

cia

# Continuous Improvement Associates

## Escaping the Crisis Syndrome How We Can Overcome Addiction

### Need More of a Long-term Focus?

### Here's how to get the discipline.



#### The source of the crisis syndrome?

Powerful structures drive individuals and organizations to become addicted to actions that relieve problem symptoms so they fail to address fundamental solutions. This leads to **The Crisis Syndrome**. This structure is described by the less bold links in Figure 1.\*

#### How do we escape The Crisis Syndrome?

To discover the way out we'll examine the recommendations in M. Scott Peck's, *The Road Less Traveled*, and Stephen Covey's *Principle-Centered Leadership*.

The bold links in Figure 1 build on the structure described in **The Crisis Syndrome**. It shows we could drive the structure to our benefit if we had more **discipline** to allow us to increase our **use of discipline to improve life skills**. This would support positive action from loop **B4, Focus on Fundamentals** (in green): increased **work on life skills** would over the long run improve our **quality of life** and close the **quality of life gap**.

As shown, greater **quality of life skills** also gives us more **courage & willingness to develop discipline**. This activates **R8, Discipline Begets Discipline**.

#### What is discipline?

Discipline sounds painful ... and indeed it is, because it's about facing the pain. Peck defines discipline as "a system of techniques for dealing constructively with the pain of problem-solving – instead of avoiding that pain – in such a way that all of life's problems can be solved."

#### The techniques of discipline

Each of Peck's four basic techniques of discipline has a systems thinking parallel:

- **delaying gratification**: "the process of scheduling the pain and pleasure of life in such a way as to enhance the pleasure by meeting and experiencing the pain first and getting it over with. It is

#### What is systems thinking?

Seeking to understand system behavior by examining "the whole" ... instead of by analyzing the parts.

the only decent way to live."

**Systems thinking parallel**: When we understand and tolerate the worse-before-better behavior in systems, we take action that best serves the long-term.

- **assumption of responsibility**: the alternative is to "escape from freedom," to put someone else in charge of my life.

**Systems thinking parallel**: We know that "system-as-cause" thinking is vital for establishing a perspective of organizational responsibility for performance ... the cause of problems is not "out there."

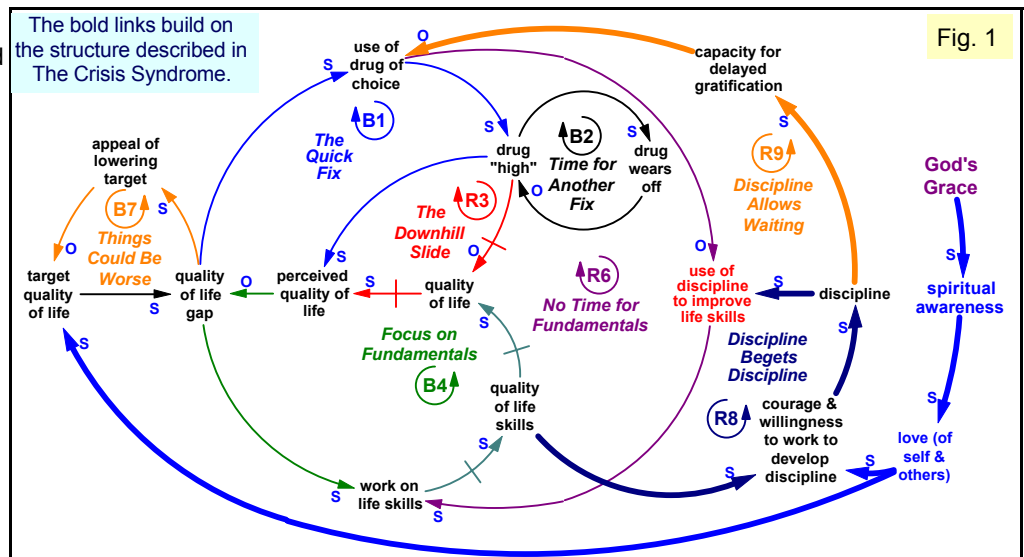
- **dedication to the truth or reality**: an openness to challenges to my map of reality.

**Systems thinking parallel**: Our openness to challenge of our mental models is critical for successful dialogue, skillful discussion and realistic modeling & simulation.

- **balancing**: - an ability for flexible response (e.g., live in the moment and plan for the future).

**Systems thinking parallel**: We need to use "both-and" thinking to integrate seemingly opposing points of view. Life is not as simple as "either-or."

An effect of greater **discipline** therefore is to increase **capacity for delayed gratification**. This decreases the **use of drug of choice** and increases the **use of discipline to improve life skills**. This creates loop **R9, Discipline Allows Waiting**.



According to Scott Peck, the courage and willingness to develop discipline come from love ... and ultimately from a spiritual awareness granted by God's Grace, consistent with AA's "twelve step" program.

\* The paper **The Crisis Syndrome** describes the structure.

