

The Issue with Stigmas

Addiction and Recovery in Today's Society

By

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Part I
Research

Society as a whole has set certain stigmas surrounding addicts and the notion of being addicted. If you have been conditioned to picture addicts in a certain light, that is exactly what will come to mind when you hear the word. Therefore, if you can't fully grasp the concept about the struggles of an addict, it is easy to mock. More often than not, if you're trying to research addiction, many photos of a disheveled person drinking alone or shooting up in a sketchy area will pop up. These images are the cold truth about what it can be like to currently be an addict, but this is no longer the reality for an individual who is recovering. There are many artists like Nan Goldin and Annie Leibovitz that have at one point immersed themselves into drug culture but have since taken themselves out. Some have even began fighting big pharmaceutical companies. It's also important to note that the stereotypical image of an addict discussed above does not always reign true. Addicts are often very good at hiding their addiction. The art world in the past has helped contribute to this view on addicts but times are changing and so are some of their perceptions of addiction. The goal of my senior project is to help people understand the way they have been viewing addicts all these years has become outdated.

When we first hear the word addict, our minds tend to veer towards people with substance abuse addictions. Unfortunately, as a society, we don't fully understand addiction, yet most speak out like they do. If you turn to someone's social media, they might post about being an "alcoholic" because they went out & drank a few too many, or you can read a tweet joking about being a "crackhead". The irony of this is, if we were labeled an alcoholic or a crackhead by someone else, we would be offended. Unless you are an addict or are a recovering addict you will never truly know what it's like to be

one and have to listen to everyone else's jokes and misconceptions about you. When you are recovering, you have come to terms with your addiction, to a certain extent, and every day you strive to work towards bettering yourself.

In order to fully understand the process of recovery, you also need to understand what comes with being an addict. The term addict is thrown around far too often. There is a difference between being a substance abuser and being an addict. An abuser is someone that may overuse a substance just to blow off steam (Sheff, 79). David Sheff is an author and advocator for helping addicts and alcoholics get the help they need. Not only has he immersed himself in research on the subject, he has experienced it first-hand while his son battled his addictions. He says you become an addict when you need that substance just to function. There are three parts to an addiction; the mind, the physical and the spiritual or emotional. The mind is where the obsession to use comes from. The mind sets the physical craving into motion, which is when you continue to use. The amount used will continue to increase because your body forms a tolerance. The mind and physical states are just symptoms of the addiction. The real issue lies in the spiritual or emotional state of being (Interviewee, 2018).

The reason addicts use is to fill or drown out whatever the real issue is with what you have become obsessed with, which would be your drug of choice. This obsession can't fix the real cause of the problem. When you are recovering, you not only have to fight the physical and mental cravings, you have to fix your emotional state if you ever truly want to recover. This is where something like the 12-step program would come in. 12-Step programs are so successful because they allow addicts to open up and share

stories with people just like them. In fact, many of the people interviewed for the second part of this paper, knew they could trust that their identities would not be revealed whilst sharing their knowledge. The steps are there for you to reflect on why you started using and what you can change about yourself to remain clean. Once you start to do so, the obsession and physical craving will be lifted. This does not mean that an addict never thinks about using, especially during bad times, but it does get easier for them to realize that the life of an addict is not one they want for themselves nor the people they love (Interviewee, 2018).

There has been a debate on whether or not addiction is a disease for a very long time and it may never end. Unless you are immersed into the world of an addict, you will probably always have the mentality that an addict chooses to use. Although they may have chosen to use that first time, the decision to continue to use is out of their hands. If your argument is that they should have never used in the first place, I urge you to look at when you first started experimenting with drugs and alcohol if you have. "The median age of initial drug use is fourteen, and 90 percent of those who become addicted begin using before the age of eighteen." (Sheff, 12). You could have just as easily been susceptible to becoming an addict. There are many other factors that go into calling addiction a disease. It is not just something addicts say to make their condition seem lesser than what it is.

There are genetic and psychological factors that can play a huge role in addiction. It is important to note that although the environment can influence how much a person drinks or uses, it is not inherently responsible for why someone becomes an addict. In *Under the Influence*, a book that breaks down common misconceptions about

alcoholics, Milam and Ketcham explain that some factors that can lead to an addiction are a person's metabolism, heredity and even ethnicity.

An alcoholic's metabolism can lead to their addiction through an enzyme in the liver malfunctioning. The act of drinking excessively can indeed harm the body, but the cells can be altered way before the person starts to drink heavily. The body trying to breakdown the chemical acetaldehyde into acetate is a much slower process for alcoholics. The buildup of this chemical can form a compound that can react like opiates and interfere with the opiate receptors in the brain, causing the person to feel the need to drink (Milam and Ketcham, 32).

When it comes to heredity, a lot of professionals will admit that although "genes may influence the alcoholic's reaction to alcohol", they don't explain the alcoholic's behavior (Milam and Ketcham, 36). Researcher Donald Goodwin conducted a study that looked at the children of alcoholic parents but were not raised by them as well as children who had biological parents that were not alcoholics but were raised by non-relatives that were. He found that the children that were the product of alcoholic parents were four times more likely to become an alcoholic themselves even without knowing their alcoholic parents.

Milam and Ketcham also go on to discuss that the ethnicity of addict can play an important role in more ways than one. Certain ethnic groups are able to breakdown alcohol more quickly and easier than others which also triggers the response to alcohol. For example, Orientals have higher levels of acetaldehyde than Caucasians do after drinking alcohol which can explain why they do not drink as much or often as Caucasians. How long a group has been exposed to alcohol also correlates to the rate

of alcoholism within the group. The rates of the alcoholism within these groups will both change if interbreeding does occur. (Milam and Ketcham, 39)

Hormones, genes and enzymes only begin to scratch the surface of addiction, especially considering any one change in them can alter someone's chances of becoming an addict. "Anyone who takes enough of a drug to cause severe structural and functional changes in the brain can become addicted. But most people who become addicted do so because their brains are different *before* they use drugs, not *because* they use drugs." (Sheff, 95) On top of this, when drugs start to change the chemicals in the brain, the act of using can in fact become involuntary.

It comes as no surprise that a lot of people in the art world have dealt with addiction. Artists like Willem De Kooning and Jackson Pollock struggled with addictions themselves and although the finished works can be viewed as a depiction of their minds at the time, the end products were not distinctly about addiction. For instance, Pollock's drip paintings are messy and chaotic which some correlate to his life of being an addict (Fuhr, 2017). Photographers like Annie Leibovitz and Nan Goldin have works that centered around drug culture. In fact, they were both addicts themselves. Leibovitz and Goldin were both coke addicts, but Goldin also mixed her cocaine with heroin (Davies, 2017). Not only was the drug scene part of their content, they themselves became part of that world. Annie Leibovitz is best known for the work she did for Rolling Stone magazine which ironically almost destroyed her. Leibovitz followed The Rolling Stones throughout their tours in the early 70s. She



had also shot portraits of John Lennon and Yoko Ono. All of those celebrities were big into the party and drug culture. Goldin's *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* is one of her more famous photo series that mainly focuses on the drug culture she immersed herself in. She had photographed people smoking, drinking and engaging in other intimate activities. The 70s and 80s in the United States was a huge time for drugs, even with the "just say no" campaigns, which evidently is when their works are from. It makes sense why photos from then would focus so heavily on the lowest part of addiction and although their intention may have just been to show what it was like back then, only showing images like theirs can slightly glorify or oversimplify the issue. Not all addicts can hit what we know to be "rock bottom", as this is just one of the few stigmas that surround the world of addicts. Popular campaigns like D.A.R.E also around this time did not help with the idea and stigmas that addicts are low lives or evil.

As mentioned in the introduction, Nan Goldin has since been using her time to organize protests at the Guggenheim Museum and Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. She started a group known as P.A.I.N., which stands for Prescription Addiction Intervention Now. Both museums receive large amounts of financial help from the Sackler family. The Sackler family owns a pharmaceutical company known as Purdue Pharma that has been largely responsible for the opioid crisis we are currently experiencing since they are the creators of OxyContin. Goldin, and many of her followers, believe that the family should be in jail for aiding and quite honestly almost supporting addiction even if what they are doing is legal.

It is important to show the effects of drugs on people but, on the other hand, it should be just as important to make or show work that relates to the process of how an

addict's life has changed since getting clean. Not everyone goes to rehab or a 12-step program. Whether an addict chooses to quit cold turkey or gets help for their addiction is entirely up to them, but the day to day life will always be a process and more people need to see what that is like.

As a society, we continue to shame and blame addicts up until the point of that addiction winning and killing them. We make it impossible for them to reconnect with society and then we are left in utter disbelief when the addiction goes so far that it kills the addict. We have mourned the loss of countless celebrities and artists even though there was no conversation about their wellbeing prior and yet still, barely one after. This is due to the unfortunate fact that we can only see the person that the drug has turned someone into. For instance, photographer Les Baker, much like Goldin and Leibovitz,



uses drugs as content for her project INEBRI-NATION. He captured portraits of people while they were peaking on a certain substance and then later edited the picture so images of the drug they were on were masked over their faces. This was done to show the effects of each of the drugs on the brain (Baker, 2014).

Although it is unclear if these people are addicts, the main focus is still on the drug. The idea around this project is a great conversation piece when referring to the effect of drugs short term but not long term. Photographing an addict at their lowest point does not help us when a conversation is not started after the fact about what can be done to help or what we can do to change this view we have of addicts. Photographs like this should not be eliminated or completely scrutinized, however they do just add to

the stigma. At this point the world knows what it looks like to be on drugs, the conversation needs to shift to accommodate to those really struggling.

Not only do we need to change the way we view addicts, we also need to change the way we treat them. If “everything we think we know about addiction is wrong” (Hari, 2015), then the way we go about helping and treating addicts is wrong as well. During the Ted Talk given by Johann Hari, he discusses how in the 1970s, Bruce Alexander conducted the experiment known as Rat Park. Rat Park was filled with food and activities that multiple rats could enjoy. In Rat Park, there would also be regular water as well as laced water. Since the rats were put in an environment that enabled them to form connections and enjoy themselves, they were not drinking the laced water as much or as often as they would when in the cage alone. As a society, we tend to push away the addicts in our lives. We make it harder for people to reconnect by shunning them and punishing them for their disease, making it harder for them to stay clean. “The opposite of addiction is not sobriety; the opposite of addiction is connection.” (Hari, 2015)

The war on drugs is not something that will be fixed overnight but many places around the world are trying different approaches to deal with addicts. Hari mentions in his talk that in Portugal in 2000, 1% of the population was addicted to heroin. Realizing that the system we have created makes it harder for addicts to stay clean, especially if they served time, they decided to try a new approach. Their first step was to decriminalize all drugs. Then, they took all the money and resources they put into the prison system and instead used it for helping addicts find jobs as well as find the help they need to get and remain clean. The idea was that instead of creating an

environment that isolated the addicts, they were being welcomed and offered the means to really change their lives. In 2015, the percentage of people in Portugal that were addicted to heroin went down by 50%. (Hari, 2015)

Artists, like Steve Lambert, have been creating art or resources that help with the issue of the war against drugs here in the states. Lambert in particular has created the Center for Artistic Activism which is “a research and training institute dedicated to artistic activism.” (Lambert, 2009). An approach recently taken around the world including in the states are safe or supervised injection sites. Like Portugal, cities across the United States and the world have recognized the horrors amongst the heroin community and have decided enough is enough. These sites provide addicts with medical attention in case of a possible overdose and clean needles to stop the spread of disease. The idea is to not only help addicts get the health services and attention they need but to reduce the death rates among them. They also make it easier for them to reconnect with society. Cities including Seattle and Philadelphia are underway of getting these safe spaces up and running (Allyn, 2018). More recently the Mayor of New York, Bill De Blasio, is pushing to bring them to NYC. The idea of safe injection sites is part of a bigger philosophy known as harm reduction.

Harm reduction is a social justice movement that focuses on the rights of addicts. There is no one way on how this policy goes about helping addicts but, the main idea is to “reduce the negative consequences associated with drug use.” (Harm Reduction Site). Harm Reduction Coalition not only helps individual addicts, but communities effected by significant degrees of drug use and abuse. Since addicts are often left voiceless, HRC does its best to make sure every individual has their chance to get the

health attention they need. The practices used to maintain harm reduction not only include safe injection sites but the opportunity to address the reasons why someone is using and managing their use. There are many principles that make HRC possible, most focusing on understanding that drug addiction is very real, and we need to give addicts a voice and an opportunity to change. This is not done by minimizing the individual or the dangers that come from drug use.

Even though it is a lot easier to cut an addict out, it's clear that this approach is not working. As mentioned previously, in order to understand a recovering addict, you must understand what it's like for addicts. If addicts are not given the support system they need, they will never know what it's like to recover. Recovering from an addiction is no walk in the park, but it is a much better alternative than what many addicts are given. It is important that we not only encourage addicts to get better but to stop depicting them, and recovering addicts, as how we do now. Changing how we treat them is only part of the problem. The idea here is not to make people believe in safe injection sites or decriminalizing drugs, even though these approaches can help, the idea is to open the public's eyes to see that we are part of the problem. It's helpful that artists like Nan Goldin, even though their past work may not support their current position, share what it's really like to be an addict. Annie Leibovitz has mentioned before that immersing herself in that world almost destroyed her. Having artists like Les Baker show the truth behind the use of drugs and addiction can and should still be talked about since we collectively should not overlook the short-term effects. We just need to make sure we don't blame addicts for the long-term effects.

Part II

Project Production, Spring 2019

As stated in Part I of this thesis, the main idea is to try to shed a different light on addicts and alcoholics. Instead of viewing this disease from an outsider's perspective, I wanted to give the people who are suffering a voice. Aside from all the ways prior research has shown that we can change the way we treat addicts; the first part is to understand them. It may be cliché; however, you really need to put yourself in their shoes to even slightly grasp at what's going on in their daily lives, even after they have started the recovery process.

The main medium focused on in Part I was photography. Photographers like Annie Liebowitz and Nan Goldin were immersed in drug culture back when it was more normalized. They were able to show us the side of addiction they knew and wanted the world to see. Their works, as breathtaking as they may be, are outdated and even they themselves know that. Nan Goldin makes it a point to show her justified hatred toward big pharmaceutical companies and the Sackler Family. Although this time in history is often referenced to as the "Just Say No" era, there were many that still did glorify drugs. Over a short period of time, this quickly shifted over to shaming those who, even if they once used drugs socially, became addicted. The goal of my project was not to glorify or to shame, but to get the general public just to understand. Even if you find the strength to remain clean and sober, the addiction will forever loom over you. It gets easier, but it never goes away.

Since I decided to mainly analyze photography, I felt it was the best medium that I stick to for part of this senior project although it didn't start out that way. For a while, I struggled with how I was going to portray the life of an addict or recovering addict without dwelling too much on the substances themselves. On top of that, I needed to

stray away from photographs of people either using drugs, being around drugs or just going about their daily routines to try to symbolize recovery. The first two options would focus on the exact opposite of the imagery I wanted to create, and the last option would not connect to my thesis at all. On top of all this, I repeatedly had said going into this project I did not just want pictures on the wall. I knew working with photography was one of my strong suits however I had



never thought about having work up in a gallery before. Even though this major focused on multiple different types of mediums, I felt photographs would be seen as not “new media” enough. For a while, I dabbled around with the idea of using a projector to show my photos in a different way, but I struggled with the concept. There was no connection I could see when it came to addiction and using a projector, it just seemed techier and more in line with the concept of what a lot of people think new media is. In the past when asked what new media is, I try to convey that it includes different mediums, but many fixate on video or programming. After much time, consideration, and trial and error, I decided to throw out the projector idea and use mirrors. It took some time, but I finally came around to the notion that I had to embrace what I was best at.

Mirrors are often used in photography to show reflection. I wanted the audience viewing my photographs to feel like they are looking through the mirror themselves. This

then can put the viewer in the shoes of the addict or alcoholic instead of having an outside perspective on someone else's life. Even though my thesis research does include facts about heroin, I decided to stick to using only alcohol and pills as subjects since both are legal, to some degree, and obviously more accessible. Focusing in on alcohol and drugs that are legal also helps puts into perspective for the audience that I'm trying to do everything possible to stray away from blaming the users of the substances.

Each photograph was either shot through a mirror or a reflective surface. In some photographs, the reflections and substances are more obvious whereas others are the exact opposite. In some of the less obvious photographs, the viewer must spend more time trying to figure out what the subject matter is. For instance, in one photograph there is a wine bottle reflected through a sink faucet but unless one takes the time, they won't understand what they're looking at right away. Much like addiction itself, problems are not always obvious, so it was important for that to be relayed in my work.

Sometimes a person can become hooked on prescription medication after enduring a serious injury but unless you really know what to look for, you might not see the signs that they're becoming addicted to a substance they think they need. The reason all the photographs are in black in white is to maintain a timeless feel. Addiction is not a new topic of discussion nor is it something that will be fixed overnight. Also, color can often dominate a picture, as it's usually what draws people in. The idea is that the audience really pays attention to the photos to see what exactly is going on. If they were in color, they may be glanced over and not seen for what they are trying to

represent. Viewers feel like they should engage more with a black and white photograph to try to find some deeper meaning.

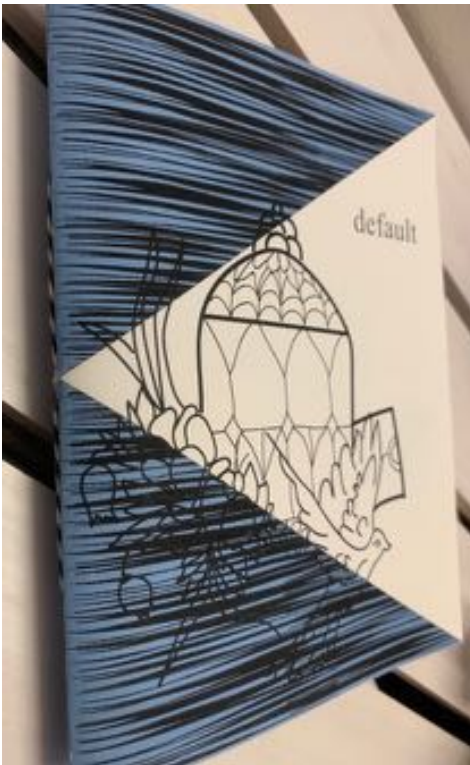
Choosing the sizes to print the images and what paper to use was a much longer process than I had expected. At first, the photos were all blown up to 8 ½ x 11. Having them printed out in front of me made it easier to see which photos I felt were the most powerful however having them that big did not look right. They looked awkward inside of the white frames I had purchased and did not add to the subtlety I was trying to achieve. The frames I used were purchased on amazon, but when I bought them, I thought it may just be a trial run. I was open to returning them if I did not like having the different size variations. After printing out the photographs to see the different sizes, I determined that blowing up the strongest photographs was my best bet and printing the less subtle ones as the smaller versions. The frames came with a mat however they were off white and did not look good on top of the photographs, so I decided to place the photographs in the middle of the page as a self-made border.

Since the frames came with glass, having a glossy paper behind it made the paper harder to see as well as add unwanted air bubbles between the two. The Epson Ultra-Premium Matte paper chosen may not have made the photos pop as much as the glossy, but overall, they looked much better displayed. The matte paper also added to the timeless feel since the black and white comes out duller and adds less depth to the picture.

While sticking to the idea of putting the audience in the addict's shoes, just having photographs displayed on a wall in a gallery did not feel very natural. In order to correct this, I chose to domesticate the space with a table, a chair and a mirror. The

idea was to make the space look like a vanity you would find in someone's home. Instead of framed pictures of happy families surrounding this area, you're drawn in to these mysterious black and white images with no friendly faces in sight. This also allows the viewer to make their own inference on whether or not the installation is meant to signify someone that inhabits this space or if they themselves would embody this role even if the latter wasn't my original intention.

Placed on the desk is the second part of this project. The book, *Default*, explores the mind of recovering addicts. The style is similar to a quote book you would find in any



home goods store however the quotes are from members of the program. The program is the term recovering addicts use when referencing Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous. Maintaining the anonymity of the people is so important to this community that although I typed up the synopsis I wanted them to fill out, I myself don't even know their identities. I reached out to someone I have known for a very long time to ask their fellow peers to participate in my project if they felt comfortable. I wrote up a few questions for this person to give to

those that participated asking them to share their journey or, any advice they would give to someone that is recovering. Included alongside each quote is either an illustration or a photograph that I have produced. In the quote books you find in stores, each have their own illustrations or pictures to go along with the quotes and I felt I should maintain

that same theme. With the topic being so sensitive and personal, handmade illustrations or photographs were the best route to take. This is also why the books are bound with twine instead of perfect bound or stapled. The perfect bind can make a book look much more factory made which is not the direction that any other part of this project has taken.

The name, *Default*, was inspired by one of the first quotes I had received in regard to this project. When I asked one of the participants about their experience with drugs and alcohol, they responded with “You know how the default font for Microsoft was Times New Roman? Alcohol is my default.” Above any other quote, this stuck with me the most. I believe this is due to the fact that the interviewee tried to relate something they’re struggling with to the outside world. Not only did default become the name of the book, it’s also the last quote inside the book as well. I found it was important to include the quote at the end of the book because the word default can serve more than one meaning. The reason that the book is only black, white and blue is because during my research, I discovered that the color for addiction recovery is light blue. Much like those with autoimmune diseases or other serious illnesses such as cancer, a color is associated to addiction recovery mostly for representation during events like fundraisers or walks. Many people also get tattoos using these specific colors. Having light blue be the only color besides black and white seemed like the best design choice and also made the book more intimate. Every design choice made held some significance.

I had drawn at least 10 different covers for this book before I landed on the bird breaking free from the cage. I did not want the cover to be so easily related to addiction,

but I wanted it to have some significance. I tried to use illustrations of nature to symbolize growth, but those designs did not feel right to me. Aside from researching the color associated with addiction recovery, I also looked up symbols of recovery. Some symbols were much blunter than others. To my surprise, a bird breaking free from a cage is a very popular tattoo choice for those that have overcome an addiction. For other personal reasons, I have a bird breaking free from a cage tattooed on my back. Given the fact that this project is centered around being personal and intimate, recreating my tattoo for the cover of this book was by far my favorite part of this process. I thoroughly enjoyed the idea that I got to put a little bit of myself into my work on a different level, even if the meaning behind mine did not have to do with addiction recovery.

During senior critique, I was given feedback on both the photographs and my books. Even though I left with solid advice on what last minute touches I should implement, my primary focus was to make the books feel less over-drawn. Initially, I only had one or two photographs in the book that were not also being displayed so the book seemed as if it was an entirely different project. Secondly, I was advised to pick a few themes I felt best fit the category of the book and use those throughout. I decided that adding photographs that were also on the wall would make the book tie together with the rest of the project, so I added a few more. I also decided to use a halftone effect that made the images look somewhat pixelated. This was more of an aesthetic choice, as the edited photographs seemed to flow better next to hand drawn illustrations. For the most part, a lot of the illustrations stayed the same, but I simplified them as much as possible. Quote books tend to keep the same theme throughout

however since each quote was from a different person with a different experience, I felt each illustration should be unique to them and their quote.

Printing these books was probably the most excruciatingly tedious part of this project as a whole. I wanted the books to not only be sturdy but also be high quality. Professor Kim recommended Hahnemühle smooth Photo Rag Duo Matte FineArt InkJet paper. Much to my dismay, the ink jet printer does not print double sided, so I had to sit by it for hours printing each book page by page, making sure the pages were facing the right way & aligned with each other.

I could not have been happier with the final execution of this project as a piece in The Passage Gallery. Although ten copies of the book were made, only three were placed out so that the space would feel more like a home. The reason displaying three was chosen instead of one however was so that more than one person can enjoy the piece at a time as I had a feeling the gallery would be packed opening night. Interestingly enough, a lot of what was shown was added as last-minute touches, so the audience could really get the full experience. The tablecloth, lights and other



decorations really made it feel like you weren't in a gallery space. I gathered some knick knacks from my own desk, so I could add even more of a personal touch. The quote displayed on the wall was one from a sound piece I decided to omit from the final piece. Since that entire area was mine and the table was placed in the corner, the rest of the wall felt bare. Adding the quote to a brick wall background made the space feel more cohesive to being in a domesticated space.

The first piece of feedback I received regarding the finished piece were from two professors that knew the most about this project. Of all the feedback I received, what these two men had to say meant the most to me and that's not just being said because they're the ones that are going to read this thesis. If you ask anyone what they think of your work, regardless of if they like it or not, they are probably going to give you good feedback in the moment as to not be rude. Before the opening, I happened to look over towards my piece where I saw Professor McKay and Professor Kim admiring my work. I overheard the two of them discussing how much they liked how it came out and noted how hard I worked. To hear that others, enjoy your work when they don't know you're around is such an incredible feeling because it's genuine. A friend of mine in the program also said that someone he knew asked if I had used stock photographs because they looked so good. I'm not sure if I can see them as stock photos but I appreciate the compliment.

When my family came to see the projects, they absolutely loved it. However only two people have an art background, so they viewed it from a different perspective. My mom had asked my aunt, who was a professional photographer for many years, how my photographs were from an artistic stand point. My aunt responded with how much

she loved them and how well shot they were. Some of the photographs were definitely stronger than others but receiving feedback from an artistic standpoint of someone that had no idea what my project was going to look like before stepping into the gallery was very heartwarming.

Given the opportunity to expand on this work, I would focus more on the photography. I never gave myself a limit to how many photographs I would take over the course of this year. If I thought of an idea or a new concept on how to shoot, I would set it up and do it. I'm pleased with the photos that I wound up using in the show, but I would definitely enjoy going back and playing around with different concepts. This could include using different mirrors or using other kinds of reflective surfaces or even focusing on different addictions other than alcohol and pills. Going back and doing research on other addictions like gambling or sex would allow me to have the same knowledge I have on alcohol and drug addictions which would spark new ideas with my photography. In hindsight, this would also allow me to be able to try to get more quotes for my book however, if that were the case, I would want to have a second addition and third addition of the book. Often, drugs and alcohol are lumped together, and I think giving the other two addictions their own book would be the best option.

Overall, I am incredibly pleased with how this project turned out. The process was anything but easy but it's something I will always be grateful for. I started off this project wanting to shed a different light on the way the general public perceives addicts and alcoholics. There were times during my research where I felt this project would never get done since no one had ever done it before. It's truly inspiring that some of the artists I have researched, although they may have been part of the drug world at one

point, have changed their views to try to help those in need. Coming up with a project that those who inspired me would be proud of in the end was nerve-wracking. Choosing a topic that is usually glorified or oversimplified in the mainstream media is no easy task, but I am proud to say I think I've more accurately portrayed it in the best way I could. I am not an addict, but I am more susceptible to becoming one than most people I know. It was my greatest honor to make a book for people who struggle with addiction even though they've been in recovery for years. They wanted their voice heard and I hope they feel that has been achieved.

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