

**2011, Why The Recovering Addict Should Not Make
Major Decisions in Early Recovery
By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.**

Why The Recovering Addict Should Not Make Major Decisions In Early Recovery

By [Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.](#)

Early recovery from addiction can be rough. Recovery brings about all manner of changes in a persons life. As an addict's body begins to detox he or she may she may experience detox symptoms, which could involve a wide range of possible symptoms, including physical, psychological, and emotional. The newly recovering addict will often experience mood swings that make life seem like an emotional rollercoaster.

Depression is common. Anxiety and fear are common. Mood swings from irritability to joy are equally common. This painfully sober person might cycle quickly from sadness, shame, and guilt to hope and joy about quitting. These mood swings can be quite troubling if they are unanticipated and misunderstood.

Introspection is encouraged in early recovery. Not only is the newly recovering person trying to accept his or her addiction, the damage that it has done to his/her life, s/he is also trying to make sense of this flood of emotion. Much of the assessment of addiction in their lives involves looking at relationships, work, social life, motivations, beliefs, and other history, while trying to make sense of it all.

Although encouraged to not make any major decisions in the first year of recovery, people often make emotionally driven decisions that they later regret once the emotions have calmed down. A common example is the addict questioning his marriage, asking himself if he ever loved his spouse, and making a decision to leave the marriage. When the emotional rollercoaster ends and he tries to reclaim his marriage, it is often too late.

Family members observing these emotional highs and lows in the addict, often make the assumption that the addiction is active. Family members, with their expectations of immediate wellness, have no other explanation for the behavior. However, a roller coaster effect of [emotional high and lows](#) is to be expected in early recovery as the chemicals leave the body, a little at a time, and as you confront issues that have been stuffed come to the foreground.

In early recovery, feelings return to life. Recall that alcohol and other mood altering drugs do just that; they alter mood. Feelings or emotions are part of mood. Recall that the use of chemicals served a major role in changing feelings regardless of whether they were boredom, anger, fatigue, hurt, sadness, loneliness, or helplessness. Alcoholics and addicts even use chemicals to alter positive feelings such as joy. So, if over a long period of time, an addict has been using drugs to numb those feelings and has stopped numbing them,

**2011, Why The Recovering Addict Should Not Make
Major Decisions in Early Recovery
By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.**
www.peggyferguson.com
www.stillwatermarriagecounselor.com

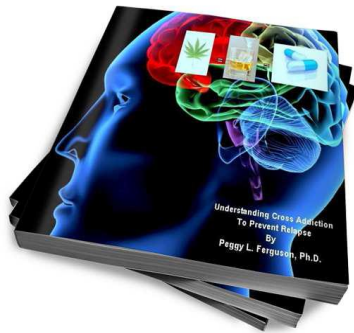
2011, Why The Recovering Addict Should Not Make Major Decisions in Early Recovery
By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

they would rebound with a vengeance.

It is helpful in the midst of those emotional highs and lows to recall that it may be a symptom of detox. The awareness of this rollercoaster effect on the emotions being common to early recovery helps in keeping this temporary condition in its proper perspective. This awareness can also elicit an increased motivation to develop appropriate new feelings management skills.

Early recovery is a golden opportunity to learn how to appropriately identify, label, own, express, and [work through feelings](#). Few alcoholics and addicts already have these feelings management skills. If you don't, now is a good time to learn. Everyone needs these [skills](#), not just recovering alcoholics and addicts.

Copyright 2011, Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D., www.peggyferguson.com Hubbard House Publishing, Stillwater, OK.



Understanding Cross Addiction To Prevent Relapse
by Peggy L. Ferguson Ph.D.

A simple guide for professional and the general information seeker. This relapse prevention guide specific to cross addiction issues explains the nature of addiction and cross addiction, examples of how cross addiction leads to relapse, and includes a **worksheet** to assist in relapse prevention.

PDF file format. \$9.95



2011, Why The Recovering Addict Should Not Make Major Decisions in Early Recovery
By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

www.peggyferguson.com
www.stillwatermarriagecounselor.com