

More praise for *Leaving Drug and Alcohol Addictions for Good*

“I know a lot of us with years of recovery who are still struggling with sleep, mood, diet, etc., and I think biochemical restoration is this missing link. I’m thrilled to have this resource to direct people to.”

Jordan Fouts, 15 years in recovery,
Senior Consultant at Philanthropy Expert LLC

“This book is important. It tells how a person or family struggling with addictions can find success working with a combination of biochemical repair and a standard mental/emotional program for addictions. And it gives them a message to not give up in looking for help.”

William Billica, MD, FAAFP,
Practitioner at Tri-Life Health PC

LEAVING DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADDICTIONS FOR GOOD

**HOW BIOCHEMICAL RESTORATION RADICALLY
IMPROVES YOUR CHANCES OF RECOVERY**

JOSEPH EISELE, CACIII

IN CONVERSATION WITH SHARON R. MONTGOMERY



FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

Leaving Drug and Alcohol Addictions for Good: How Biochemical Restoration Radically Improves Your Chances of Recovery

Published by Paradise Lane Publishing
Fort Collins, Colorado

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ISBN: 978-0-692-18335-9

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SELF-HELP / Addiction

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Printed in the United States of America.



*To my wife, Donna, and my children, Lindsey, Andrew,
and Lauren, who have been my biggest support.
To Bill Corbett, my very first sponsor, and dear friend.*

*To all in the 12-step and other recovery communities,
sisters and brothers who have walked this path together
throughout the years, and to all those who are still
struggling to find recovery. Don't give up!*

*“I know I will both witness and tangle with the
deepest part of the night, until the night is done
and the sky turns platinum with the dawn.”*

—Amy Dickinson

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PREFACE

THIS BOOK IS THE RESULT of many conversations I had with Sharon, as I explained to her my approach for treating addiction and the importance of biochemical restoration.

I was also telling her my own story of addiction—total, severe, desperate, sinking so low that suicide seemed the only option.

In the process of telling her my story, Sharon revealed her own—of the battle she was currently engaged in with her son, and his serious addiction.

We realized that we could share with readers not only experience but empathy on three levels: the addicted person, their loved ones, and the healthcare professionals who support them through their journey. My role as a professional in addiction recovery and my personal experience as an addicted person, together with Sharon's pain and struggles as a family member searching for answers, offer you, our reader, a more complete perspective on what it takes to get to recovery.

We literally do feel your pain—as the person struggling with addiction, or the person fighting to keep a loved one from total destruction, or the professional whose life work and passion is to help others recover. Through this conversation-style book, we hope you gain the answers and direction you're looking for. Have hope. With help, you can get through this and thrive!

INTRODUCTION

AFTER BECOMING AN ACCREDITED addiction specialist, I eventually opened up InnerBalance Health Center as a place to bring both addicted individuals and their loved ones to where they needed to be—physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually—in order to reach and maintain full recovery.

In my experience, what was missing from many addiction-treatment programs was the critical component of biochemical restoration. Bringing the metabolic system into balance is absolutely essential to full recovery, and various metabolic tests can also play a role in keeping individuals off the addiction train in the first place.

If you or a loved one are dealing with addiction, you should, of course, always seek the advice of professionals. This book is not intended as a substitute for doing so. Rather, it is another resource for you and your team to consider as you make your way on your journey to full recovery.

PART ONE



Use and Abuse

CHAPTER 1

Reaching Out

“It wasn’t until I came across the term ‘biochemical restoration’ that I realized it could bridge the gap between addiction and full recovery.”

— JOE

- SHARON -

I MET JOE AT THE END of my frayed and unraveling rope.

I had just realized that my twenty-two-year-old son, Lorin, was probably an addict. I didn’t know how deeply, or for how long, this...*thing* had been burrowing into his life, but whatever it was, it left me reeling and on high alert. His selfish, withdrawn, bizarre behavior attested to it. Even allowing for the possibility of depression, I knew there was something more.

This was chemically driven. I felt it in my gut.

I was bitter, tired, resentful, and downright heartsick when I opened up to Laura, our family therapist. My husband, Micah, was as worried as I was, although he felt we should just leave Lorin alone and maybe he would grow up. Grow out of it, with any luck. But I needed answers and hoped Laura knew where I could turn.

“I just need to know what’s wrong,” I said.

“There’s someone I know who runs some pretty in-depth tests,” Laura said. “Really accurate biochemical tests like ones on the thyroid and genetics. You could see if he would do an assessment for Lorin, just as a one-off visit. Maybe he can help.”

She said I would be contacting a wellness center in Loveland, about an hour away from my home in Denver. The person to talk to was the clinical director, Joe Eisele. “He’s the only man I’d send a loved one to, Sharon. He has a big heart. And Lorin deserves a big heart.”

It was evident Laura knew Joe’s work and respected him immensely, and I had learned to trust her judgment. I would do anything to find a way to get my son realistic, practical help.

I promptly researched Joe Eisele and his clinic, reading reviews. What I discovered made me tear up at the possibility of finally finding a solution. It also intimidated the hell out of me.

WHY JOE WAS DIFFERENT

Joe Eisele was a founder of InnerBalance Health Center and had been its clinical director since 1998. He was considered an expert in treating drug and alcohol addictions. He was well-respected in the medical community and had been the focus of numerous interviews throughout the country for his innovative approach to healing and educating those in the addiction community. His center acknowledged how addiction can affect an entire community. It impacts the addicted individual, their loved ones, and the legal and medical professions as well.

The wellness center reported an 86 percent satisfaction rate among clients who successfully completed the program. The center's life coaches, who stay connected to the clients, measure the satisfaction rate a year after clients complete the program.¹

What struck me as I read about Joe was something he called "the missing link," a factor that is unaccounted for in most treatment facilities. These facilities miss the focus on a body's biochemical imbalances, which are a critical link in solving the dilemma of a person's addiction. Joe took a scientific, medically-based, holistic approach that enhanced the success rate significantly.

But the second I read the word "holistic," my guard went up. I was firmly in the traditional camp of healthcare. I went to doctors, not mystical shamans, for heaven's sake. I had my kids immunized, took medicine from a prescription bottle when needed, and pooh-poohed the "woo-woo" people who were *out there* in their alternative medicine and lifestyle. I was still on the fence about things like essential oils, for crying out loud. A holistic, biochemical approach? How could there be such a blend?

Yet when I dug deeper into Joe's approach to holistic medicine, it aligned with the meaning. Holistic medicine, in its simplest form, is the understanding that all the parts of us are interconnected and need to be in balance for our whole system to work. That didn't seem woo-woo at all. It made sense. Being interconnected meant that each system or process affected other systems. Just like the interaction of a community.

Joe's center was treating the whole person, and as a series of integrated systems, assessing any deficiencies that pulled a body out of whack. It was addressing more of what the mainstream professional community thought people needed.

Overall, what I gleaned from my research was *exactly* what my gut said Lorin needed. What my strained family needed. Okay,

what I needed. I felt compelled to talk with Joe because the truth was, Lorin had broken us in oh-so-many ways. It was a good thing there were heartstrings attached to my charismatic son because I felt wrecked—emotionally, spiritually, and financially.

MY DESPERATE MANTRA AS A LOVED ONE

I couldn't seem to stop helping my son out of increasingly bad spots. A series of bailouts for him, hoping he'd keep his word and pay us back. Doctor bills, therapy bills, rent, phone, insurance, food—everything we paid for felt blackmailed through love. I was secretly ashamed to “just take care of it,” but I did nonetheless. It was just easier on all of us.

“If we don't take care of him, he'll end up on the street. He could die out there!” I spewed this fear to my husband when nothing changed. I spewed it to my close friends when I felt hopeless, and to myself constantly. It had been my desperate mantra for years. We paid for travel tickets when he needed to get out of town to clear his head, and then needed to come back and try life close to family again. We bought into him making a fresh start, over and over again. We paid because we hoped “this” would be the solution. Whatever “this” currently was.

Years of compensation for what we thought was a “Boomerang Kid,” then a “Depressed Guy,” then a “Selfish Millennial,” and finally our “Failure as Parents.” All those secret labels had left us broke and broken. Of course I'd check out any avenue to help my son. And myself. I looked at Joe's philosophy as my Hail Mary pass.

GAINING SKILLS FOR A LIFETIME

Joe's approach addressed all the ways a person needs to heal, not merely stopping the unruly, addictive behavior by “talking it out.” Not shaming or guiltig an addicted person into temporarily stopping, as that can just drive the behavior

underground. And unlike some traditional methods, Joe's approach certainly did not just accept that a recovering person would fall off the wagon in an endless addiction cycle. His approach seemed to provide real-life, practical steps for the addicted individual and those dealing with their consequences. He seemed to know what to do short-term and long-term. That's what I was interested in.

Up until this point, I had assumed that once a person became addicted, he or she was pretty much a lost cause. Friends, family, and co-workers all had stories that added to that belief. So did articles in social media and the news. It was the normal outcome of what I had observed. It's what terrified me about my son "being" an addict. I didn't want to push him into the "lost cause" bin and walk away. I wasn't ready for that.

Joe's approach showed that another option was not only possible but achievable. His center took into consideration the biochemical aspect, the habits, the triggers, the "why" that drive a person's addiction in the first place, and then provided a path through it and tools to use throughout a lifetime. Joe's method also showed kindness and compassion to the person suffering from the addiction. In fact, his philosophy seemed to show respect and dignity to all parties involved.

Many other programs I came across took an almost shame-centered approach.

**Joe didn't seem to look at people as "being an addict" at all.
He simply treated people who "had an addiction."**

That was a big difference because I already knew my son was suffering. He showed more self-loathing and low self-esteem than anyone I knew, despite our words of love. So this philosophy rang true to me.

Plus, Joe had a specific program for the loved ones of the

person struggling with an addiction. *How kind*, I thought, *to take into consideration a loved one's broken heart*. I worried about how much my resentment had grown, but mostly I worried about my stumbling ignorance, and how to function as a secondhand survivor, knowing I was doing everything wrong but still having to do it. Joe's program seemed to consider it all.

AN UNEXPECTED QUESTION

So, with Laura's advice fresh in my mind, and not knowing how to frame my questions, I sent a tentatively worded email to Joe's program manager, Keri. I asked about testing possibilities, pricing, insurance, availability. I told her I had a loved one who might be—I couldn't voice the reality to myself yet that he almost certainly *was*—struggling with drug or alcohol abuse and was looking at options.

The hardest part was mentioning I was a professional writer, as our therapist advised. "When you call the center to get some information, mention that you do some writing," Laura had said. "You never know if they may need your services." Who knew—maybe she was right and I could help them with a blog.

Keri let me know that the center did more than testing, and asked if I would like some more details. I did, but the challenge was that there was no way Lorin would even talk to me about going to another therapist or getting a job, let alone going into a center.

Keri reached back out a short time later, after I had frantically, chaotically moved on to other possible solutions, including drinking a shot of something strong every once in a while. I had just toured a homeless shelter for Lorin, knowing he could end up there soon. I couldn't keep going on this way. It was either that, or scheduling that mystical shaman.

"Mr. Eisele would like to schedule a phone call with you if you could make time." *Ahhh, so that's how you pronounce his name:*

Eyes-Lee. “And would you please send over some writing samples?”

I’d already decided that there was no chance I could put my son in a rehab place. He’d never pay me back, *if* he went, and I knew he’d never go in the frame of mind that he was in. But writing for InnerBalance might just give me a chance to learn more about this biochemical restoration. I’d glean information from their methods. It was a long shot, but it was better than a homeless camp or a shaman session.

I stuttered that yes, I would speak with him, and would send some writing samples. We scheduled a time for Joe’s call and I hung up. I didn’t care if I had to blog or update their website content for decades if it meant my son had a shot at some help.

A CAUSE TO GET BEHIND

The appointed day came, and I darted into my bedroom for the phone call with Joe.

“Hi, Sharon. This is Joe. Joe Eisele, from InnerBalance Health Center.”

I remembered Laura’s endorsement, and what I’d read about Joe. I also remembered the sea of other possibilities I’d researched for how to help Lorin. Vague suggestions or tangled solutions that made my eyes gloss over. I did a quick swallow. I had reached out to Joe and his center for information, and what I got seemed to be an interview for...who knew what? I swallowed again. Joe said that he’d looked over my writing samples. “Do you ever write things for yourself?” he asked.

For myself? Of course I did. Blogs, stories, and journal entries were part of the everyday routine that had kept me sane.

“Yes, I do, Joe. Would you like me to send something over to you?” I was mentally shuffling through the more appropriate entries to email him right then and there.

His next words floored me. “Have you ever written a book, Sharon?”

A book. *A book!* My throat closed up just a bit. *I thought he was interested in the simple stuff!* I took a deep breath and took a risk. “In fact, Joe, I haven’t written a book to completion, but I did end up with a lot of interviews, and the content for a book.”

It had been my best/worst experience to date. I’d learned a lot, like what happens when there is no contract in place. But I also learned to fall in love with a cause, how to form meaningful relationships after the interview was over, and how to write for something bigger than my paycheck.

As Joe and I continued talking, I realized that this man had found something bigger than himself as well. He wasn’t a clinical director so much as a person dedicated to bringing more effective information to those in need. That was a cause I could get behind.

That day on the phone, we started a project of our own. Joe asked me to help him write a book he’d yearned to write for fifteen years but never felt he could put into words. I needed answers, information, and resources for my situation with Lorin. I agreed to the project, and we became hopeful partners.

A JOURNEY FOR HOPE

Lorin was at a sullen, inward-focused point in his life, committed to his destructive course. But I knew I needed answers and experience to survive my own daily life. If writing a book would lead me to my answers, then that was what I needed to keep going.

I know now there is hope. I don’t have to throw away my son, or anyone else who’s suffering from addiction, just to survive the fallout. The best surprise is that I’ve come to enrich my life by learning of Joe’s extraordinary tale and bringing an idea whose time has come out into the world. The story is here for anyone who is at the end of their rope, just like I was. Keep hanging on. Keep reading. There is hope.

His door is open to you, too.

- JOE -

Sharon came to me the same way a lot of people do, as a last-ditch effort to find hope through the toughest time they've ever had. She discovered she's part of the addiction community, whether she wants to be or not. She'll be okay because she reached out...but I'm getting ahead of the story.

I didn't know to what extent Sharon was reeling in the chaos of addiction, but I didn't need to.

**I see it often with our clients' loved ones who don't know where to turn.
The hesitant, tired, desperate need to discover something—*anything!*—that
will calm the storm that made landfall.**

Maybe you feel that way, too. Maybe you are staggering as the awareness kicks in that *there is something wrong with my loved one*. Or maybe it's you struggling with addiction and your loved ones are caught up in the chaos. Either way, it's time to explain a bit about the perfect storm that made landfall in your life.

THE PERFECT STORM

Perfect storms don't simply happen. These fierce phenomena don't just "appear" from nowhere. A multitude of factors must line up, just so, for the elements to intensify the result. It's the difference between severe weather and a catastrophic situation. And because perfect storms in nature are so destructive, causing fallout to so many communities around the world, an entire recovery-and-rebuilding industry has risen up to address them.

Perfect storms cause damage in the medical field as well. Scientists, surgeons, and researchers in the medical community have struggled to predict what goes into causing so much pain and suffering. They've studied the plagues that killed countless

people, wiping out generations of families and loved ones. They've considered bacterial diseases like leprosy, which terrified the public and shunned those very people who were most in pain and vulnerable to the devastation. The perfect storms throughout our medical past birthed research, direction, and lifesaving techniques we now use every day.

It's astounding, then, that the addiction community has such a hard time finding the right information on how to effectively treat a person who has turned to drugs or alcohol. What I've found is that trauma, loneliness, peer pressure, DNA, and other indicators that bring about a perfect storm of elements in that person's life are rarely taken into consideration right off the bat. Instead, fear, misinformation, and the uneasy hope (by both the addicted person and the loved ones) that "it will all just go away" abound in those initial stages.

The aftermath is a culture of shame, blame, and disgrace. Loneliness and isolation fester while families are torn apart. Loved ones are traumatized right along with the addicted person. Prisons are full of individuals convicted of crimes resulting directly from the consequences of addiction. It's more than a tragedy. It's our community's ongoing catastrophe. These results are just as dangerous as any other perfect storm in the medical or atmospheric realm.

MY OWN STORM

My own storm brewed for decades, gaining in strength and momentum. And although it started out with fun and freedom and experimentation, my storm ended in a rage. A category 5 hurricane of years that wreaked havoc on all those who came into contact with me. Dark years feeling alone, confused, and afraid, until finally I surrendered and accepted help. I learned through sad experience that the number-one thing all addictions do is keep people from living up to their potential.

It took a long time, though, before I hit rock bottom and surrendered. In fact, I repeatedly hear, “Why do we have to fall so far down before hitting bottom?” It’s one of the first questions a person with an addiction asks when coming into our center. Their loved ones ask the same thing. That question is followed quickly by, “Is there *really* help?”

I had to go so far down before hitting bottom because by the time it became apparent, I was well into my use. There are stages in the progression of addiction, as well as recovery, and I knew nothing about them.

Use, abuse, addiction, and recovery are a complex combination of many factors.

We are dealing with issues that were there before the introduction of drugs and alcohol, and now we are dealing with additional issues that actually come from the addiction itself.

Another reason I had to go so far down the path of addiction was to avoid the guilt and shame of others finding out I might have a problem. It’s taboo to have a problem, right? The stigma of being less than self-sufficient. But talking about the taboo is the first step in healing ourselves. It made all the difference in my life.

The second question—*is there really help?*—plagued me throughout my own addiction journey when I saw so many people, including myself, get sober...only to fall into relapse after relapse. That question became my constant companion, the quiet voice in my head. It wasn’t until I came across the term “biochemical restoration” that I realized it could bridge the gap between addiction and full recovery. In my work with physicians and other professionals, I heard the term often.

I realized that if biochemical restoration was the key for me, it could be the key to healing for so many of us whom traditional treatment alone does not heal, long-term.

Now I understand that biochemical restoration, when combined with a traditional foundation, a holistic approach, and a continued healthy support system, is the optimal way to restore all systems to a healthy state. It enables a much higher percentage of people to go from sobriety to long-term recovery.

And it's important that the support system be a healthy one, where we surround ourselves with people who are not still living the chemically driven lifestyle. A positive support system might be a cause that engages us, or a spiritual connection—whether through nature, meditation, or a higher power.

FACING DOWN YOUR OWN STORM

This book gives you one of many possible directions to take in order to get your answers. It's based on decades of research. Along with the research, this book brings decades of experience, fact-based explanations, and practical results to the equation. It's wrapped in a true story that lets you know you are not alone. And if you're like so many other members of the addiction community, that's more than enough reason to keep reading.

Let's state the obvious right up front: If you've picked up this book, it's not for a little light reading.

- If you've picked up this book as the loved one of an addicted person, you're most likely exhausted, out of ideas and excuses, and feeling battered with betrayal after painful betrayal. You already know how it feels to juggle your *actions* with a possibly addicted person's *reactions*. Add to that chaos the outside world's judgments and broad advice. *Exhausting!* This story may bring you some answers.
- If you've picked up this book for yourself, you may want to stop using that drink or drug, but just can't make your

resolve stick. You may have tried other programs, other options, and are out of ideas. You've racked your brain for solutions and nothing seems to help. This book may give you some insight.

- Or maybe you work with addicted individuals as a member of the medical, mental health, or legal profession, and are looking for more complete options to help educate, diagnose, or treat your clients. You're looking for a solid resource to assist people with addictions and their consequences. This book may be an option for you, as well.

It is usually in this chaotic state of mind that perhaps the hardest question of all is asked: *"Is this really happening?"* The answer is yes, it really is. Without help, this is not something that will go away easily or soon. Having an addiction is insidious by nature, and it is almost impossible for you to recover from it on your own.

Hard to hear? Absolutely.

But addiction is a challenging thing to face. The good news is, you do not have to face it alone. Nor should you. There is a better way.

DEALING WITH YOUR STORY

Whether you are the one teetering on the ledge of addiction or the one who cares about someone who has fallen off that ledge, only when we face—and face down—that ledge can we shine a light into the dark corners. After all, how can we conquer something if we can't talk about it? We must speak plainly to heal ourselves, our circle, and our community. Plain speaking is the only way through to healing.

I met with Sharon, first and foremost, so she could help me

write a book. But what I discovered was how important it was for her to get some answers. She was heartsick and dazed. All I could do was share what I knew from my life, my experience, and what I've come to rely on through research and time-tested results. From there, I hoped she would be able to move forward in whatever direction she needed to.

You're reading this book because Sharon and I partnered to write it. After that initial phone call, we knew we could tell this story. It is the story of the path of my perfect storm, as well as Sharon's journey with her son. And although this is our story, there are elements in it that could be anyone's journey. In fact, as you read our story, you may recognize similarities in your own life, as either an individual who is addicted or the loved one of an addicted person.

My hope is that in reading about my storm, you'll connect with some of my story and find insight into what can help you in your particular circumstances. I hope my journey brings you some of the answers you need, or helps put you on a path to your next set of answers.

Keep reading. There *is* hope.