

CRASH SITE ANALYSIS

I (**Dr. Ted Roberts**) had the privilege of serving as a safety officer in several squadrons. Part of the job involved investigating aircraft accidents and discerning what had taken place and why. At times, it was a gruesome task that deeply challenged my problem-solving skills, but the struggle was always worth the effort. The lessons learned in the process could save lives in the future.

Like with crash site investigations, I have come to the realization that to help individuals stop the insanity of continual relapsing, they needed training in how to do a thorough investigation of the crash site in their lives. A relapse can look and feel a lot like a smoking hole in the ground of an aircraft crash site. At first observation it seems like there are no clues as to what might have happened. It can feel like part of you has died. There is the acrid smell and taste of shame in the air, and you can feel hopeless!

Yet, if you start carefully analyzing the wreckage, it will tell a very clear story of cause and effect. The crash and the relapse didn't just happen. There were decisions made, attitudes embraced, boundaries violated, and thoughts tolerated that were in place long before you slammed into the ground. There is also a cause for the relapse, and if you examine the crash site, you will see a very strong underlying pattern driving the downward spiral!

1 Describe the last relapse you experienced and describe the crash site in vivid detail.

2 What did the start of the downward spiral look and feel like?

- List the last three weeks of your FASTER Scale results. What was the lowest level you reached each week prior to Relapse?
 - In detail, describe the Double Binds you were struggling with during those three weeks.
 - Why do you think you never resolved those Double Binds so you could get off the FASTER Scale and return to Restoration?
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3 What accelerated the downward plunge?

- What were your Commitments to Change during those three weeks?
- Why did you give up on the Commitment to Change that could have pulled you out of the downward spiral?
- How many calls to group members had you committed to make each week?

- Why didn't you call a group member for help when you were headed into the ground?
 - What were the triggers that set you up?
 - What boundaries, or middle circle (*Seven Pillars of Freedom*, Pillar 5) issues, did you ignore or willfully violate?
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4 What lessons did you learn from this relapse?

5 If you experienced multiple relapses, what is the common pattern in your relapses?

6 What new guidelines do you need to put into place with respect to:

- Sleep
 - Exercise
 - Anger
 - Being alone and the need for a Safety Plan when you find yourself alone
 - Dealing with family of origin issues
 - Media usage
 - If you are married, dealing with conflict
 - Your tendency to isolate
 - Your eating habits
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7 Does your wife, if you are married, have a Safety Plan, and are you aware of the natural consequences if you relapse?

8 What is your plan for the next time you find yourself in that familiar pattern of relapse? On a separate sheet of paper describe in detail how you are going to pull out of an approaching crash.
