

What causes, say, heroine addiction? This is a really stupid question? Right? It's obvious, we all know it. Heroine causes heroine addiction. Here's how it works: if you use heroine for 20 days, by day 21 your body would physically crave the drug ferociously because there are chemical hooks in the drug, that's what addiction means but, there's a catch. Almost everything we think we know about addiction is wrong. If you, for example, break your hip, you will be taken to a hospital and you will be given loads of diamorphine for weeks or even months. Diamorphine is heroine it's in fact much stronger heroine than any addict can get on the street because it's not contaminated by all the stuff drug dealers dilute it with. There are people near you being given loads of deluxe heroine in hospital right now. So at least some of them, should become addicts, but this has been closely studied it doesn't happen.

Our current theory of addiction comes in part from a series of experiments carried out earlier in the 20th century. The experiment is simple:

you take a rat and put it in a cage with two water bottles one is just water the other is water laced with heroine or cocaine almost every time you run this experiment the rat will become obsessed with the drugged water and keep coming back for more and more until it kills itself

, But in the 1970s Bruce Alexander, a professor of psychology, noticed something odd about this experiment. The rat is put in the cage all alone it has nothing to do, but take the drugs.

What would happen he wondered if we tried this differently? So he built "Rat Park" which is basically heaven for rats.

It's a lush cage, where the rats would have colored balls, tunnels to scamper down, plenty of friends to play with other rats. Everything a rat about town could want.

And they would have the drugged water and the normal water bottles, But here's the fascinating thing in Rat Park rats hardly ever use the drugged water. None of them ever use it compulsively, none of them ever overdose. But maybe this is a quirk of rats, right?

Well, helpfully, there was a human experiment along the same lines. The Vietnam War 20% of American troops in Vietnam were using a lot of heroine. People back home were really panicky because they thought there would be hundreds of thousands of junkies.

But a study followed the soldiers home and found something striking. They didn't go to rehab. They didn't even go into withdrawal. Ninety-five percent of

them just stopped after they got home. If you believe the old theory of addiction, that makes no sense.

Into a horrific jungle, in a foreign country where you don't want to be and you could be forced to kill or die at any moment, doing heroine is a great way to spend your time.

But if you go back to your nice home with your friends and your family. It's the equivalent of being taken out of that first cage and put into a human rat park.

We need to think about addiction differently. Human beings have an innate need to bond and connect. When we are happy and healthy, we will bond with the people around us, but when we can't, because we are traumatized, isolated, or beaten down by life

we will bond with something that gives us some sense of relief it might be endlessly checking a smart phone, it might be pornography, video games, reddit, gambling, or it might be cocaine. But we will bond with something. Because that is our human nature.

The path out of unhealthy bonds is to form healthy bonds. To be connected to people you want to be present with.

Addiction is just one symptom of the crisis of disconnection that's happening around us.

We all feel it. Instead of helping people heal and getting their life together, however, we have cast them out from society.