



# The Biology of Desire: Why Addiction Is Not a Disease

By Marc Lewis



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**The Biology of Desire: Why Addiction Is Not a Disease** By Marc Lewis

Through the vivid, true stories of five people who journeyed into and out of addiction, a renowned neuroscientist explains why the "disease model" of addiction is wrong and illuminates the path to recovery.

The psychiatric establishment and rehab industry in the Western world have branded addiction a brain disease, based on evidence that brains change with drug use. But in *The Biology of Desire*, cognitive neuroscientist and former addict Marc Lewis makes a convincing case that addiction is not a disease, and shows why the disease model has become an obstacle to healing.

Lewis reveals addiction as an unintended consequence of the brain doing what it's supposed to do—seek pleasure and relief—in a world that's not cooperating. Brains are designed to restructure themselves with normal learning and development, but this process is accelerated in addiction when highly attractive rewards are pursued repeatedly. Lewis shows why treatment based on the disease model so often fails, and how treatment can be retooled to achieve lasting recovery, given the realities of brain plasticity. Combining intimate human stories with clearly rendered scientific explanation, *The Biology of Desire* is enlightening and optimistic reading for anyone who has wrestled with addiction either personally or professionally.



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## The Biology of Desire: Why Addiction Is Not a Disease By Marc Lewis Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

“This is the *real* story of ‘this is your brain on drugs,’ but one that provides a refreshing, convincing alternative to the widespread traditional disease-model view of addiction. Through compelling stories of real people who struggled with various addictions, Lewis lucidly makes the case for a new science-based understanding of what causes and sustains addiction. Most important, it offers far more positivity about ways out of addiction than those offered by traditional treatment, providing hope for those struggling as well as for their loved ones.” —**Anne M. Fletcher, M.S., author of NY Times best-selling *Sober for Good, Inside Rehab*, and the *Thin for Life* Books. Recipient of the Research Society on Alcoholism Journalism Award and APA's Outstanding Contributions to the Understanding of Addictions Awards**

“Highly readable and plausible illustration of current ideas about addiction from behavioural neuroscience and clinical perspectives by the use of vivid case histories.” —**Trevor Robbins, Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience and Experimental Psychology, Cambridge University**

“Neuroscientist Lewis (*Memoirs of an Addicted Brain*) presents a strong argument against the disease model of addiction, which is currently predominant in medicine and popular culture alike, and bolsters it with informative and engaging narratives of addicts' lives... Even when presenting more technical information, Lewis shows a keen ability to put a human face on the most groundbreaking research into addiction. Likewise, he manages to make complex findings and theories both comprehensible and interesting... [T]his book, written with hopeful sincerity, will intrigue both those who accept its thesis and those who do not.” —***Publishers Weekly***

“Armed with scientific data and plenty of case studies... Lewis enters the ongoing addiction nomenclature debate with an intellectually authoritative yet controversial declaration that substance and behavioral dependencies are swiftly and deeply learned via the “neural circuitry of desire.”... Lewis introduces biographical testimonies of Americans struggling with addiction that both humanize and reinforce his standpoint. ... A thought-provoking, industry-minded, and polarizing perspective on the neurocircuitry of human desire and compulsion.” —***Kirkus Reviews***

“A very readable, often touching, gateway into the universe of neuroscience and the shadowland of addiction.” —***Sydney Morning Herald***

“Marc Lewis's new book neatly links current thinking about addiction with neuroscience theory and artfully selected biographies. Ex-addicts, we learn, are not “cured,” rather they have become more connected to others, wiser, and more in touch with their own humanity. This is a hopeful message that has, as Lewis demonstrates, the advantage of also being true.” —**Gene Heyman, author of *Addiction: Disorder of Choice***

“Informed by unparalleled neuroscientific insight and written with his usual flare, Marc Lewis's *The Biology of Desire* effectively refutes the medical view of addiction as a primary brain disease. A bracing and informative corrective to the muddle that now characterizes public and professional discourse on this topic.” —**Gabor Maté, M.D., author of *In The Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters With Addiction***

“Dr. Lewis — a former addict who recovered to become a distinguished neuroscientist and author — writes

engagingly about the addictive experience, the recovery experience and the science behind them. Whether you are looking for a foundation in the neuroscience of addiction, guidelines for recovery or just hope that recovery is possible, it's all here. The scientific information is presented in the context of day-to-day behavior and the lives of individuals you will come to care about. You'll learn more about neuroscience (and human development and psychology) than you may have thought possible. Informed by this book, you'll see how neuroscience explains addiction as a part of life, rather than a mysterious entity only experts can understand." —**Tom Horvath, Ph.D., President of ABPP, Practical Recover, and SMART Recovery and author of *Sex, Drugs, Gambling & Chocolate: A Workbook for Overcoming Addictions***

### **Winner of the 2016 PROSE Award in Psychology**

"*The Biology of Desire* says a lot about the brain mechanisms underpinning addiction but, to its credit, does not stop there. With minor exceptions, we do not help addicts (and they do not help themselves) by ministering directly to their brains. As Mr. Lewis stresses throughout this unorthodox but enlightening book, people learn to be addicts, and, with effort, they can learn not to be addicts, too." —***Wall Street Journal***

"Neuroscientist Lewis delves into the functioning of the addicted brain. He intends to demonstrate that addiction (substance abuse but also behavioral addictions such as eating disorders, gambling, etc.) is not a disease... This objective is met by the detailed life stories of five recovering addicts the author has interviewed. Their descent into the grips of addiction reads like passages of a junkie's memoir: terrifying and page-turning... [T]his work helps make sense of how addiction operates and is recommended for readers wanting to learn more on the topic." —***Library Journal***

"A courageous and much needed voice in rethinking addiction—Lewis takes addiction out of a disease model and reframes it as a negative outcome of neuroplasticity—simply put, our brains' fundamental nature to change as a result of learning and experience. This model provides realistic hope, given that what has been learnt can be unlearned by harnessing the principles of neuroplasticity. Through his intimate personal and professional knowledge of addiction Lewis reframes our understanding of its mechanisms and nature in a way that is empowering." —**Barbara Arrowsmith-Young, author of the International Best Seller, *The Woman Who Changed Her Brain***

"So much nonsense is spoken about addiction and the brain. If you want to understand what's really happening, read Marc Lewis' clear, insightful, and necessary book." —**Johann Hari, author of *Chasing the Scream***

"If you want to understand addiction—and why it matters how the brain actually learns to become addicted—read this book. In elegant and incisive prose, Marc Lewis expertly explains the neuroscience of desire, and how it shapes the paths of our lives." —**Maia Szalavitz, author of *Unbroken Brain***

### **About the Author**

**Marc Lewis, PhD**, is a neuroscientist and professor of developmental psychology. Now at Radboud University in the Netherlands, he taught for more than twenty years at the University of Toronto. He has authored or coauthored more than fifty journal articles in neuroscience and developmental psychology. Presently, he speaks and blogs on topics in addiction science, and his critically acclaimed book, *Memoirs of an Addicted Brain: A Neuroscientist Examines His Former Life on Drugs*, is the first to blend memoir and science in addiction studies.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Jay Blanchard:**

Here thing why this particular The Biology of Desire: Why Addiction Is Not a Disease are different and trustworthy to be yours. First of all looking at a book is good nonetheless it depends in the content of it which is the content is as tasty as food or not. The Biology of Desire: Why Addiction Is Not a Disease giving you information deeper and different ways, you can find any book out there but there is no guide that similar with The Biology of Desire: Why Addiction Is Not a Disease. It gives you thrill reading through journey, its open up your eyes about the thing this happened in the world which is perhaps can be happened around you. You can bring everywhere like in park your car, café, or even in your means home by train. If you are having difficulties in bringing the published book maybe the form of The Biology of Desire: Why Addiction Is Not a Disease in e-book can be your substitute.

#### **Juan Dishon:**

The experience that you get from The Biology of Desire: Why Addiction Is Not a Disease is the more deep you looking the information that hide within the words the more you get interested in reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to be aware of but The Biology of Desire: Why Addiction Is Not a Disease giving you excitement feeling of reading. The article author conveys their point in specific way that can be understood simply by anyone who read the idea because the author of this publication is well-known enough. This specific book also makes your own vocabulary increase well. That makes it easy to understand then can go with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We suggest you for having this kind of The Biology of Desire: Why Addiction Is Not a Disease instantly.

#### **Ralph Pettie:**

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