

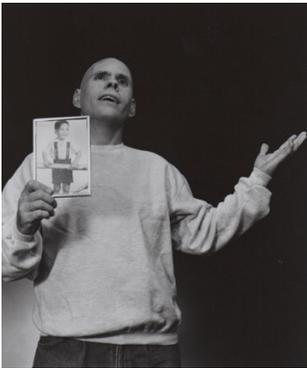
## STUDY GUIDE

### A JOURNEY THROUGH ADDICTION

by Rick Adam

GRADES 5-12

[www.rickadam.info](http://www.rickadam.info)



#### THE PROGRAM

“A Journey Through Addiction” is an “informance” – an autobiographical informational performance designed to present students with a personal look at difficulties involved in drug and alcohol abuse, food addiction, co-dependent behavior, and dysfunctional family dynamics. It is the story of Rick Adam’s own personal journey through drug dependency into recovery and beyond. The show and the follow up workshops are designed to give students an idea of how to access information on this subject. This program teaches students how to overcome negative internal messages and how to set and attain life goals.

The performance is the real life story of Rick Adam’s journey through addiction. At age 14, Rick weighed 229 pounds, had a 46” waist, and was living in an addicted and dysfunctional family. He taught himself to cope with these problems and overcame his own negative internal messages. Rick learned how to lose weight. He put a halt to his addictive behavior and drug addiction. He said “YES” to life. More importantly, he said “YES” to his own creativity. He taught himself to map out his personal goals. He became a composer and performer and has been keeping his life in balance ever since by performing, teaching, and creating musical style theater.

Some of the major content covered in this informance are:

- Solving Problems Creatively
- Mapping Personal Goals
- Making Healthy Choices
- Building Self-Esteem
- Positive Self Imaging
- Peer Counseling

Students become involved in making healthy choices and are given a chance to participate in group activities designed to enhance their self expression, communication, self awareness and creativity.

This guide can be used before and after the performance (or workshop). It can also be used independent of any performance or artist visit. Much of the information listed is designed to be copied and presented directly to students.

Questions often come up during discussions. We recommend a counselor or similar professional be available for any students who might feel the need for a more in depth perspective on this topic.

#### LIVING FREE

“Living Free” means taking charge of your own happiness and lifestyle. “Living Free” means acting responsibly. “Living Free” means saying “NO” to drugs, alcohol, and other addictive behaviors such as overeating and overspending. It means saying “YES” to solving problems creatively and doing activities that make you feel good about yourself.

Students can think about living free by taking the following survey. No one else has to see it or read it. It’s for each individual’s personal information only. Students should be as honest with themselves as possible.

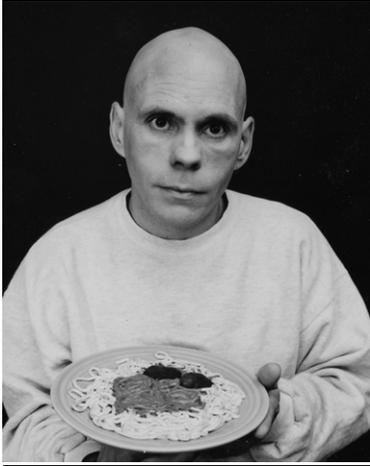
#### DO YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH ALCOHOL?

1. Do you drink alcohol?
2. Do drink alcohol when you want to forget problems, when you are feeling lonely, or to be part of a crowd?
3. Have you ever had a blackout or forgotten events while you were drinking?
4. Does anyone in your immediate family have a drinking problem?
5. Do ever drink to overcome a hangover, or drink until you get sick?
6. Does your drinking interfere with your responsibilities? Have you ever missed school because you were drinking?

If you answered YES to three or more of these questions, if you have blackouts, memory loss, or if you drink to get rid of a hangover you may have a drinking problem. To get help refer to the phone numbers at the end of this study guide or talk to someone you can trust like a counselor, teacher, or social worker.

**FACT:** 4.6 million teenagers have a drinking problem.

## DO YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH FOOD?



1. Do you constantly think about “feeling fat”?
2. Do you use food as a reward or punishment for things you have done?
3. Do you feel guilt or shame after you eat or do you hide food and/or eat in secret so no one will find out?
4. Do you fast, then binge?
5. Do you ever force yourself to vomit after you have eaten?

**FACT:** A Gallop Poll has found that 37% of teenagers in the U.S.A. binge on food. 18% of all teenagers have an eating disorder such as Bulimia Nervosa, Anorexia Nervosa, or Compulsive Overeating.

If you answered YES to three or more of these questions there is a good chance that you might be “at risk” when it comes to eating habits. Habits can be changed. The books and other information listed at the end of this study guide may help.

Some definitions:

**Bulimia Nervosa:** A person who has Bulimia, eats compulsively and then will often force themselves to vomit afterwards. Sometimes a Bulimic person will go on strict diets, fasts and exercise programs. Without help, a Bulimic person usually repeats this pattern over and over again. Bulimia can be a fatal condition. Many times a bulimic person has a very low self-image.

**Anorexia Nervosa:** A person who has Anorexia has an obsession with being thin. Anorexic people starve themselves and often take huge amounts of laxatives or diuretics. Anorexic people often

become malnourished. Anorexia was once thought to be a disease only young women had although now we know that young men also have this condition. Anorexia is a disease that can be fatal.

**Compulsive Overeater:** A person who is a compulsive overeater is unable to control their eating behavior. They often eat huge amounts of food, then diet, then eat again, then go back to dieting. Their weight goes up and down in a “see-saw” effect that often results in medical problems.

## DO YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH DRUGS?

1. Do you often go along with what your friends want to do even if you don’t feel you should?
2. Do you smoke cigarettes?
3. Do any of your friends or anyone in your family have a problem with drugs?
4. Do you take drugs or have you experimented with drugs?
5. Have you ever felt guilty about taking drugs?
6. Do you ever use drugs because “everyone else” is doing it?
7. Have you ever lied about having drugs in your possession?
8. Have you ever missed school or work because of drug use?
9. Have you ever stolen money to get drugs?
10. Have you ever tried to stop taking drugs but couldn’t?

**FACT:** 1 out of every 16 high school students smoke marijuana daily.

**FACT:** Lots of kids smoke the drug PCP (Angel Dust) because they think it’s pot. Angel Dust, Cocaine, and Heroin can kill you the first time you try it.

**FACT:** Most people who use drugs for recreation end up with health problems, legal and financial problems and family difficulties.

**FACT:** Drug use can be fatal.

If you answered YES to three or more of the questions on this survey you may be at risk or need drug counseling. It’s up to you to help yourself and it is as simple as talking to a counselor, minister, teacher, or an adult you trust. You may also want to call the **National Institute on Drug Abuse Hot Line** at 1-800-662-4357.

## **BRAIN STORM**

We've been talking a lot about "living free", changing our addictive habits and taking care of ourselves. You might have found out that you are not addicted to drugs and that you are already "living free". Congratulations! You care about yourself. Keep up the good work! Many people go through life drug and alcohol free.

The people we call 'at risk' behave in addictive ways. These people often drink, overeat, or take drugs because they feel sad, fearful or angry. Very often people 'at risk' live in families who assist them in their addictive behavior. Many family members pretend not to notice that there is a problem. Some families have a history of alcoholism or drug addiction. In these families talking honestly is often difficult and quite often one or more family members becomes a scapegoat taking the blame or the brunt of the anger when things go wrong. This kind of family relationship is often labeled 'dysfunctional' and 'co-dependent'. Co-dependency and addictions often go together. To get clean and clear is one of the most important things you can do for yourself.

The following is a list of suggestions on how to get free and how to "live free". We suggest that you try to think of as many solutions to these questions:

1. What advice would you give to a friend who told you they thought they had a drug or alcohol problem
2. How would you go about living a drug free life? Make a list of any and all possible answers to these questions. You may want to circle the answers that seem the best. You may want to write some of these ideas into an article for your local newspaper. You might find that some ideas make good slogans for posters for the school walls. Some of you may even want to create your own peer discussion "brainstorming" group for problems and questions as they arise.
3. All around the country students are "living free". Here are some 'say NO to addiction' projects that students like yourself have produced.

\*Video Tapes with a 'Say NO' theme

\*Newspaper articles: published in local and national papers

\*Books with real life stories. Some are published nationally.

\*Rap Song: music with a message

\*Radio and TV commercials: many are run on local stations as a public service

\*Project Graduation: chemical free celebrations are popular across the country

\*Chemical Free parties and Dances: It's not just for prom night anymore

\*Peer Counseling Groups: most schools have peer groups already in session

How do you think you might want to get involved? What projects could you create?

## **TIPS ON LIVING FREE**

1. Hang out with friends who are drug, tobacco and alcohol free.
2. Get involved in an activity that uses your skills and knowledge. This can be as simple as snapping a photograph or as complicated as learning a new language.
3. Talk things out. Talking about your feelings and being open about your opinions can make you feel more worthwhile. It will give people a chance to get to know you better.
4. Know when to ask for help or assistance. No one can do everything all alone. Look around for a counselor, teacher, minister, aunt, uncle or an older brother or sister with whom you can talk. Use the toll free hot lines we've listed at the end of this guide. Keep trying until you get it right.
5. Get the facts and get the real facts. If you have questions about drugs, alcohol, sexuality or self-image find out the real story. Don't rely on hearsay or gossip.
6. Keep a journal of your thoughts and feelings. It helps. Who knows you just may end up being a famous author someday.
7. Write a song about your feelings and thoughts. Start your own band or go to substance free coffeehouses.
8. Remember to put yourself first. If you are uncomfortable in any situation whatsoever, take charge. Don't be afraid to ask for what you need. Be your own best friend.
9. Find a 'self help' group. Groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous and Al-A-Teen, have some of the highest success rates in assisting people in overcoming addictions.
10. Spend time with people who care about you and whom you care for. A family can be a real help in tough times.
11. Get involved with helping others. Volunteer some time at a food bank, a political campaign, or a shelter for homeless persons. You may want to

- help at a childcare center, an after school recreation program or at your local library.
12. Move your body! Get out and dance, skate, ski, run, bike or play team sports. You will feel better emotionally as well as physically.
  13. Give yourself private and quiet time away from school, work, family and friends. Get to know the person you are going to be spending the rest of your life with - YOU! Learn to like yourself for who you are.
  14. Become an artist or a musician. Join a group. Learn to draw, act, juggle, unicycle, sing, etc., etc.
  15. Be kind to yourself and know that everything takes time - including growing up. Even teachers continue to grow. Everyone is in the process of learning about life.
  16. Remind yourself that it is OK to make mistakes. A mistake is only a failure if it stops you permanently from accomplishing your goal.
  17. Never drink and drive.
  18. Never take Drugs and drive.

### **WHERE TO FIND FURTHER INFORMATION**

**Among the very good books we recommend are:**

1. *Life 101: Everything We Wish We Had Learned About Life In School-But Didn't* by Peter McWilliams
2. *100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom* by Canfield / Wells
3. *The Complete Juggler* by Dave Finnigan
4. *Co-Dependent No More* by Melody Beattie
5. *Of Course You're Angry* by Gayle Rosellini and Mark Worden
6. *Juggling for the Complete Klutz* by Cassidy and Rimbeaux
7. *Heal Your Self-Esteem: Recovery from Addictive Thinking* by Robinson
8. *Growing Up Drug Free* ed. by U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC, Department of Education 1-800-624-0100
9. *What Work: Schools Without Drugs* by U.S. Department of Education National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, PO Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20852
10. *Ten Steps to Help Your Child Say "NO": A*

*Parents Guide* by U.S. Department of Education National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, PO Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20852

*Love Your Fat Away* by Aliza Guggenheim

### **ORGANIZATIONS THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL**

1. Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-a-non, Al-a-teen, Overeaters Anonymous: look in your local phone book
2. D.A.R.E. Program: check with your local police department

### **PHONE NUMBERS AND HOTLINES**

1. National Institute on Drug Abuse: 800-662-4357 or [www.phoenixhouse.org](http://www.phoenixhouse.org)
2. National Council on Alcohol and Drug Use: 800-NCA-CALL
3. E.D.A.P. Eating Disorders Awareness & Prevention 800-931-2237 or [www.edap.org](http://www.edap.org)
4. Child Help USA - Child Abuse Hotline: 800-422-4453 or [www.childhelpusa.org](http://www.childhelpusa.org)
5. National Runaway Switchboard: 800-621-4000 or [www.nrscrisisline.org](http://www.nrscrisisline.org)
6. Cocaine Help Line: 800-262-2463 or [www.phoenixhouse.org](http://www.phoenixhouse.org)

### **Disclaimer**

**Information contained in this study guide should not be used as a substitute for professional health and mental health care or consultation. Individuals who believe they may need or benefit from care should consult a psychologist, school psychologist, or other licensed health/mental health professional.**