

Have addictive personalities aided human evolution?

We're so inundated with bleak facts about addiction that it may be hard to perceive any silver lining. It's nearly impossible to imagine, but there could be an evolutionary advantage to the addictive tendencies that cause many to throw away relatively safe and undisrupted lives to walk on addiction's perilous ledge. As a former addict who is now a psychology and neuroscience professor at Bucknell University, I've dedicated my life's research to learning the root causes of addiction.

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Though something as complex as addiction certainly doesn't have a sole cause, [some of us are prone](#) to it because we are predisposed to especially [appreciate new experiences](#). Where someone naturally more cautious might retreat from novel and potentially risky opportunities, [addicts](#) and potential addicts are more inclined to [perceive them as \[pleasurable.\]](#)

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The population benefits by having a mixed pool of risk-averse and risk-seeking individuals—some to caution us to remain secure in what's familiar, and others eager for the unknown. Which is better for survival clearly depends upon the particular conditions; at least some of us will survive if the group expresses tendencies toward both strategies.

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Perhaps by developing alternate channels for the natural drive for new experiences and challenges to flow, the need to seek exciting states in chemical fixes would diminish. Even better, society as a whole might benefit as novelty-seekers trailblaze for us all.

Read full, original post: [The Evolutionary Advantages of an Addictive Personality](#)