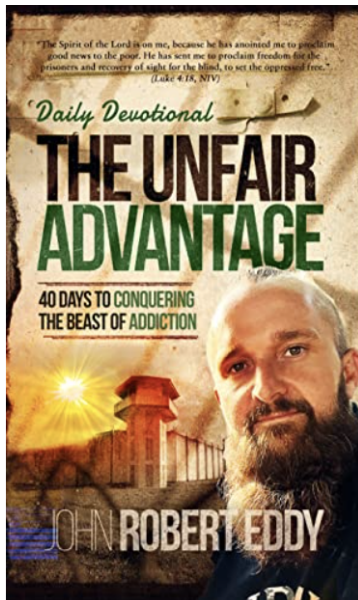


The Unfair Advantage: Daily Devotional

40 Days to Conquering the Beast of Addiction

Free 7-Day Devotional Download



Available on Amazon.com

by John Robert Eddy

The Unfair Advantage Daily Devotional

40 Days to Conquering the Beast of Addiction

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To my beautiful wife Monica Eddy—
My best friend! My soulmate! My “rib”!

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Introduction

“Get busy living or get busy dying.”

– *The Shawshank Redemption*

If you’ve picked up this devotional, you’ve probably read my book *The Unfair Advantage: My Story of Conquering the Beast of Addiction* and know about the miraculous changes God has brought about in my life. It’s hard to believe that just over ten years ago I was a completely hopeless alcoholic and drug addict, a thief, a liar, a relationship wrecker, a criminal... I could go on and on!

But my life has been totally changed. I’ve been completely clean and sober for over a decade. My prison term was mysteriously cut short. I have a prosperous (and honest!) business that employs a bunch of people. I’ve been given a beautiful wife and four wonderful children. And I have a deep purpose in life that keeps my fire burning every day: to help others find the freedom I found.

And it’s all because of the power of Jesus and the practical application of the Twelve Steps. Hey, I’m nobody special. What God did for me he’ll do for you! I wrote this devotional to help you draw closer to him each day as you work through the Twelve Steps. You see, I was miraculously delivered, but I still had to work through the Steps to maintain and grow in my sobriety, and I have to continue to live out the Twelve Steps every day of my life. Staying close to Jesus is the key.

You can do this! The Bible says, “*greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world*” (1 John 4:4). Christ in you is greater than any demon. With his power and the Twelve Steps, the “*Unfair Advantage*” in life is yours! Let’s get started....

DAY 1: Admitting

STEP ONE: Admit we are powerless over drugs, alcohol, or any addiction and as a result our lives have become unmanageable.

*“And you will know the truth,
and the truth will set you free.”*

– John 8:32 (ESV)

Step One is admitting we need help. This can be scary, making us feel vulnerable and weak, but it is actually the first step to victory! As Jesus said, *“the truth will set you free.”*

Behind each of the Twelve Steps is a spiritual principle, and the spiritual principle behind Step One is *honesty*. Not mere “cash register” honesty, but being completely honest with yourself that you have a problem. The problem may be with drugs or alcohol, or with gambling or sex, or a destructive relationship you’re wrapped up in; it can be anything, but the key is admitting you have the problem and need to change. *“The truth will set you free.”*

A man named Charles was on a tour bus on the highway when another tour bus up ahead skidded on the snowy road, flipped on its side, and slid into a field. Charles’ bus stopped, and Charles jumped off it, ran to the overturned bus, and climbed on top to try to free the injured passengers. He grabbed the handle of the emergency door, which was facing up, and pulled and pulled—but the door just wouldn’t budge. Frustrated, he stepped back. Then another man came, turned the handle of the emergency door, and opened it easily. And Charles realized why

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the door hadn't opened for him: He had been standing on it the whole time!

Like Charles, we are often our own worst enemy when it comes to opening the door to freedom. By failing to admit our need, we're the ones keeping ourselves shut in! Admitting we need help is the first step to freedom. Everybody has the same opportunity to change, but you have to get honest with yourself.

Pray with me: "Heavenly Father, help me to be honest with myself! Help me admit my problems so that I can change the things about me that need to be changed. I know this is an inside job, requiring truth in my heart. Help me see myself as you see me and admit my problems to you and others. As I do, I trust in Jesus' promise: '*The truth will set you free.*' In Jesus' name, I pray."

Notes:

Day 2: Getting Honest in Everything

STEP ONE: Admit we are powerless over drugs, alcohol, or any addiction and as a result our lives have become unmanageable.

“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.”

– Luke 16:10 (ESV)

As mentioned on Day 1, the spiritual principle behind Step One is *honesty*. This means being honest with myself at all times and in all situations—in the big things (like not embezzling from my employer) and in the little things (like what I watch when I’m alone). This can be hard sometimes, but it’s worth it, because Jesus said, *“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.”*

When I am honest about the truth of Step One—that I am powerless not only over my addiction, but over the people, places, and things in my life—it actually takes the pressure off! Because then I am counting on God. It’s like the minister who went to play in a local golf tournament. As he prepared to tee off, storm clouds rolled in, and the tournament organizer said to him, “Preacher, I trust you’ll use your influence with the Man Upstairs to keep the weather from turning bad.” The minister shook his head and said, “Sorry. I’m in sales, not management.” When we admit we are powerless, it takes the pressure off! Because then we’re counting on God.

But I can’t count on God if I don’t get honest with myself in

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all situations in my life, little or big. This is something you have to do day-to-day, hour-to-hour. But there's true freedom in it. And peace!

Pray with me: "Father, I pray that you help me be honest in everything in my life. Help me realize that I'm powerless over every situation and come to you for everything, no matter if it's big, no matter if it's small. For everything. In Jesus name, I pray."

Notes:

Heads Up!

Step One is honesty! I'm not talking about cash register honesty but getting honest with yourself deep inside—as the saying goes, “To thine own self be true.” Being honest with yourself that you have a problem with drugs, alcohol, people, food—whatever it may be.

This is the one step you've *got* to get perfect. I've never seen anybody relapse because he didn't work a good Fifth Step or a good Eighth Step, but no one makes it who tries to cheat Step One. Can't be done. This step is the most important.

Day 3: Choosing the Next Right Thing

STEP ONE: Admit we are powerless over drugs, alcohol, or any addiction and as a result our lives have become unmanageable.

“But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.” – John 3:21 (NLT)

As we have learned, the spiritual principle behind Step One is honesty. This means admitting you need help (Day 1). It also means being straight with yourself about yourself, including about your powerlessness over your addiction and life in general (Day 2). And today’s topic: It means *doing the next right thing!* The next right thing in everything you do.

Even though your flesh and mind want to go in a different direction, want to take the easy way, man-up and choose the right direction! That is always God’s direction. Even when it hurts, even when it’s hard, choose the next right thing to do. Believe it or not, that’s when real growth comes. That’s when the miracles come!

Do you know there really is such a thing as Easy Street? It’s in Honolulu, Hawaii. If you go to Honolulu and take the Pali Highway to Pali Pass, then take Pali Pass to Park Street, then turn right on Park Street and go one block—you actually arrive at Easy Street. That’s its name. The problem is, once you turn onto Easy Street, it doesn’t go anywhere. One block later you find the sign: “Dead End.”

It’s that way in life too. Easy Street is a dead end,

John Robert Eddy | The Unfair Advantage Daily Devotional especially—and often literally—for the addict or alcoholic. Being honest with yourself means choosing the next right thing to do. Even when it’s hard.

Pray with me: “Heavenly Father, help me do the next right thing in every situation of my life, even when my mind wants to go the other direction. Even when it’s hard. For that’s when the miracles come. Help me follow the Holy Spirit in my heart in every area of life, for your glory. In Jesus’ name, I pray.”

Notes:

Day 4: Believing (Even Just a Little)

STEP TWO: Believe in a Power greater than myself to restore me to sanity.

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

– Jeremiah 29:11 (ESV)

Today we come to Step Two: Believe in a Power greater than myself to restore me to sanity. The spiritual principle behind this step is *hope*.

It works like this: After I get honest with myself deep down inside and get ready to change, the next thing that comes is hope. And I get that hope from a Power greater than myself. That Power is God! The Power of Jesus!

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. After I came to believe in a Power greater than myself, even just a little bit, that’s when things really started to change. I didn’t always believe in Jesus and I barely believed in God, but all it took was a little “mustard seed” of faith (Matthew 17:20)—just acting on the little bit of faith I had—and God took it from there!

That’s how much he loves us. God is our Father, and just like I love my own family and children so much and would give them anything, God loves us more than that. Go to him with this addiction problem you have, with all the problems you have. Hope will come and the change will start!

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” –

Pray with me: “Father, I come to you just thanking you so much for believing in me and loving me even when I had barely any faith at all. I pray that you help me continue to wake up and come to you every single day for help, because this is a daily reprieve—I need you every single day. I love you so much and thank you for your help! In Jesus’ name, I pray.”

Notes:

Heads Up!

“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” – St. Augustine

Day 5: Growing in Hope

STEP TWO: Believe in a Power greater than myself to restore me to sanity.

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.
– Romans 12:12 (ESV)

After I hit the bottom of my life, I was finally ready to change. I mean completely change, not tightening nine screws out of ten, but all ten! Because half measures don't accomplish anything. When I was really ready to change, I had to be all-in.

All those times through the years when I had tried to make a new start but never quite did it—it was because I had reservations. I was keeping back part of myself. I wasn't all-in. So I kept getting the same results.

But when I hit my knees on that cold jail cell floor and asked God to help me, I was finally ready to change. The cool part is that God is so loving that at that moment, though I wasn't even sure about my conception of him, he put his hand out and grabbed me and picked me up! I *knew* he had answered my prayer, and so right away I started hitting my knees in prayer every morning and every night, asking for his help, thanking him for it—and my hope grew more and more daily.

When you start to do the same thing, God is going to put his hand out and help you too! I'm no one special; he loves you just as much as he does me. I look back at my life now, more than 10 years later, and have to pinch myself on a day-to-day basis to be sure I'm not dreaming—he's brought me so far!

Everyone has the same opportunity. So let go and let God, not

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just partly but completely, and I promise you that hope will come every day. But remember something: “It’s 10 miles in the woods and it’s 10 miles out.” It doesn’t happen overnight, so don’t give up. Persevere, stay consistent, be disciplined. Your hope will grow and your life change more and more every day.

Pray with me: “Father, help me be all-in with the change in my life. Show me my heart and convict me about the things I need to change. Help me give all of myself to you, not just part. Give me wisdom to just put one foot in front of the other, realizing this is not an overnight matter. Give me the strength, give me the wisdom, and give me the patience to persevere. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Thank you for the daily hope, Father.”

Notes:

Day 6: Quenching Your Thirst

STEP TWO: Believe in a Power greater than myself to restore me to sanity.

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

– James 4:8-10 (ESV)

Do you know that all the years I was struggling, constantly looking for other things to make me happy, whether it was drugs, money, people—the list can go on and on—it was true insanity. Because I was trying to quench a thirst that could never be quenched with any of those things. Only God can quench that thirst at the heart of us, but I didn't realize that until I hit bottom bad enough that I was willing to look to him—and then hope came!

“When the pain of remaining the same becomes greater than the pain of changing, we will change!” And the truth is, the only way you're going to change is through Jesus. When I hit bottom, the only one I could reach for was God, and he was there to lift me up out of the mud and mire. If you're struggling at all in your life—and chances are, you are—he is there for you too. He is your hope!

Pray with me: “Father, help me to lay down my problems to you, every single one of them. Purify my heart, convict me of the things I need to change. Help me realize, Father, that I was born and created to worship you, and you're the only one who will

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ever feel any voids or holes in my life. Help me put you first,
Father, before anything, because I know the rest will take care of
itself. Give me hope, Father. In Jesus' name, I pray.”

Notes:

Day 7: Turning It Over

STEP THREE: Make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand him.

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

– Hebrews 11:6 (ESV)

Today we come to Step Three: Make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand him. The spiritual principle behind this step is faith!

Everybody lives by faith to some degree. For example, you go to a doctor you don't know, whose degrees you haven't verified. He gives you a prescription you can't read. You take it to a pharmacist you've never seen before. He gives you a chemical compound you don't understand. Then you go home and take the pill according to the instructions on the bottle. All in sincere, trusting faith! Well, Step Three encourages us to live by faith in the God of the universe! You can do it.

When I first started through the Twelve Steps and went through various stuff—problems, trials, crises—my faith was nowhere near where it is now. And it's okay if your faith is small now. God will still help you. He doesn't love us for who we are, he loves us for who we're going to be. So keep pushing and disciplining yourself to go to God for everything—not just some things, but everything. Turn your entire world and life over to him. And when you give it all to him, you can sit back and watch what he does! Then your faith will grow.

And every time you take your will back from him, even if it's numerous times a day, just catch yourself and give it to him again. God will edify you, refine you, and when you start seeing miracles take place in your life—things only God can do—your faith will grow even more and you'll want to be closer to him.

Start right now every day going to God early in the morning like Jesus did. Give him your life each day and sit back and watch the miracles and the blessings that take place when God has his arms around your life and he is the one running it!

Pray with me: “Father, help me to come to you in every situation of my life. Help me to start my day out with you first! To give every situation to you and to turn my whole life over to you. And when I try to take it back and ‘drive the bus,’ give me the will power, courage, and wisdom to release it to you once again. Father, I know that with you in control of my life, the sky is the limit. I love you so much. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.”

Notes:

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