Ask an Addiction Specialist

Dr. Bob Weathers

Plural Recovery:

Helping Ourselves Help Each Other

Addiction Relationships, & Recovery

All Addictions: Same Brain Changes

3 Brain Changes That You Need to Know

3 Brain Changes: *Direct Result of Addiction*

3 Brain Changes: *Contribute to Further Addiction*

In Active Addiction: The Poor Get Poorer

Vicious Cycle in Brain

Brain Change #1:

Numbed Pleasure

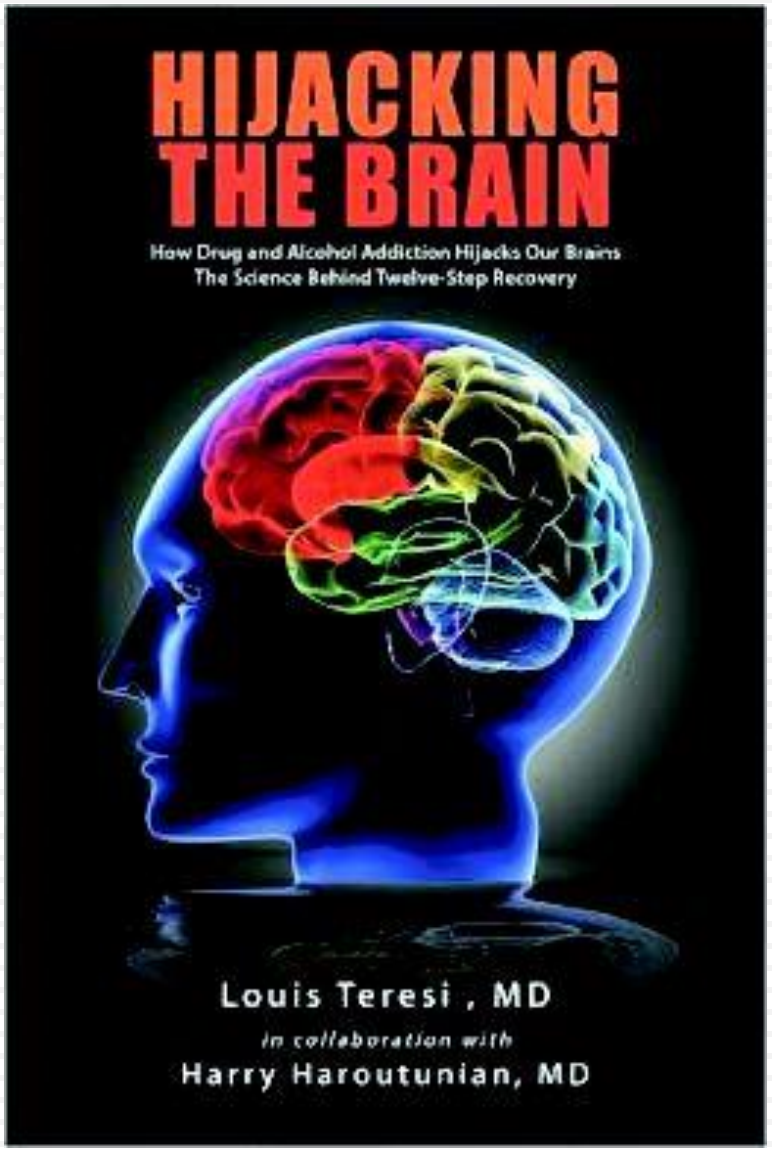
(*Nucleus Accumbens*)

Homeostasis

Allostasis

(*Cortisol*)

Anhedonia → Feel "Normal"



Anhedonia ➔ Feel "Normal"

Exercise:

How Does This Brain Change Impact Relationship?

Examples

* **“Dead Eyes”**
* **Lack of Passion**
* **Flatness of Affect**

Brain Change #2:

Increased Craving

(*Ventral Tegmental Area*)

Dopamine: Salience + Incentive

Incentive Sensitization

***Dopamine*:**

*** Baseline = 1**

*** Sexual Response = 2**

*** Cocaine = 4**

*** Heroin = 10**

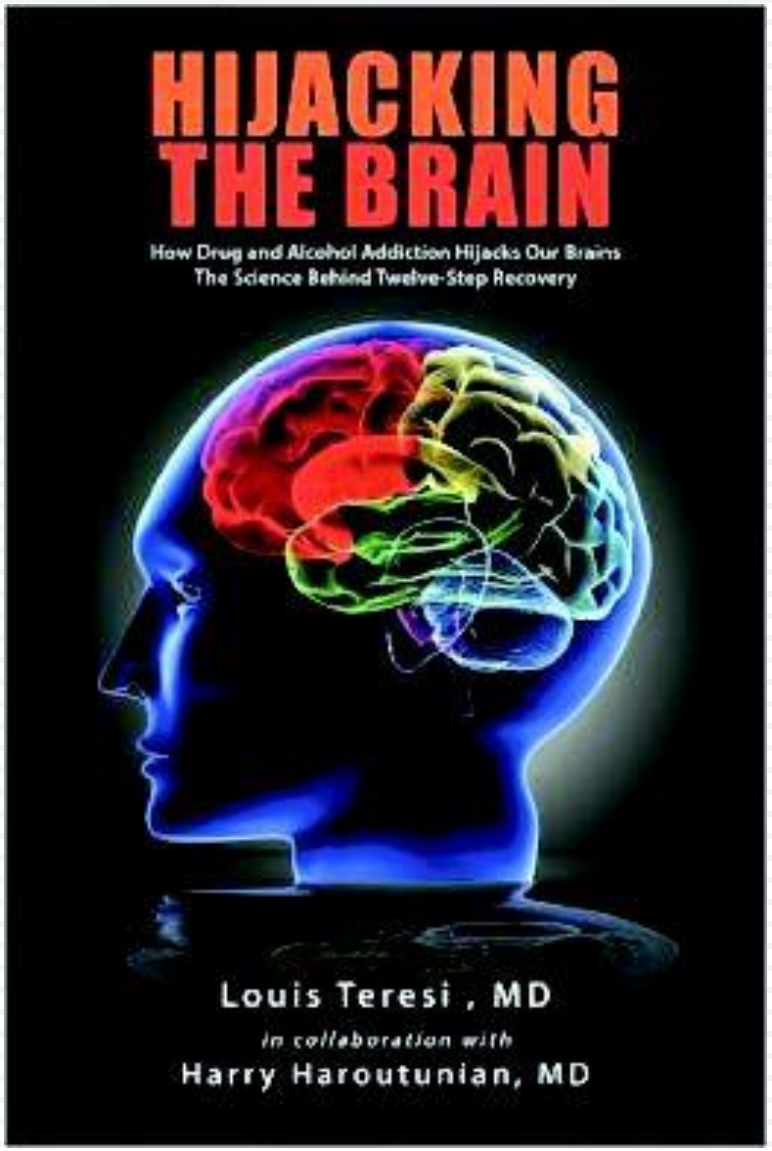
*** Methamphetamine = 12**

Dr. Richard Rawson (UCLA)

Dopamine
Glutamate

Triggers – External Cues & Internal Stress

Craving Trumps Willpower



Craving Trumps Willpower

Exercise:

How Does This Brain Change Impact Relationship?

* Distractibility
* Disengagement
* Irritability

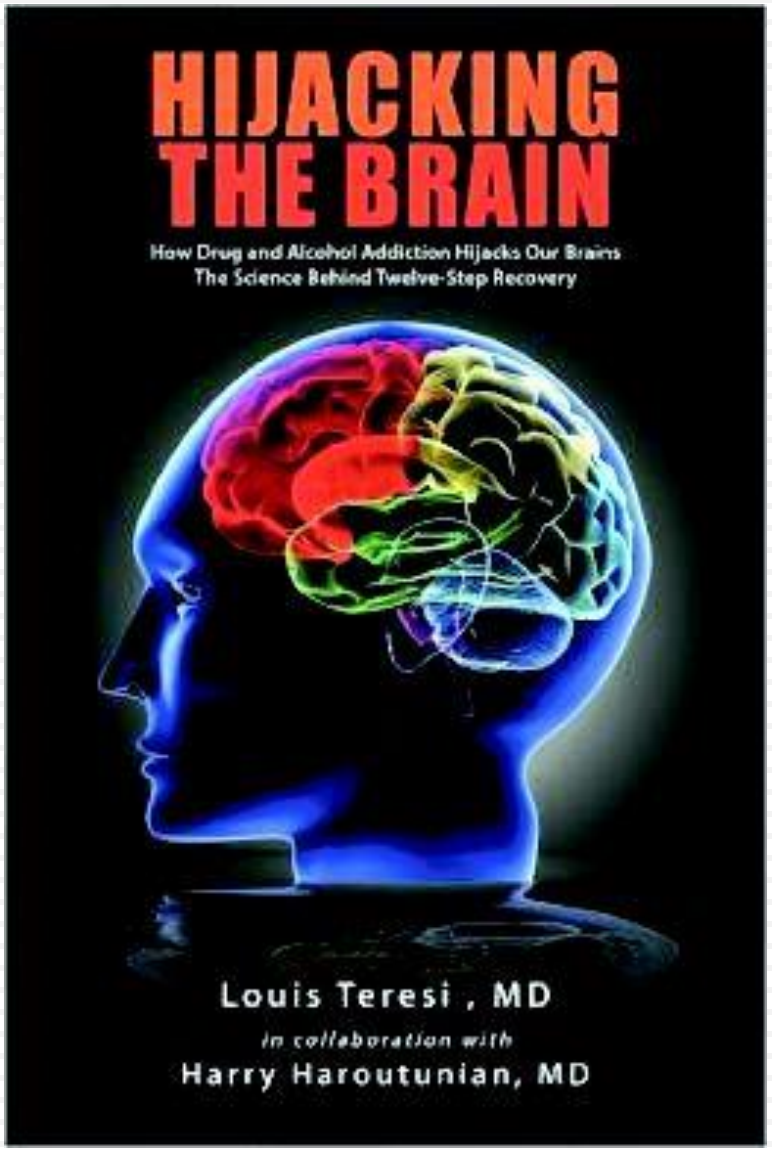
Brain Change #3:

Decreased Control

(*Prefrontal Cortex*)

Hypofrontality – Brakes vs. Accelerator

Subcortex Negates Cortex



Subcortex Negates Cortex

Exercise:

How Does This Brain Change Impact Relationship?

* Impulsivity
* Aggression
* Poor Judgment

PAWS: Post-Acute Withdrawal Syndrome

Exercise:
How Does PAWS Impact Relationship?

How Do --

1) Numbed Pleasure

2) Increased Craving

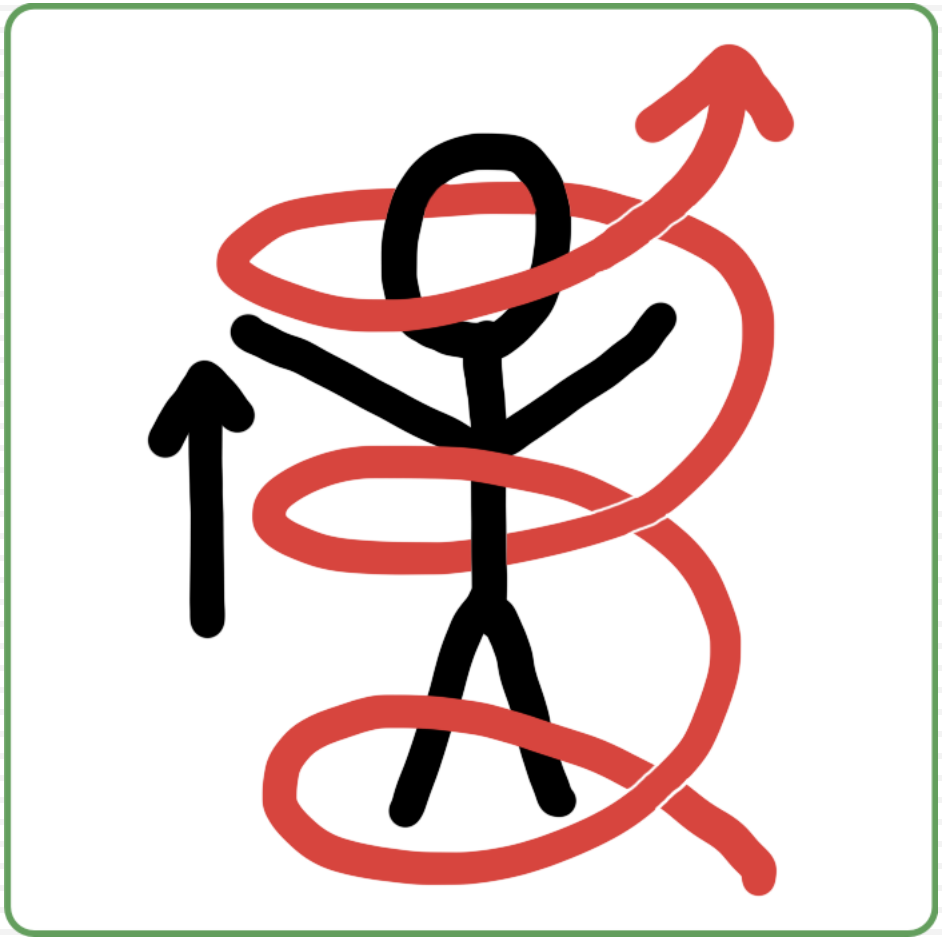
3) Decreased Control

-- Impact Relationship?

Key to Early Recovery:
Getting Support to Sustain Sobriety

Recovery for Everyone

In Committed Recovery: The Rich Get Richer



Adaptive Spiral

There Is Hope!

***Further Resources*:**

www.drbobweathers.com