



# Why Do I Keep Doing That? Why Do I Keep Doing That?: Breaking the Negative Patterns in Your Life

By Dennis Wholey

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## Why Do I Keep Doing That? Why Do I Keep Doing That?: Breaking the Negative Patterns in Your Life By Dennis Wholey

Why We Do What We Don't Want to Do--and How to Stop

*Why Do I Keep Doing That? Why Do I Keep Doing That?* explains why we all experience the “compulsion to repeat” and discover the most successful ways to stop doing what we don't want to do . . . whether we drink it, smoke it, snort it, pop it, spend it, gamble it, eat it, work it, feel it, or have sex or a relationship with it.

As a recovering alcoholic, Dennis Wholey knows firsthand what it takes to break an addiction. In his *New York Times* bestseller *The Courage to Change*, Wholey brilliantly changed the way people viewed the negative pattern of substance addiction. Now, in this highly anticipated book, *Why Do I Keep Doing That? Why Do I Keep Doing That?*, Wholey expands the exploration of the compulsion to repeat by tackling other negative and self-defeating patterns of various types and degrees.

Habits are hard to break--especially destructive ones that bring about pain in our lives, create continuous problems or obstacles, keep us with people who are bad for us, and prevent us from reaching our full potential.

We all have our own answer and our own path to healing. Dennis Wholey helps you find yours. He shows us how to make these changes with expert insights from his team of behavioral experts along with personal stories of different negative behaviors and lifestyles, questionnaires, evaluations, and “personal inventories” that dig into your own life and background. *Why Do I Keep Doing That? Why Do I Keep Doing That?* shows you how to find the answers you seek, the support you deserve, and the understanding you must have to forge your way to a happier, more rewarding life--and a truer sense of who you are.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Frustrated by his own self-defeating behavior and inspired by Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, talk show host Wholey (PBS's *This Is America*) explains repetition compulsion—a tendency to repeat behavior that has already proved unhealthy—using interviews with mental health experts and the testimony of ordinary people who have conquered their problems. Dealing with pitfalls such as people pleasing, procrastination and rage, these regular people explain their specific problems, theorize about what drives their "compulsion to repeat" and offer their commonsense suggestions for change. The experts—including Peter Kramer (*Listening to Prozac*), Nathaniel Branden (*Six Pillars of Self-Esteem*), Harvard clinical psychiatry professor E. Virginia Demos and others—reinforce Freud's belief that such behavior is rooted in childhood experience. Wholey (*The Miracle of Change*) himself sticks to pep talks and questionnaires designed to illuminate the reader's problems. This encouraging guide offers the fundamental advice that one should seek professional help. Though readers stuck in negative patterns may recognize themselves in Wholey's case studies, those who have already graced a therapist's couch won't find any new insight here. (Mar.)

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### About the Author

Dennis Wholey is the host of the weekly public affairs series *This Is America* on PBS, which is distributed to 400 cities in the United States, Canada, 160 foreign countries via PBS stations, the American Life TV Cable Network and Voice of America Television. Wholey is the author of The New York Times bestselling book *The Courage to Change*, and he has written several other popular books on personal growth and psychology.

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### Excerpt from *Why Do I Keep Doing That?*

The poet May Sarton told me that most nonfiction books were an attempt by the author to answer some burning question that wouldn't go away. Both Freud and I, it seemed, had one that wouldn't quit: Why do people repeat (over and over again) behaviors, relationships, and feelings that are clearly self-defeating, harmful and painful?

That's the question Freud faced back then. It's the question that I took on as an author. It's the question we all face in our face in our daily lives today. How many of these following questions have you pondered:

- Why does a person get into abusive relationships again and again?
- Why do some people choose the wrong careers or take jobs they hate?
- Why does a person keep getting fired?
- Why do bosses hire employees who can't do the job?
- Why is he always late?
- Why is she so negative?

- Why is he always sick?
- Why does she always get drunk?
- Why does someone who is sexually active practice unsafe sex?
- Why do so many people struggle with money problems?
- Why are so many of our friendships and intimate relationships so unfulfilling?
- Why do we try so hard to get love from people who don't love us back?

Meet Victoria , a thirty-four-year-old sales rep for a major clothing chain based in Los Angeles . Everyone sees her as a caring, giving, self-less person.

### **Victoria 's Compulsion: People Pleasing**

ôWhen I was growing up, nobody really took care of me, so I never learned to take care of myself. We found out later on that my mother was a prescription drug addict. I just thought she was depressed all the time, and I guess she was. She actually overdosed once after I went off to college and ended up in the hospital. She recovered, thank God, and finally got off the painkillers. However by that time, her change of behavior was too late to have any real positive impact on me. The damage had been done.

ôMy dad never seemed to be around. He'd tell us it was his 'crazy job at the newspaper', but I always thought that he had a girlfriend on the side. So my sister and I spent our time as kids going to school and waiting on my mother. I learned how to take care of her---and other people---real good.

ôMom was often in a stupor and came in across as drunk so we never invited any of our school friends to come over to our house. We were too embarrassed. In a way we kind of had an absent mother because of her drug use and an absent father because of what he said was his work.

ôOne night in a long rambling phone call I complained to my sister that I felt my boyfriend was taking me for granted. She sent me a book she'd read by Pia Mellody and Andrea Miller called Facing Codependence. Pia Mellody's mantra, my sister told me, is 'Ask for what you need; ask for what you want; and listen to what you get.' That phrase hit home with me big time. I thought about the people in my life---there really weren't that many---and I realized that I never asked for what I wanted and needed. As far as listening to what I got, that's all I did---listen---and what I was getting was everybody's problems. No one was asking me how I was doing, who I was, what were my hopes and dreams and fears, what did I want to do.

ôAfter I finished reading that book, I joined a codependency support group and those meetings made my head hurt. Week after week I'd leave the meetings in shock, thinking of how much I neglected myself by literally serving others. I learned---just by listening to other people talking about their lives in those meetings---that my relationships really weren't relationships at all; they were all one-sided. I was a one-person support group.

ôThat was true of my boyfriend, my two girlfriends, the people I hung out with at work, and even my boss. It pained me to admit that I had made their lives more important than my own and that I had built a circle of people around me who, by their actions or inactions, didn't really care about me very much at all. It was all about them. I am embarrassed to even say this too, but my whole life was wrapped up---or trapped---in taking care of emotionally needy and sick people, just as I had done with my mother when I was young.

ôAbout six months into those codependency meetings I began to change. I began to develop relationships

that were a whole lot healthier and more equal. I stopped being a doormat at work and even took a few months emotional vacation from everyone to rebalance myself and set some boundaries about listening to other people's problems. That was hard. I had to learn to live with me. I cleaned house. I hope this doesn't sound cruel, but I fired my boyfriend. To say he was a slacker would be charitable. He was really living off of me.

I can slip back into old patterns. I'm attracted to a certain type of person. But nowadays I catch myself quickly. I don't think relationships have to be fifty-fifty every day, but they've got to balance out over time. 'Your wish is my command' is no longer the price of admission into my inner circle today.

Over the past year, I've developed some self-respect and self-esteem. I know what I need. I'm working on knowing what I want. I'm attracting a whole different kind of person today. I'm pretty happy and I have some really supportive friends. It's taken a lot of work, but it sure has been worth it.

## **WHY DID I KEEP DOING THAT?**

Looking back on it now, it seems to me that I always hooked up with people who needed someone to take care of them. Maybe I was sending out some signals along those lines, because needy people certainly found me. I never really knew what I wanted and needed but I sure as hell knew what they wanted and needed. I came, I gave, I listened to their problems. Just as I took care of my mother as a kid, I took care of everyone as an adult. My mother came to me in many disguises. I'm embarrassed to say that taking care of other people made me feel better about me-and even better than them.

## **My Suggestions For Change**

If someone came to me today with a story like mine, I'd direct that person to the Internet and suggest she or he Google 'codependency characteristics.' A few of them that hit me in the gut are:

*My good feelings about who I am stem from being liked by you.*

*My mental attention is focused on you.*

*My self-esteem is bolstered by solving your problems.*

*I am not aware of how I feel. I am aware of how you feel.*

*My fear of rejection determines what I say or do.*

If those characteristics resonate with you, you belong at codependency meetings. Do yourself a favor and commit to a dozen meetings. At the end of that time, if you don't think you belong, they will gladly refund your misery.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Lynn Jones:**

Have you spare time for a day? What do you do when you have far more or little spare time? That's why, you can choose the suitable activity intended for spend your time. Any person spent their particular spare time to take a walk, shopping, or went to often the Mall. How about open or perhaps read a book eligible Why Do I

Keep Doing That? Why Do I Keep Doing That?: Breaking the Negative Patterns in Your Life? Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You already know beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can be cleverer than before. Do you agree with it has the opinion or you have additional opinion?

**Edward Carter:**

In this 21st millennium, people become competitive in every way. By being competitive at this point, people have to do something to make these individuals survive, being in the middle of typically the crowded place and notice by simply surrounding. One thing that oftentimes many people have underestimated this for a while is reading. That's why, by reading a e-book your ability to survive improve then having chance to endure than other is high. For you personally who want to start reading the book, we give you that Why Do I Keep Doing That? Why Do I Keep Doing That?: Breaking the Negative Patterns in Your Life book as nice and daily reading publication. Why, because this book is usually more than just a book.

**Margaret Wynkoop:**

Nowadays reading books are more than want or need but also turn into a life style. This reading addiction give you lot of advantages. The advantages you got of course the knowledge the rest of the information inside the book that improve your knowledge and information. The details you get based on what kind of publication you read, if you want attract knowledge just go with education and learning books but if you want truly feel happy read one with theme for entertaining including comic or novel. Typically the Why Do I Keep Doing That? Why Do I Keep Doing That?: Breaking the Negative Patterns in Your Life is kind of e-book which is giving the reader unpredictable experience.

**Connie Hockaday:**

Spent a free time to be fun activity to complete! A lot of people spent their free time with their family, or their own friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing same thing every week. Do you feel it? Do you wish to something different to fill your current free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book might be option to fill your no cost time/ holiday. The first thing that you'll ask may be what kinds of reserve that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the reserve untitled Why Do I Keep Doing That? Why Do I Keep Doing That?: Breaking the Negative Patterns in Your Life can be excellent book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

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