

The Myth of Addiction: Two Withdrawals — Supporting Thinkers & Parallel Views

This document summarizes authors, researchers, and models that echo or reinforce the ideas expressed in Clint Matheny's essay *"The Myth of Addiction: Two (2) Withdrawals — Physical and Emotional."* The central claim— that addiction is less a chemical hijacking than an attempt to escape unbearable emotional pain— has strong resonance across trauma-informed, psychological, and neurobiological literature.

1. Trauma / Pain-First Framings

Gabor Maté – Captures the same premise: "Don't ask why the addiction, ask why the pain." He views addiction as an adaptive response to trauma and distress rather than a disease.

2. Not-a-Disease / Learning-Based Framings

Stanton Peele – The "life-process" model treats addiction as a habitual coping pattern tied to meaning, relationships, and personal agency.

Marc Lewis – In *"The Biology of Desire"*, Lewis frames addiction as learned neuroplastic behavior, not a pathology.

Maia Szalavitz – *"Unbroken Brain"* argues addiction is a developmental learning disorder, echoing that the substance is a tool for emotional regulation.

3. Emotional Withdrawal & Relapse Risk

Koob & Volkow – Their "addiction cycle" identifies the withdrawal/negative affect stage—emotional pain, dysphoria, and stress—as a primary driver of relapse.

Alan Marlatt – Relapse Prevention theory highlights that high-risk emotional states predict relapse, showing addiction is rooted in emotional coping.

PAWS (Post-Acute Withdrawal Syndrome) – Clinical literature recognizes lingering emotional withdrawal (anxiety, dysphoria, emptiness) months after detox.

4. Environment & Connection

Bruce Alexander – *"Rat Park"* – Demonstrated that environment and social disconnection strongly affect drug use, implying addiction is a symptom of isolation rather than chemistry alone.

5. Memory Reconsolidation & Emotional Healing

Bruce Ecker – *"Unlocking the Emotional Brain"* – Describes psychotherapy through memory reconsolidation, dissolving emotional learnings that drive compulsion.

RTM (Reconsolidation of Traumatic Memories) – Supports recovery by rewriting emotional memory patterns; consistent with Clint Matheny's approach using Clean Language and memory reconsolidation.

6. Summary

Clint Matheny's "Two Withdrawals" framework uniquely integrates emotional withdrawal and trauma healing into one coherent model. While others have articulated similar ideas, few have presented it with such clarity:

"People aren't addicted to the drug—they're addicted to the escape from what they cannot bear to feel."

This synthesis bridges emotional psychology, trauma science, and neuroscience, offering a more compassionate and complete understanding of addiction.