

## **Addiction?**

A proposal to create a series of comic books to help people understand how addiction works in the body, how people come to be addicted, how addicts can be helped, and how by helping them we help ourselves.

### **Education for the public and for addicts**

The authors have the skills to create a series of cartoon books that are easy to read, insightful, and helpful for high-school students, addicts, addiction counselors, law enforcement personnel, families of addicts, and the general public. They have done similar educational work that is highly praised, and have shown that they can complete projects of this size. They have a general vision of the nature and treatment of addiction as set out in the attached essay “Teaching Addicts.”

### **The working group**

#### *Richard L. “Arf” Epstein*

Dr. Epstein has a Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of California, Berkeley. He has written books on logic, critical thinking, philosophy, and ethics. He has written the high-school/college textbooks *Critical Thinking* and *The Pocket Guide to Critical Thinking* which have been highly praised for their insight and clarity (see [www.AdvancedReasoningForum.org](http://www.AdvancedReasoningForum.org)). These books also teach reasoning in the sciences. Dr. Epstein has the ability to understand technical material in the sciences and social sciences and see what is essential. He searches out criticism of his work in order to give clear and accurate presentations that are also engaging.

Dr. Epstein is the head of the Advanced Reasoning Forum, a research group and publishing company ([www.AdvancedReasoningForum.org](http://www.AdvancedReasoningForum.org)).

#### *Alex Raffi*

Since 1998, Mr. Raffi has been a professional cartoonist and illustrator. His work has been recognized by the Nevada Press Association on a number of occasions, notably having won the Best Illustration award from the Nevada Press Association in 1998, 1999, and 2000, and most recently the Best Editorial Cartoon All State Papers award. Currently, he is a partner and creative director of Imagine Communications in Henderson, Nevada ([www.weareimagine.com](http://www.weareimagine.com)).

Mr. Raffi is a member of the Advanced Reasoning Forum.

Dr. Epstein and Mr. Raffi have shown with their collaboration in *Critical Thinking* that abstract ideas can be made not only clear and clearly applicable but also amusing through the use of cartoons. A copy of that book is attached.

#### *Peter Adams—Managing Editor*

Mr. Adams has the skills to organize and see this project through to completion. He was a Senior Acquisitions Editor and then Executive Editor at Cengage (Thomson Learning) from 2001 to 2007. He then was the head of ESRI Press until his retirement in 2015. He has been the editor for many books by Dr. Epstein and Mr. Raffi.

Mr. Adams is now Managing Editor of the Advanced Reasoning Forum.

### **Description of the cartoon books**

#### *Addiction in the Body—Too Good is Just Awful*

How humans have developed to be susceptible to addiction.

How addiction affects the brain and body.

#### *The Road to Addiction*

20 archetypal stories of people who have become addicted.

How they became addicted.

The effects of their addiction on them.

The effects of their addiction on their family and friends.

The effects of their addiction on society.

#### *Helping Addicts—Helping Ourselves*

A survey of the main methods of “treating” addicts.

Abstinence vs. harm reduction.

The War on Drugs:

The costs. The effects on society. The results.

Comparison to alternatives: legalizing drugs; decriminalizing.

### **Audience for the comic books**

Professional educators, law enforcement, students, addicts, families of addicts, the general public. The comic books would be made available to:

- High school classes.
- Teachers and counselors.
- College courses in social work, psychology, nursing, and medicine.
- Detention center and prison officers’ training courses.
- Doctors’ offices.
- Sheriff’s deputies, police officers, and other law enforcement personnel.
- Addiction counselors.
- Addiction and mental health counseling groups.
- Inmates at jails and prisons.
- City, county, state, and federal lawmakers.
- Employers.
- Families of addicts.
- Addicts.

### **Format of the comic books**

- Printed comic book.
  - The cartoons will be clear and simple, in black and white.
  - (Compare the cartoons in *Critical Thinking*.)
- E-book.
  - A PDF version will be prepared from the printed version.
- An animated version.
- All the above in Spanish.

### **Current status**

A draft of “Addiction in the Body—Too Good Is Just Awful” is attached.

This has been tested in high school classes and subsequently revised.

Work could commence on this now.

Outlines of “The Road to Addiction” and “Helping Addicts” have been done, but they are very preliminary, requiring more research before sending out for critiques.

### **Projected first stage of the project: “Addiction in the Body”**

- Organize an advisory committee: people who work on the science of addiction and to drug counselors.
- Send the current draft to the advisory committee for criticism.
- Present the current draft to focus groups:
  - High school classes.
  - Drug counselors.
  - Counseling sessions.
  - Groups of deputies and police officers.
  - Inmates at jails and prisons.
  - Nursing students.
  - Families of addicts.
  - People who have had little or no contact with addicts.
- Revise.

As revisions are made and cartoons drawn, drafts will be sent to the advisory committee and to three rounds of reviewers.
- Prepare a complete illustrated draft of “Addiction in the Body”.
- Send the illustrated draft to the advisory committee for criticism.
- Prepare final print-ready version.
- Prepare study guides for drug counselors, high school teachers, and other educators.
- Prepare a PDF version.
- Prepare a Spanish edition (printed and electronic).

This could be done in 18 months, perhaps less, depending on how quickly comments are received from the advisory committee and the testing sessions.

### **Distribution of “Addiction in the Body”**

- PDF versions could be made available for free on the internet via the websites of agencies, institutes, and foundations that have supported the project.
- Printing and distributing the comic book could be done by the Advanced Reasoning Forum.

### **Funding needed for the first stage of the project**

Cost estimates are available on request.