

The Modern Struggle Is Fighting Weaponized Addiction

2-3 minutes

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Naval: On some very deep level, all pleasure creates its own offsetting pain and fear of loss. I recently tweeted, “[In an age of abundance, pursuing pleasure for its own sake creates addiction.](#)” I was upgrading a [Miyamoto Musashi](#) line, “Do not seek pleasure for its own sake.”

Musashi was a Japanese swordsman. In his time, pursuing pleasure meant a very different thing than it does today. He didn’t have unlimited processed food, Internet pornography, marijuana and alcohol available on demand.

Now that we’re in an age of abundance, we can easily fall into addiction if we pursue pleasure for its own sake. And that’s hard to get out of.

The modern struggle is really about individuals—disconnected from their tribe, religion and cultural networks—who are trying to stand up to all these addictions that have been weaponized: alcohol, drugs, pornography, processed foods, news media, Internet, social media and video games.

Addictions are fake work and fake play

Addictions let you engage in fake play and fake work. Before, you had to go socialize with friends; now, you can just get drunk with a bunch of strangers. Before, you had to go find a mate, create children and raise a family; now, you can just watch a lot of porn. Before, you had to hunt and climb trees to get fruit for a little bit of natural sweetness; now, you can buy all the gelato you want.

The modern struggle is standing up to these weaponized addictions. They give you small doses of pleasure, but they also desensitize you and expose you to the misery of their absence.