

The tool:



Vitally Absorbing Creative Interest (VACI)

Effectively used for which of the 4 points?

**Building
Motivation**



**Coping with
Urges**



**Problem
Solving**



**Lifestyle
Balance**



A **Vitally Absorbing Creative Interest (VACI)** can help bring back the simple pleasure of living a life free of substances and unhelpful behaviors. When we get overly involved in any one activity, be it helpful or not so helpful, we cut a lot out of our lives that we used to enjoy. Finding a balance can restore the fun and enjoyment that life has to offer. So how can we get back to those simple pleasures of life?

First take a look at the benefits list on your CBA. What were some of the benefits you were getting from your unhelpful behavior or drug of choice before the costs became too high? Did you enjoy the buzz? Did you like being able to just check out for a bit? Did you like the taste? Maybe it was the social aspect? Each of these benefits is a key to finding a VACI.

If you enjoyed the buzz, then look at things you could do to get a real buzz out of life. You might have to work harder at it, but the reward will be greater, AND you will actually remember it in the morning and for years to come. Maybe you decide to ride a roller coaster you have never ridden before. Maybe it is learning to run. Perhaps you have always wanted to sky dive. Maybe you have always wanted to learn to ride a motorcycle. Figure out what would give you a buzz and take it on.

If drinking or drugging allowed you to “check out” for a bit, maybe looking at some ways of being away from the world for a time might give you the chance to restore your energy for being with others. Take a walk in a park. Go to the ocean, river or a lake and watch the water move. Go on a day trip and be alone with yourself in your car. A bicycle ride is another great way to just be alone with nature. What about gardening, crafts, and the long list of artistic endeavors?

If you really enjoyed the taste of a good wine or your favorite beer, then maybe it is time to start exploring what kinds of non-alcoholic drinks you can create. It can be a real adventure. Start shopping for all kinds of juices and drink mixes. Maybe even write a book about it.

If you were one who leaned on alcohol or drugs to help you feel comfortable in a social situation, you might challenge yourself to go to a social situation and put on an act of being as fun and friendly as you were when you were drinking or drugging. Continue practicing that until it becomes natural. And always remember, others are as afraid of us as we are of them.

Another thing to look to when trying to find a new VACI is to think about what you used to like to do as a kid. What interests did you hold? What hobbies did you have? What dreams were never realized? Now is the time to take your life back and make some of those things happen.

Variety is the spice of life. Find many Vitally Absorbing Creative Interests and keep looking for more. Life is full of amazing and new things for us to learn and do. Take it on. The choice is yours.

