



## The Shulman Center January 2022 Monthly e-Newsletter

*Celebrating The 20th Year of Our e-Newsletter!*

*Thanks to our 3,000 subscribers for your continued interest & support!*

**HAPPY NEW YEAR 2022!**

Watch & listen to this new 30-second PSA  
(Public Service Announcement)  
for Unsteal.org

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaxnEQXNKcc>

Watch & listen to Mr. Shulman's 20-Minute Interview  
on Kleptomania on Anthony Padilla's YouTube Channel  
"I Spent A Day with... Kleptomaniacs"

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvGtowTfPqU>

Watch & listen to Mr. Shulman's 90-minute podcast interview  
on shopping addiction and more!

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gDau-8w4LxY>

Watch and listen to Mr. Shulman's 20-minute live Zoom "Real Men" storytelling  
from June 18th which was just uploaded to YouTube:

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tT2VGCEsDj8>

Watch & listen to Mr. Shulman's new hour-long podcast interview  
on shopping addiction and more!

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qO6CZca9xy4>

**Addiction is giving up everything for one thing.  
Recovery is giving up one thing for everything.**

New TV series on "theft addiction" may be picked up in this year! *Stay tuned!*

[Donate To C.A.S.A., LLC](#)  
[And/or To The Shulman Center](#)  
[Donate Here!](#)

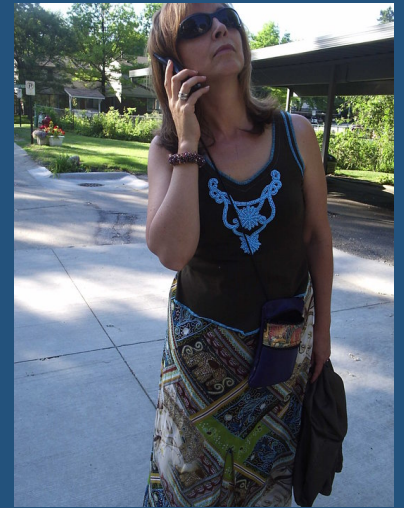
Please Consider Making A Tax Deductible Contribution to Unsteal.org (a not-for-profit)  
[Donate Here!](#) or Go to <https://unsteal.org/>

Please Consider Making A Donation or Become a Patreon Sponsor  
to *Connection Is Magic!*

See: <https://connectionismagic.com/> or Go to <https://www.patreon.com/connectionismagic>

Please Note Our Updated Website at:

[www.theshulmancenter.com](http://www.theshulmancenter.com)

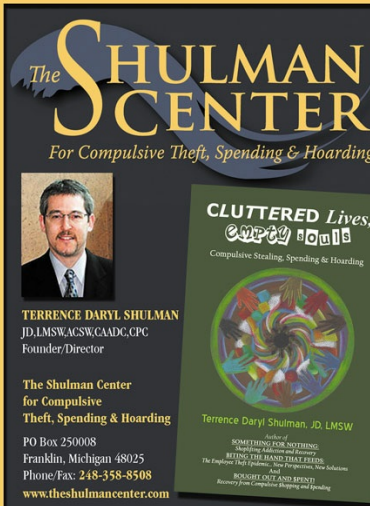


**Tina Shulman,  
Creative Director**

**TERRENCE DARYL SHULMAN**  
 JD, LMSW, ACSW, CAADC, CPC  
 Attorney, Therapist, Consultant, Author & Coach  
 FOUNDER/DIRECTOR OF  
 The Shulman Center for Compulsive Theft, Spending & Hoarding



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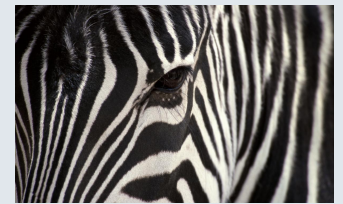
**The SHULMAN CENTER**  
 For Compulsive Theft, Spending & Hoarding

**CLUTTERED Lives,  
 empty HOLES**  
 Compulsive Stealing, Spending & Hoarding

Terrence Daryl Shulman, JD, LMSW  
 Author of  
 SOMETHING FOR NOTHING:  
 Saving Time, Resources and Expenses  
 BEHIND THE HANDS THAT EAT  
 The Employee Theft Problem: A Six-Step Solution  
 BOUGHT OUT AND RESENT  
 A Survival Guide for Compulsive Spending and Spending

**TERRENCE DARYL SHULMAN**  
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 Founder/Director

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 Theft, Spending & Hoarding  
 PO Box 250008  
 Franklin, Michigan 48025  
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 www.theshulmancenter.com



**CHECK OUT OUR NEW MERCH at Unsteal.org**  
<https://unsteal.org/swag/>

**CHECK OUT SAMSON SHULMAN'S PODCAST**  
*Connection Is Magic!*  
<https://connectionismagic.com/>  
 and Merch at:  
<https://connectionismagic.com/shop>

**During This Time of Social Distancing, Your Life Does Not Have To Be on Hold!  
 Specialized Therapy by Telephone or Video-Chat  
 Your Life Is Calling...  
 CALL US AT: 248-358-8508!**

**150-Question Online Shoplifting Assessment Tool**

**ANNOUNCING THE RECENT LAUNCH OF A NEW**

**150-QUESTION ONLINE SHOPLIFTING ASSESSMENT TOOL**

DEVELOPED BY THE SHULMAN CENTER

WITH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM ADE SOLUTIONS IN METRO-DETROIT

*This is a rare and in-depth assessment tool and can be easily accessed online*

It takes about 20-30 minutes to complete and can be used by courts, therapists, and those who have shoplifted. Once the questionnaire is completed and submitted, you will receive an immediate one-page summary that tells you how severe a shoplifting problem you have, what type of shoplifter you are, and what is your risk of reoffending in the future (low, medium, high, very high).

[Click here to access our questionnaire!](#)

**Read Recent Comprehensive Article from MoneyGeek**

on Compulsive Shopping/Spending... I'm quoted

[Click Here!](#)

**See Recent Guardian UK Article on Why Wealthy People Shoplift:**

Mr. Shulman quoted as expert!

[Click Here!](#)

**Listen to Mr. Shulman on a recent 100-minute Podcast Interview**

"White Collar Crime and Recovery" with 15 other "convicts"

[Click Here!](#)

**See Recent Free Press/USA Today Article on Shopping/Shoplifting Addiction:**

Mr. Shulman quoted as expert!

[Click Here!](#)

**Listen to Mr. Shulman's 40-min Interview**

Less Waves, More Ocean: Staying Calm in Covid Times

[Click Here!](#)

**Listen to Mr. Shulman's Recent 45-minute Audio Interview on Shoplifting Addiction:**

When Stealing Is A Drug!

[Click Here!](#)

**See Recent 5-Minute Video on Shopping Addiction on Cheddar:**

Mr. Shulman quoted as expert!

[Click Here!](#)

**See Dr. Oz's 15-minute July 9, 2019 Shoplifting Addiction Episode**

Mr. Shulman Feature on The Show!

[Click Here!](#)

## QUICK LINKS

[2-minute NBC Nightly News Segment \(May 2021\) on Phone and Shopping Addiction Guilt Gifting Is A Thing in 2020 But It Can Get Out of Hand Quickly!](#)

[Anti-Capitalist Teens Share Shoplifting Tips on Tik-Tok Online Shopping Addiction in The Time of Covid Quarantine](#)

[White Collar Support Group Video Podcast Episode#1](#)

[Shopping Addiction and Holidays](#)

[Guardian UK Article: Rich Robbers](#)

[NYPost Shopping Addiction Article](#)

[Dr. Oz July 9, 2019 Episode on Shoplifting Addiction](#)

[Mr. Shulman Quoted in July 14, 2019 Article on Netflix Series "Trinkets" on Teen Shoplifting](#)

[Mr. Shulman Quoted in Vancouver Sun July 24, 2019 Article on Shopping Addiction](#)

[Stop Thief! Restaurant Diners Help Themselves to More Than Food!](#)

[New 10-minute Video Preview of Forthcoming Online Employee Theft Prevention Course](#)

[August 15, 2018 Cover Story on Shoplifting in Detroit Metro Times](#)

[Cosmo Journalist Confesses She's A Shopaholic!](#)

[You Could Be an Online Shopping Addict!](#)

[Men Are Shopaholics, Too! Author Buzz Bissinger Tells All on NBC's Megyn Kelly Show](#)

[Plain Thieves or Addicted to The Rush? Mr. Shulman Featured in Recent 3-miNute news clip](#)

[Check Out Our Updated Hoarding Disorder Video Archive Webpage!](#)

[Samson Shulman Podcast Interview with Jonathan Schwartz: Embezzler to The Stars](#)

[Mr. Shulman Quoted About Worldwide Shoplifting Trends In Recent International Online 'zine](#)

[Mr. Shulman's Appearance on T.D. Jakes May 12, 2017 Show on Financial Infidelity](#)  
[Mr. Shulman's 90-Minute Hoarding Presentation](#)  
[Mr. Shulman Quoted in Recent Online Article on Shopping While Driving](#)  
[View Unsteal.org Founder Introduce the "Unsteal Box" in TV News Debut](#)  
[Shopping Addiction Featured on NBC's Megyn Kelly Show Tuesday February 27](#)

## UPCOMING SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS & PRESENTATIONS of INTEREST

**Friday January 28, 2022**—Mr. Shulman gives a 6-hour Power Point presentation via Zoom entitled *If Gambling Disorder Is An Addiction, Why Shouldn't Other Behavioral Disorders Be, Too? Understanding & Treating 'Process Addictions'* for CORE Learning, Inc. (Michigan) from 9:30am-4:00pm. \$99 includes 6 CEUs. Register at: [www.corelearninginc.com](http://www.corelearninginc.com)

**Saturday February 26, 2022**—Mr. Shulman gives a 6-hour Power Point presentation via Zoom entitled *If Gambling Disorder Is An Addiction, Why Shouldn't Other Behavioral Disorders Be, Too? Understanding & Treating 'Process Addictions'* for CORE Learning, Inc. (Michigan) from 9:30am-4:00pm. \$99 includes 6 CEUs. Register at: [www.corelearninginc.com](http://www.corelearninginc.com)

**Friday April 22, 2022**—Mr. Shulman gives a 6-hour Power Point presentation via Zoom entitled *Everyday Ethics and Social Worker Ethics: How We Teach Our Kids to Be Honest, How We Live Honestly, and How We Practice Our Social Work Profession with Integrity* for the Genessee Intermediate School District from 8:30am - 3:00pm. Private.

**Tuesday May 3, 2022**—Mr. Shulman gives a free Zoom 90-minute Power Point presentation entitled *How Much Is Enough? Understanding and Treating Hoarding Disorder* at the Royal Oak, MI Public Library from 7:00pm-8:30pm. Free. Register through Royal Oak, library website

**Monday May 9, 2022**—Mr. Shulman gives a free Zoom 90-minute Power Point presentation entitled *How Much Is Enough? Understanding and Treating Hoarding Disorder* at the Troy, MI Public Library from 7:00pm-8:30pm. Free. Register through Troy, MI Library website.

**Wednesday July 6, 2022**—Mr. Shulman gives a free, live 90-minute Power Point presentation entitled *The Five Love Languages: Understanding Yours and Others for Better Relationships* at Bay County, MI Public Library (Sage, MI branch) from 6:00pm - 7:30pm. Free.  
Register at: <https://www.baycountylibrary.org/events/bcls-news-events>

## FACTS, STATS, QUOTES & MORE!

### NEW YEAR'S QUOTES

*Cheers to a new year and another chance to get it right!-- Oprah Winfrey*

*Celebrate what you want more of. -- Tom Peters*

*The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written. We can help write our own story by setting goals. -- Melodie Beattie*

*New Year's Resolution: To tolerate tools more gladly, provided this does not encourage them to take up more of my time. -- James Agate*

*Your success and happiness lies in you. Resolve to keep happy and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties. -- Hellen Keller*



*I think in terms of the day's resolutions, not years.' -- Henri Moore*

*Ring out the false, ring in the true!-- Lord Alfred Tennyson*

*Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better man-- Benjamin Franklin*

*All of us, every single year, we're a different person. I don't think we're the same person all of our lives-- Steven Spielberg*

*And now, we welcome the new year: full of things that have never been -- Rainer Maria Rilke*

## **Request 4 Anonymous & Confidential Excessive Acquisition Study**

Hi Everyone...

In late November 2021, I spoke to May Luu, a researcher from Canada who is interested in understanding your experiences with bringing home too much stuff (for example, compulsive buying, shopping addiction, acquiring things for free). It can be extremely hard to recruit participants for studies, so any help from you would be great. If you want to be part of improving treatments for acquiring too much stuff, you can participate in her online paid study. The study itself takes about 1 hour and you will receive CAD\$13.00 (or equivalent in your local currency) in appreciation.

To see if the study is a good fit for you, you will need to do a 10-15 minute phone screen with May first. If you would like to participate, please send May an email at [hoarding@psych.ubc.ca](mailto:hoarding@psych.ubc.ca)

For more information, here is the study website: <https://psych.ubc.ca/research-participation/why-do-we-buy-understanding-acquiring-study/>

Do you find it hard to resist buying things or bringing home free stuff? Do your friends call you a shopaholic or shopping addict? Do you experience big problems because of the amount of stuff you bring home? Would you like to help improve treatments for bringing home too much stuff? May Luu, a researcher from Canada, would like to hear your experiences through an online paid study. The study itself takes about 1 hour and you will receive CAD\$13.00 (or equivalent in your local currency) in appreciation. To see if the study is a good fit for you, you will need to do a 10-15 minute phone screen with May first. If you would like to participate, please send May an email at [hoarding@psych.ubc.ca](mailto:hoarding@psych.ubc.ca)

For more information, here is the study website: <https://psych.ubc.ca/research-participation/why-do-we-buy-understanding-acquiring-study/>

Social Media (Please note the starred portion at the end must be included in your post for ethical reasons). Do your friends call you a shopaholic or shopping addict? Do you find it hard to resist buying things? Do you experience problems because of your buying?

Share your experiences by taking part in a UBC study on acquiring. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/UBCBuyStudy>

For more info, please email: [hoarding@psych.ubc.ca](mailto:hoarding@psych.ubc.ca)

**\*\*Please note that if you like or comment on this post, this will be visible to others. If you would like your interest in the study to be confidential, message the email address above.**

**SPOTLIGHTS!**  
**OTHER ASSOCIATES ARE DOING GREAT WORK, TOO!**

Contact Mr. Shulman for More Information  
on starting a C.A.S.A. chapter near you!

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**ANNOUNCING THE RECENT LAUNCH OF A NEW  
150-QUESTION ONLINE SHOPLIFTING ASSESSMENT TOOL  
DEVELOPED BY THE SHULMAN CENTER  
WITH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM ADE SOLUTIONS IN METRO-DETROIT.**

*This is a rare and in-depth assessment tool and can be easily accessed online.*

*It takes about 30 minutes to complete*

*and can be used by courts, therapists, and those who have shoplifted.*

*Once the questionnaire is completed and submitted,  
you will receive an immediate one-page summary that tells you*

*how severe a shoplifting problem you have,*

*what type of shoplifter you are,*

*and your risk level for reoffending in the future*

*(low, medium, high, or very high).*

**See: <https://ade.solutions/shoplift.html>**

**Or click here: [Shoplifting Assessment](#)**

**View Mr. Shulman's 2-minute YouTube Video on Shoplifting Addiction:**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7eNcJhwGwc>**

**In 2019 I was contacted by three gentleman from the Baton Rouge and Lafayette, Louisiana area--one from the criminal justice system. one from addiction-recovery treatment centers, and the other specialized in developing online learning courses. They commissioned me to develop four online education programs:a juvenile and an adult shoplifting prevention course; an adult employee theft prevention course; and an adult identity theft prevention course. These four courses have been live online since mid-2020 and a 5th course I developed on effective decision making went live this past month.**

**See course information at:**

**<https://cbtclasses.com/course-registration/>**

**In 2018 I was contacted by Turning Point Justice, Inc. out of Boca Raton, Florida and consulted with them to create an online program to address the epidemic of employee theft--based on my book *Biting The Hand That Feeds* and my counseling with theft offenders. Next, I consulted on and co-created an online shoplifting awareness-prevention program based on my book *Something for Nothing*. Both programs are now available for purchase. The employee theft course is available to individuals but was primarily designed to be marketed to companies and organizations of all kinds. The course has three modules: 1. An introductory course for all employees (incoming and seasoned); 2. A secondary review course for any employee who . has committed a minor infraction of dishonesty in the workplace but who is given a second chance and retains his/her employment; and 3. A special course for any employee who is terminated for employee theft but will be offered a chance to take this course for his/her own reflection and, possibly, to receive leniency. The shoplifting course is available to individuals who may be court-ordered to take it or who may wish to take it voluntarily for self-improvement and, possibly, to receive leniency as well. See course information at: <http://turningpointjustice.com/>**

**Instructions: To request enrollment in an education course by Turning Point Justice, please email: [support@cbtfortheft.com](mailto:support@cbtfortheft.com) and indicate you were referred by The Shulman Center. Please be sure to include your name and phone number for TPJ to get in touch with you.**

I am honored and excited to announce that my 2003 book *Something for Nothing: Shoplifting Addiction and Recovery* has been translated into Japanese was published on July 9, 2019. I received several copies in the mail and it is listed on the Japanese version of Amazon.com! I'll have to brush up on my Japanese! We are discussing a possible trip to Japan later this year to help promote it! Dr. Hiroshi Okuda, a psychiatrist from Japan who helped me get this book published, visited me in Detroit on September 14, 2019. Tina, my wife and the creative director of The Shulman Center, and I hoped to visit Dr. Okuda in northern Japan in April 2020 but this was postponed due to the Covid pandemic. We hope to visit in 2022.

White Collar Crime Support Group  
Meets Online on Zoom Monday Evenings Since 2016  
7 pm ET, 6 pm CT, 5 pm MT, 4 pm PT

**Contact:**

Rev. Jeff Grant, J.D., M.Div., Co-founder/Minister, Progressive Prison Ministries, Inc., Greenwich CT & Nationwide. 203-405-6249, [jgrant@prisonist.org](mailto:jgrant@prisonist.org), Mailing: PO Box 1, Woodbury, CT 06798  
See: [www.prisonist.org](http://www.prisonist.org)

**RECO12.COM**

Weekly Recovery Open Talks Live Online  
(And Recorded for Later Listening)  
See: <https://www.reco12.com/>

Check out new **Unsteal.org** videoclips...  
[Confessions of A Repentant Thief](#)  
[Unsteal Repayment Boxes Now in Stores!](#)  
<http://www.unsteal.org>

Great podcasts by my brother Samson Shulman!  
Interviews with up 'n coming trailblazers  
and their ups 'n downs along their way  
<http://www.hustlesanctuary.com/>  
and his new podcast called Connection Is Magic!  
<https://connectionismagic.com/>

Carrie Rattle, CFP, of Behavioral Cents bought  
Dr. April Benson's Stopping Overshopping Program  
which includes a *guided self help program that is housed on an App called Mentegram.*  
See: <https://www.shopaholicnomore.com/guided-self-help-for-when-the-urge-strikes/>

Sign Up for The Jack Hayes, International Free Quarterly Loss Prevention Newsletter!  
<http://hayesinternational.com/products/the-hayes-report-on-loss-prevention-newsletter/>

Online Course For Shoplifters Helps Them Understand and Stop Stealing  
<http://web.3rdmilclassrooms.com/courses/court/stoplifting#section-top>

**Monthly Articles of Interest**

Click on **blue** hyperlinks  
to view full articles/videos:

**If Only Every Judge Was This Down to Earth!**

**It Only Every Judge Was This Down-to-Earth!**  
*Judge Shares About His Own Mental Health Struggles*

**Ever Hear of Financial Anorexia? It's a Thing!**  
*And It's Not A Solution For Shopaholics!*

**Winter Cleaning Anyone?**  
*Not Motivated?*

*Read This Article on 4 Ways Decluttering Can Save You Money!*

**Looking Forward to Hibernating This Winter? Me, Too, But Beware...**  
*Short Slideshow on How Isolating and Loneliness Harm Our Health*

**Are People Good or Bad? Both Can Be True...**  
*Listen to This 50-Minute Podcast Story from NPR's "Hidden Brain"*

**Self-Talk: Friend or Foe?**  
*Therapist-recommended Techniques To Calm Your Anxious Mind!*

**Just In Time--or Just Like That--for "Sex And The City!"**  
*4 Signs You Have "Main Character Syndrome!" (Like Carrie!)*

**You Want Free Stuff?! You Got It!**  
*The Ancient (and Modern) Art of "Dumpster Diving!"*

**Yes, Another Article on The 5 Love Languages!**  
*Maybe This One Will Finally Click!*

**11 Things You Should Get Rid of Before The End of 2021!**  
*Well... How About in Early 2022?*

**6 Smart Things Super-Organized People Always Do**  
*Well... How About 4 out of 6 Things Messy People Never Do?*

**Here's What to Know--The Good and Bad--About Buy Now, Pay Later Options**  
*Hint: It's Almost Entirely Bad on So Many Levels!*

**An Invisible Addiction?**  
*Gambling Addiction On The Rise (Especially During Covid)!*

**Here's Your Free Online 5-Minute Audio and/or Visual Relaxation**  
*Take A Break! Rejuvenate! Play It One Time, Twice or Eight!*

**Health Habits That Can Backfire!**  
*When Too Much of A Good Thing Becomes A Bad Thing!*

**How To Quit Co-Dependency!**  
*If You're Ready To Start Taking Care of Yourself Instead of Others!*

**5 Ways To Turn Your Brain Off To Help You Get Some Sleep!**  
*At Least One of These Approaches Should Work!*

**The #1 Reason Not to Ever Lie to Your Partner...**  
*It May Not Be Too Late To Implement This Plan!*

**10 Ways Children of Divorce Love Very Differently**  
*My Parents Divorced When I Was 11... I Can So Related To This!*



## This Month's Featured Articles

### HAPPY NEW YEAR 2022?

by  
*Terrence Shulman*

I don't know about you, but I'm ready to put 2021 to bed. While it's been one of my better years for business and helping others--90 new clients, consulting works, and webinars--it's also been a hard year for me personally and--from my perspective--for our country and the world.

A good friend and mentor of mine unexpectedly took her life this past spring, my 82-year old mother passed away on December 13th after a 10-year long-good-bye with Alzheimer's, and my 92-year old uncle--who'd been like a second father to me (since his brother, my father died in 1993) passed away on December 22nd after a year-plus physical and cognitive decline. My nearly 20-year marriage has withered on the vine as we move towards separating early this year and, likely, divorce late this year or the start of next. And two of my best friends' sisters passed away in the last two months as well.

And, finally (?), my 2nd-ranked Michigan Wolverines--I'm a two-time alumnus--barely showed up in The Orange Bowl against the 3rd-ranked Georgia Bulldogs.

While I was hopeful for our country after Joe Biden won the November 2020 presidential election and the Democrats took the Senate and held onto the House, Trump--or at least *Trumpism*--has spread faster and deeper than Covid and may be responsible for as many or more illnesses and deaths. And the year got off to a real bang (figuratively and literally) with the January 6, 2021 attack on our Capitol and on democracy. For a short moment, it looked like the Republicans finally came to their senses and recognized the monster they'd created and enabled... but that was short-lived.

While vaccines have provided hope and safety for over half the country, much of the remaining part of the country is sabotaging their own health and the body politic as a whole. The economy seems to have rebounded but has hit some bumps with the spread of the Omicron variant. Airline flights have been cancelled, schools are again in a wait-and-see mode, and a recurring sense of uncertainty fills the air.

Meanwhile, weather patterns continue to bare down on us, with the heat rising and more extreme storms and events (hurricanes, twisters, and drought-fueled wildfires spread across the lands. And the Build-Back-Better legislation (which would, in part, address climate change and fund environmental policies and programs).

Still, there always are points of light to appreciate in our own lives and in the world even if we must struggle to find them. So, here's my list:

1. I'm still relatively healthy of body, mind and spirit.
2. I still feel a passion for my work and t's my intention to work another 9 years until the end of 2030 when I'm 65 and I feel there is steady and growing acceptance and understanding of compulsive stealing, spending and hoarding and the need for more treatment options for these disorders.
3. My 92-year old stepfather is still relatively healthy.
4. My 17-year old dog Bam Bam is still relatively healthy.
5. My wife and I remain amicable.
6. My recovery seems to be solid.
7. I have a nice home and a working car and good neighbors.
8. I have a large circle of good friends and relatives.
9. My two younger brothers are both moving forward in their lives: one of them just started a new job in the last month and the other is half-way through his master's degree in psychology and has an awesome podcast that is gaining attention.

awesome podcast that is gaining attention.

10. My 20-year old nephew is half-way through his sophomore year at a new college.
11. A good portion of the country and world have been vaccinated and/or are taking other precautions to limit the impact of Covid.
12. A good portion of the country and the world is committed to the truth and democratic principles and is working tirelessly to see that truth, human rights, and democracy prevail.
13. A good portion of the country and the world is committed to making necessary changes to slow climate change and its impacts.
14. A good portion of the country and the world is committed to expanding equality for people of all backgrounds.
15. A good portion of the country and the world is committed to increasing income equality and making the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes.
16. A good portion of the country and the world recognize the importance of religious freedom and tolerance.
17. A good portion of this country's youth and the world's youth show signs of appreciating diversity in all its forms and transforming capitalism so that it has a conscience and works for more and more of us.
18. There is growing awareness--in part through the Internet--that we are all globally connected and what happens in other countries affects us all in some way.
19. Scientific, technological, and medical advancements for the good of all are increasing at light-speed.
20. It's a new year and we can all pray, intend, recommit, and act to be the change we hope to see in the world.

**Forget New Year's Resolutions!  
Try These New Year's Inspired Intentions Instead!**  
*by*  
**Jack Kornfield**

We all know about New Year's resolutions and how short-lived they can be. Consider setting a long-term intention. A long-term intention is also called a vow or dedication. In the forest monastery we would gather before dawn in the candlelit darkness and begin the sonorous morning chanting to dedicate ourselves to loving-kindness and liberation for all. The chants reminded us that awakening is possible whenever we dedicate ourselves to a noble way of life. We would vow to use the support we received as monks for awakening and compassion, for ourselves and for all beings. In these challenging times, amidst the pandemic, climate disruption, calls for social and racial justice, and our own personal challenges, we too can pause, quiet ourselves and dedicate ourselves to our best intentions. Setting a long-term intention is like setting the compass of our heart. No matter how rough the storms, how difficult the terrain, even if we have to backtrack around obstacles, our direction is clear. The fruits of dedication are visible in the best of human endeavors.

At times our dedications are practical: to learn to play the piano well, to build a thriving business, to plant and grow a beautiful garden. But there are overarching dedications as well. We might dedicate our life to prayer, commit ourselves to unwavering truthfulness or to work for world peace. These overarching dedications set the compass of our life, regardless of the outer conditions. They give us direction and meaning.

I heard a story about an inner-city school principal who spent part of her evenings making sandwiches for the homeless. After she finished she would travel around the poorer parts of her neighborhood and distribute them. Even though her day was already full, this evening activity didn't overwhelm her. It actually made her happy. She didn't do it out of guilt, duty, or external pressure. They were hungry. She had food. She shared in a way that made a difference for her. Even when she was rebuffed by those to whom she offered food on the street, she didn't feel rejected or angry, because she wasn't doing it for the acceptance or appreciation. After some time the local media heard what she was doing and printed a story about her. Instantly she became a minor celebrity. Her fellow teachers and friends started sending her money to support her work. Much to their surprise, she sent back the money to everyone with a one-line note that said: "Make your own damn sandwiches!"

said. Make your own damn sandwiches!

When we read something like this it is inspiring. It touches our own innate nobility and courage. But it can also bring up guilt and self-doubt: What about me? Am I doing enough?

It is good to question our own dedication, even if it makes us uncomfortable. To what have we dedicated our life? How deeply do we carry this dedication? Is it time to rededicate our life? We have to be true to our own way.

As you begin the New Year, take some time to sit and quietly reflect. If today you were to set or reaffirm a long-term intention, a vow, your heart's direction, what would it be? It might be as simple as "I vow to be kind." It might be a vow to build a healthy business, establish a truly loving family. It might be an intention to dedicate yourself to the healing or care of others, or to fearlessly express your creativity in the world. Once you have a sense of your long-term dedication, write it down. Then put it someplace where you keep special things. Now, as you go through the year, let it be your compass—your underlying direction—in spite of changing outer circumstances. Let it carry you.

Thomas Merton once advised a frustrated young activist, "Do not depend on the hope of results. . . . you may have to face the fact that your work will be apparently worthless and even achieve no result at all, if not perhaps results opposite to what you expect. As you get used to this idea, you start more and more to concentrate not on the results but on the value, the rightness, the truth of the work itself." By aligning our dedication with our highest intention, we chart the course of our whole being. Then no matter how hard the voyage and how big the setbacks, we know where we are headed.

## How to Quit Co-Dependency

by  
Jodie Oakes

### What is Co-Dependency?

There is a saying that it takes two to tango and co-dependency can be one of the most toxic dances out there. In simple terms; co-dependency is a negative behavior pattern where one person enables another and loses themselves in the process. Co-dependency shows up often in romantic relationships but can also rear its ugly head in any kind of relationship dynamic, including when it comes to family, friendships and even work relationships too.

If you are the co-dependent one then it means that whether consciously or subconsciously you allow the other person to exercise control over you, you always put them first (even at the expense of yourself), and you always seek their approval.

### What does it look like?

If you constantly find yourself struggling to make decisions in your relationships, not being able to identify or verbalize your feelings, valuing the opinions of others consistently and always feeling the swell of self-doubt, not being able to trust yourself and your choices, and always feeling responsible for the needs and behaviors of others then you could be a prime example of co-dependent.

### Where does it come from?

Co-dependent behavior can come from a lot of places, most notably it is behavior born from fear. If you have abandonment issues or are afraid of being on your own, then you may be willing to do whatever it takes to stay in a tangled relationship – even if it means losing yourself.

Co-dependency can also come from low self-esteem and being in abusive situations in life. It can also come from a place where boundary setting is a challenge and people-pleasing is a form of compulsive behavior.

### Is it all bad?

Not all co-dependency is bad. Any healthy relationship will sway between people needing to lean and needing to be leaned on. Co-dependency can become hugely problematic when it is highly one-sided or when the person you are entangled in is abusive, has any form of addiction, or is just in general something you consistently seek out and feed off as it is a negative cycle to be in.

## How to deal?

### **Reflection**

One of the first steps to quitting co-dependent behavior is recognizing that you are following this pattern in the first place. Taking a good hard look at ourselves is a huge challenge, but it's time to breathe deep, be honest with yourself and spend some time reflecting on your current and former relationships, along with the relationships you were privy to as a child.

### **Therapy**

Therapy or counseling can be an amazing way to effectively deal with self-esteem issues and other avenues that lead to co-dependency. Therapists are highly knowledgeable and trained in helping you to unpack certain behaviors that aren't serving you.

### **Break it Down**

A major thing to understand right now is that not all of you is co-dependent, there is a part inside that wants to make a change. Once you understand this, you are able to recognize that you have the tools needed to break old thought patterns. A good tip is to spend a little time in the evening going back over your day and noticing where and when you gave your power away. Make a mental tweak to rewrite the scene of what you could have done differently to get that power back. This doesn't come from a place of frustration or feeling bad, but as an acknowledgement that practice makes perfect and mental awareness can lead to physical change.

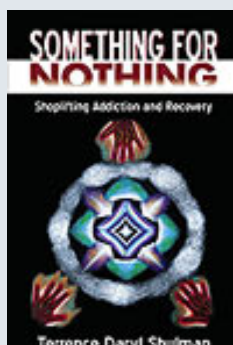
### **Small Steps**

Big behavior patterns are hard to change overnight, it's the small steps that lead us down the path to where we are supposed to be. Start by trying to introduce small changes into your daily routine such as practicing saying no to the small things and seeing that this doesn't mean an automatic loss of everything, trying to reconnect with your own intuition, spending time planning a date night for yourself, and even things like reading this article on co-dependency are all small steps that all add up to taking a life leap.

*Jodie Oakes is a seasoned writer and content creator with continuously itchy feet. She can often be found traveling the globe with her camper-van, dog, and surfboard in tow. Jodie is a travel, luxury, and wellness brand specialist with a degree in Imaginative Writing. She is a voracious reader who loves poetry, wine and cheese, and has a Lord of the Rings tattoo. Sorry. Not Sorry.*

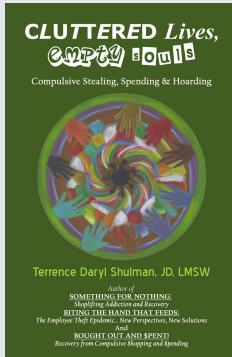
**HAVE A SAFE MONTH & NEW YEAR, AND REMEMBER: LIFE IS WHAT WE MAKE OF IT!**

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