

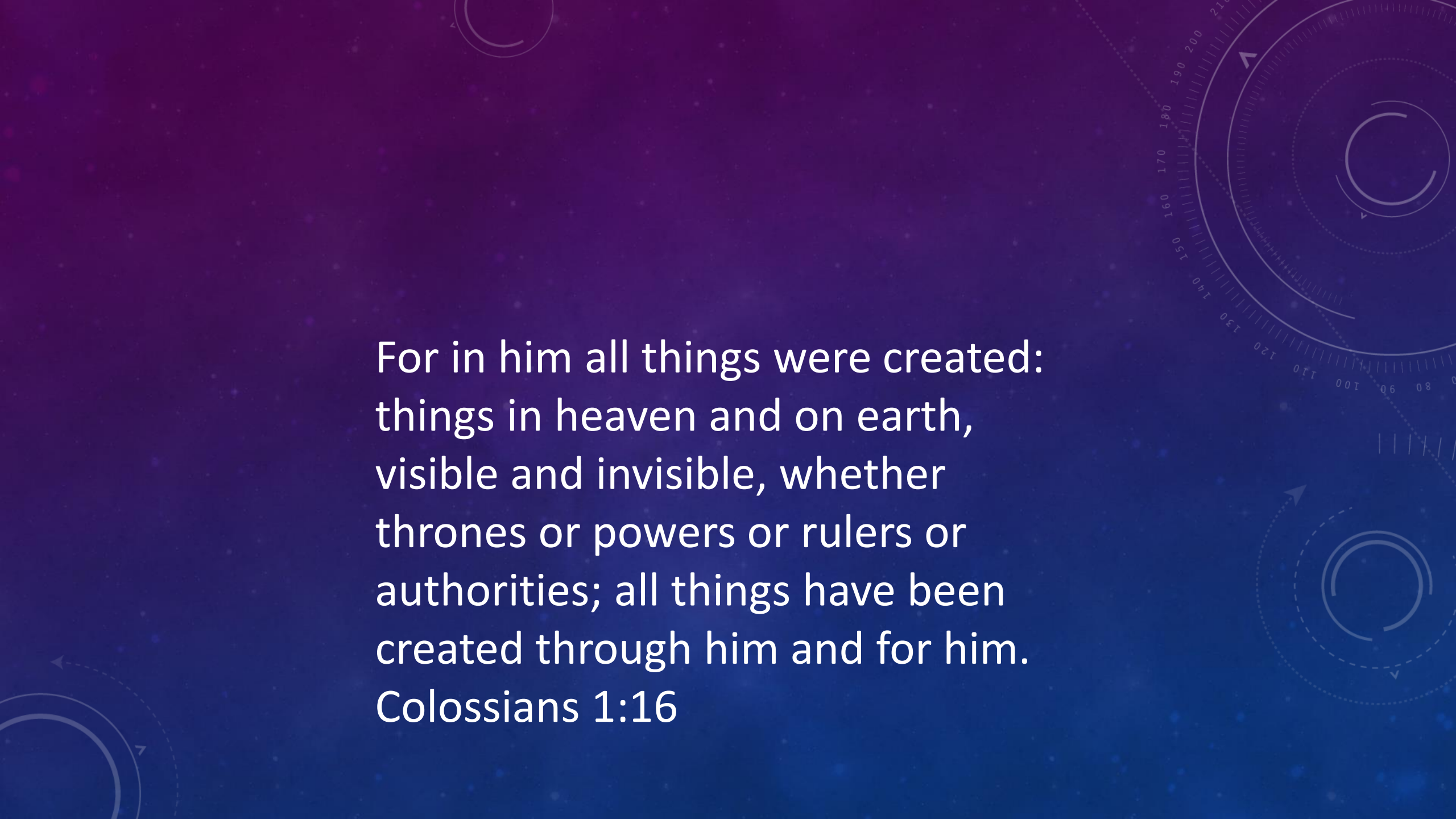
The background features a dark blue gradient with intricate white and light blue circular patterns. On the left side, there is a large circular scale with numerical markings from 140 to 260 in increments of 10. Several concentric circles and dashed lines with arrows are scattered across the frame, creating a sense of movement and depth.

RECOVERING FROM ADDICTION: A JOURNEY IN THE “ART CREATING MEANING”

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For in him all things were created:
things in heaven and on earth,
visible and invisible, whether
thrones or powers or rulers or
authorities; all things have been
created through him and for him.
Colossians 1:16

WHAT IS THE ART OF CREATING MEANING?

- In the Art of Creating Meaning, we take the experiences our clients suffering from drug abuse and grow from it, as well as create something positive and substantial from the lessons learned (Tyson, 2011).
- During the journey of Creating Meaning, one will learn to tap into hidden strengths and talents. We explore the client's creative side and build upon it. During the journey of Creating Meaning, one will learn to tap into hidden strengths and talents. We explore the client's creative side and build upon it.

WHAT IS THE ART OF CREATING MEANING? (CONTINUED)

- Before long, they will regard their history of substance abuse, a beautiful experience that has helped to motivate them to do even more beautiful and wonderful things in their lives. (I would reword this, evidence based research would concur that addiction motivates people to change but not that it was a beautiful experience)
- It will become a skill that our clients will find themselves using to assist them in understanding areas in life that are a source of confusion.

THE 5 STEPS TO THE ART OF CREATING MEANING

- We are aware of the progressive 5-Step process of how people experience grief, which is a form of loss, (Kubler-Ross, 1969). The steps are, Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance.
- Unfortunately, after the 5th step of Acceptance, there is no step to rebuilding ones' life after the loss. This where The Art of Creating Meaning, can assist our clients.

THE 5 STEPS TO THE ART OF CREATING MEANING (CONTINUED)

- The Art of Creating Meaning is focused on building lives up, after the devastation of loss. The 5-Steps of The Art of Creating Meaning are as follows, Acceptance, Resuming Normalcy, Making the Decision to Grow From the Experience, The Process of Creating Meaning and Gratitude.

FROM GRIEF TO RESOLVING LOSS TO CREATING MEANING

Kubler-Ross

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

Resolving Loss

- Shock & Denial
- Pain & Guilt
- Anger & Bargaining
- Depression & Reflection
- Upward Turn
- Resolving Narrative
- Acceptance & Hope

Creating Meaning

- Acceptance
- Resuming Normalcy
- Making decision to grow
- Process of Creating Meaning
- Gratitude

GUIDED BY NARRATIVE THEORY

- Peoples lives are stories and individual experience their stories in ways that are meaningful
- Socially constructed reality – social constructivism
- Narrative approach characterized by stories that gain credence through the lifelikeness
- White and Epston (1990) people experience problems when the stories of their lives do not represent their lives
- Assists people by distancing their relationships their lives and stories they judge to be impoverishing (Mertz, 2014). Giving space for alternative stories to develop

GUIDED BY NARRATIVE THEORY: FIVE PRINCIPLES

- 1 – Time and Context of Narrative
- 2 – Shared experience and transformation principle
- 3 – Naming and unpacking
- 4 – The meaning making of Principle
- 5 – Social-Political-cultural Intervention Principle

ACCEPTANCE

- The substance abuse population has experience profound loss on many different levels. These steps can be used to assist them in rebuilding their lives and growing as a result of their experiences.
- Acceptance resembles the Step 1 of the 12-Step Program of Recovery, that states that one must admit that they are powerless over their addiction and their lives have become unmanageable, (Williams, 2011).

ACCEPTANCE (CONTINUED)

- This step in The Art of Creating Meaning, promotes the ability for our clients to be honest with about the choices they have made to bring them to this point in their lives.
- Matthew, (2006) conducted a study of Gay and Lesbian drug abusers. In the study, the participants stated that once they accepted that the abused substances to mask their sexual orientation, healing began.

ACCEPTANCE (CONTINUED)

- Bringing our clients through this step will help them to understand the past and give them the courage to face the future in their road to recovery, and making it less difficult to stimulate their creativity (Eshleman, 2014).

RESUMING NORMALCY

- Although their lives will never be the same, as a result of their drug use, we can help them find a sense of normal living, during their lives in recovery.
- This means whatever the client believes is a healthy, normal life without drug use.
- With an active life, as described by Hennessey, (2018), our clients can find the support and encouragement they need to move to the next step with confidence.

MAKING THE DECISION TO GROW FROM THE EXPERIENCE

- In this step, We must ask our clients a questions that will cause pain and heart-ache.

MAKING THE DECISION TO GROW FROM THE EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)

- The question is, “**What have you learned as a result of your life as a substance abuser?**” In this open-ended questions, we will assist the client in digging deep into their experiences, which will include many painful memories for the client.
- We must assess whether the client is ready to move in to this area of our work with them. We can assess this by observing how they are living at that moment.

MAKING THE DECISION TO GROW FROM THE EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)

- Have they been “clean” for a significant amount of time?
- Are they able to identify their triggers?
- Do they have a Safety Plan in place if they feel the need to use?
- Do they make use of the Safety Plan?
- Are they productive in their lives? Are they adding to the lives of others in a positive manner?

THE PROCESS OF CREATING MEANING

- The fourth step in The Art of Creating Meaning, is the process of coming into seeing ones' creative work come to fruition.
- Remember, The Art of Creating Meaning, we take the experiences our clients suffering from drug abuse and grow from it, as well as create something positive and substantial from the lessons learned (Tyson, 2011).
- By inspiring meaning, the client perpetuates the value and importance of their experiences during their drug use.

THE PROCESS OF CREATING MEANING (CONTINUED)

- One thus transcends the losses of the experiences and develops a permanent link between themselves what they have lost because they understand that everything is meaningful even if in a sense, it is beyond our understanding and that there is always tomorrow.

THE PROCESS OF CREATING MEANING

- Tyson, (2018) uses an acronym to assist in the process of creating meaning, which is C.R.E.A.T.E. Each letter stands for a word that promotes the creative process. The words are, Care, Relevance, Engagement, Attitude, Time and Elevation.
- The words of the acronym as values found in Seligman's values of Positive Psychology (2006).

THE PROCESS OF CREATING MEANING (CONTINUED)

- Seligman's research encourages us to tap into areas such as well-being, flow, personal strengths, wisdom, creativity, psychological health and characteristics of positive groups and institutions, to assist our clients.
- These values causes our clients to experience positive emotions, which assist in the healing and creative process.

CARE

- The first step of the process and the principle representing the first letter in the acronym is, care. Our clients will identify something about which they had a deep concern.
- It can be the rights of animals, children, the environment, domestic violence or poverty. We will work with our clients to explore their deep concerns and use it to help build their creation.

RELEVANCE

- Relevance pertains to something in which the client is particularly close. An issue with which they can identify will be most useful.
- For example, if the client resides in an area where pollution is a prominent problem, they may want to advocate for “Smoke Free” laws in their housing development.
- This will help to increase the quality of the air in the building. In doing something, closely connected with their everyday lives, the clients are able to see “fruit of their labor,” and be proud of the fact that help to do something that will help the community.

ENGAGING

- Whatever way our clients choose to create meaning, it must be engaging.
- Seligman, (2006) states that there is an element of “flow” when one is deeply engaged in a project. In “flow” we become so significantly involved with the project that we become one with it.
- Such positive engagement in an activity that our clients care about and that is relevant to their lives, causes positive emotions.
- These positive emotions enhance the creative process, making the final product of their creation, something in which our client can be proud.

ATTITUDE

- A positive attitude is necessary in creating something meaningful.
- This may be a challenge for some of our clients because they may choose to create projects that are time consuming, or require the involvement of other people who may not share their passion for their work.
- This is where we can be a calming source to them, encouraging them to remember the reason they are creating this work.
- . It is a representation of how they are better people of substance and depth due to their experience. It is at this point that we urge them to maintain a positive attitude about the creation process.

TIME

- The creation that our clients decide upon, must be one that takes a significant amount of time to complete.
- Time is an important element, as it gives the client the opportunity to reflect on their experiences, the lessons learned from them and how they have become better people as a result.
- It must be a work that requires patience and endurance. A creation that takes a significant amount of time, such as going back to school for a GED or a degree, is valued more highly than one that does not require much time to complete.
- A creation that is time demanding heightens the client's sense of accomplishment success.

ELEVATION

- The final product of the creation must promote a feeling of elevation, triumph and completions. These are feelings that are not a part of the drug users' everyday lives.
- The feeling of elevation that come from seeing the finished product of one's creation is inspiring and reassures our clients that they can make something beautiful and important that contributes to the world.

GRATITUDE

- Finally, the final step to The Art of Creating Meaning, is the ability to be grateful for their experiences during our clients' time of drug use.
- The feeling of gratitude shows that the client has the ability to look deep beyond the surface of their lives. They are able to see past the pain and loss caused by their drug use.
- They see the exquisiteness of the finished product of their creation and they are grateful. They are grateful for the resilience, the fortitude, the strength and the courage it took for them to come out of a live of drug use and to build a beautiful life as a result.
- This is The Art of Creating Meaning.

EXAMPLES OF CREATING MEANING

- The creations that come from our clients should be something that they can identify clearly to themselves and others.
- In doing so, they are able to refer back to their creations in times when they are feeling like relapsing, depressed, anxious or simply giving up.
- Their creations will remain as perpetual proof that they can overcome difficulties and even thrive from them. These are examples of such creations.

EXAMPLES OF CREATING MEANING (CONTINUED)

- Growing a garden for the beautification of the neighborhood and the edification of the environment.
- Completing school (GED, BS, BS MA, PhD or any training program) will boost our clients' self-esteem and make them useful for work in society.
- Writing their story and publishing it can help other like them to overcome addiction and create meaning as well.
- Walk a marathon for a cause in which they believe. Or our clients can do some other form of healthy activity (lose weight, become fit, be a fitness coach etc.)

EXAMPLES OF CREATING MEANING (CONTINUED)

- Advocate for causes surrounding substance abuse. Lobby, work with politicians, be active in the community with others to have drug dealers removed from the neighborhood.

CONCLUSION

- We will allow our clients to choose the ways they want to create meaning.
- We are there to help them explore the various ways that will fit their personality and personal goals. Help the client choose a task that is not too daunting, overwhelming or unmeasurable.
- This can be discouraging and make them want to give up if it becomes too difficult for them to see the destination of their desire.

CONCLUSION

- However difficult or simple the task may seem to us as clinicians, it may be a good activity for our clients, one that will stretch and build their characters lives.
- We must support, encourage and applaud them for all their efforts.
- Finally, we should celebrate with them when you see the wonder of their creation.

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