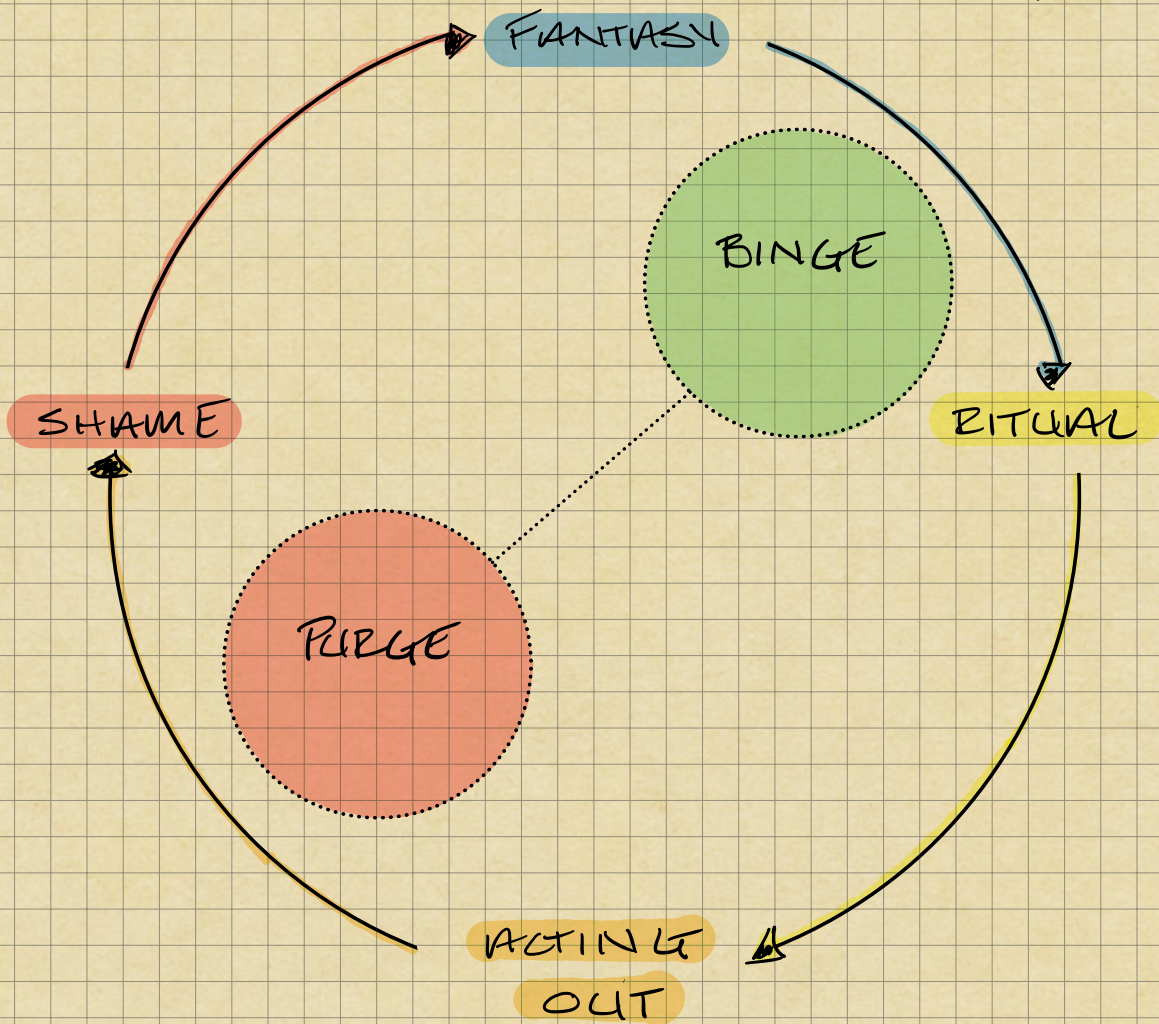


THE ADDICTION CYCLE



This model answers the question we most often ask in our shame:
WHY DO I KEEP DOING THIS?

FANTASY

- x This is imagination in its most unhealthy state. Often, the myth of nostalgia can "take us back" to a time when things were better or less complicated.
- x Sexually speaking, the fantasies can be bound up with our earliest sexual encounters. Triggers such as music, social media, or location can serve as **FANTASY TRIGGERS.**
- x The fantasy transaction is a form of mental escapism. It often begins when there are no options for physically acting out. In this way, it can feel hidden, harmless, and healthy.
- x The Bible discusses taking every thought captive and making it obey CHRIST.
This is a biblical acknowledgement that
 - 1** WE ARE NOT OUR THOUGHTS and
 - 2** BAD THOUGHTS DON'T MAKE US BAD PEOPLE → THEY MAKE US PEOPLE.

RITUAL

- x In this phase of the cycle, the mental begins to manifest in the physical. This allows the participant to see, perhaps for the first time, what's been entertained at a cognitive level.
- x Engaging in ritual is the first, big stop sign in the cycle. A great phrase to use in this phase of the cycle is: I'M DOING IT AGAIN. After this step in the cycle, a person's chance of interrupting its completion drops by a significant percentage.
- x The ritual, usually, has a long and practiced history. This is to say that it won't feel ritualistic as much as normal behavior. It is important, while attempting to divorce the cycle, to invite others in to your life-rhythms. Others can see what we cannot.

ACTING

OUT

- x This is the step that seals the shame. The fast-moving train has reached a speed nearly too fast for the brakes. Will gives way to want and the ability to think rationally about action/consequence is almost non-existent.
- x As the binge/purge leads a person around the cycle two critical and unfortunate errors occur:

↳ **1) SATISFACTION DECREASES** ↓

↳ As novelty transforms to normalcy, the rush requires higher levels of **risk**.

↳ **2) BEHAVIOR INCREASES** ↑

↳ Small steps begin to stack into large, previously bounded, leaps.

SHAME

- x The Addiction Cycle's secret weapon, shame shows up with a vengeance. The most dangerous aspect of this portion of the cycle is that it takes the issue internal again.
- x The shame, just like the fantasy, thrives in this hidden environment. It grows in the darkness. And, in that darkness, it begins to drive. Like a strong push in the back, it does its job by forcing the participant to seek relief.
- x Relief arrives in the form of an internal detachment from the external reality. As an aside, this is how this cycle leads to the byproduct of ISOLATION. Fantasy appears to be relief. In the end, however, it's just the start of another round trapped in the cycle.