

## Samson & Delilah

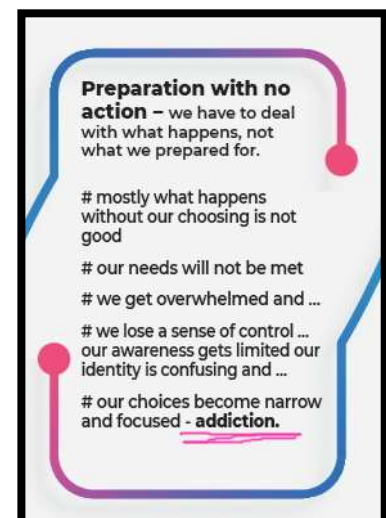
Now I want to talk about the end of the movie and the promise of better things. You'll remember that final scene, Samson and Delilah together in that little hut by the windmill at sunset.



The question is: "Will Samson beat that addiction, or will the promise of a new day be broken again?". The answer, of course is we can only guess. But let me point out some things that, as health workers, you may keep in mind regarding raising the chances of a good recovery.

Let's look at our concept diagram and see where our Samson is. Remember emotions drive us to do things often without our awareness, so he is driven toward picking up that can whether he wants to or not. Remember too, his brain has been affected by the fumes so his capacity to make better choices will be limited.

Preparation with no action. And yet there is action, picking up the petrol can, so what does this mean? Let me explain. At the deep emotional level Samson is prepared for action with an expectation that the action will meet a need. But, the action he is prepared for and the expectation he has, is for his emotional needs to be met – needs like connection, meaning, and control. However, the action he takes 'hijacks' his brain into thinking he has control and it gives meaning. This is a lie - it is as though he has taken no action at all. It reminds me of when I was a kid and mum sent me to get wood for the fire, seeing me go and expecting the wood and I go off and play – no wood and the fire goes out.





Preparation with action. Here lies the clue to the question about Samson beating the addiction. Engaging with life and making decisions about someone to love, something to do, and something to look forward to.

There are instances in the movie that show Samson's lack of engagement; Delilah being abducted and later hit by a car and Samson wasn't aware of either. And sitting in the wheelchair watching as Delilah brings home the kangaroo, he lets it all happen around him with no intention or perhaps capacity to help. His awareness may be permanently disabled due to the petrol sniffing, so what follows is assuming this is not the case and his brain functioning is slowly recovering.

So what might your intervention look like? For a start you have an idea of the problem so that gives you confidence that your involvement will make a difference.

My suggestions would be:

1. Deal with both of them. Delilah seems to be the stronger character and will be crucial in what develops in their new venture together. And besides they will appreciate you validating their status as a couple.
2. You understand that talking only engages the thinking brain, but the addiction is an emotional problem, so you have to impact Samson's emotional brain. If you can get him to relax all the better, and then use images of Delilah's care for him, the fact that they have found each other, the chance of a new day dawning, one that has clearer skies than the storms of Alice Springs, the bridge to nowhere, and the river run dry. Use as much imagery as you can, and make it sensory rich – so he sees the dry lifeless sand, hears the birds singing a welcome to country song, feels the water washing over his burning skin like a baptism into a new life. Practice making it up as you go along and you will get better at it. Get to appreciate *what* you are doing and *why*. You are helping Samson make new patterns; a new way of making sense of his world.
3. Help the young couple feel excited about their new life together, an excitement that has a practical as well as a romantic appeal. Avoid presenting the experiment as a long-term arrangement, but a season of exploring ways to approach this great adventure of life together.
4. Propose possibilities centered around *action* – things to do. Delilah has shown she has no difficulty in this regard, but it will be crucial that Samson develop something that gives him a reason to get going for the day. His emotion driving him toward purposeful action whether he feels like it or not. It could be hunting, music, dance – things he has shown some talent with. You might propose he write a song or dance routine based on his remarkable journey from addiction toward wholeness. A wonderful way to help younger kids learn from his new-found wisdom. You are helping him develop what most mothers already have, that remarkable commitment to young people who depend on her.

5. Consider the importance of mentors. You will have community contacts you can trust and who have experience in dealing with young people, people who have a deep commitment to dealing with dysfunctional behaviours. Never underestimate the value for Samson and Delilah to see a working model of what they could be, in a sense it is a rite of passage into adulthood, knowing who they are as individuals and as a couple, and knowing where they are going. In other words life having meaning, and them having a sense of control – their decisions matter.
6. Use the ESSENCE checklist to help you focus on what things contribute to their getting established, particularly in this early stage with the tendency toward addiction still fresh in Samson's mind. And of this list, one that is easy to overlook is the value of spirituality. Delilah has already indicated a leaning to this by placing a cross on the wall of their hut but it is important that Samson join her in how they express their belief and practice of the spiritual sort. The recognition of a higher power is crucial in the recovery from addiction and it could well be the single most important factor in Samson's progress.
7. In considering spirituality, may I suggest an exploration of possibilities instead of the presentation of a package. I don't say this lightly. After about seventy years of spiritual experience it is only in the last couple that I have come to realise a lot of what I held dear was in fact not true, and have come to embrace a view of and relationship with God that satisfies completely. Now I don't know what that cross means to Delilah, but if it means an angry God punishing his son, it will result in a spirituality that will bring more problems than it is worth. I realise that the church will disallow any tendency toward the spirituality of your ancestors, but in this case I would encourage exploration of the emu in the night sky in an attempt to have a spiritual dimension in their lives. For what it is worth, this young couple's future will benefit more from establishing a belief in and awareness of the Great Creator Spirit on their side wishing their good and grieving their bad, than any adherence to a set of suspect ideas from another culture and another time.
8. Keep the steps small. Avoid the desire to put a lot of things in place and involve a lot of people. Leave them be for a while. No work schemes, training programs, no professionals that want to do their thing. Encourage this couple to focus on each other and their relationship, to get to understand each other's needs, and practice ways to enjoy life in each other's company.
9. Finally, and I realise this is a lot to take in – a long answer to a short question. Your primary task is to inject hope. Hope enables us to inhabit the joy-end of the mood scale. Hope enables us to see possibilities, things to get excited about. Hope helps us see ourselves with pride and dignity, the very opposite of shame. And hope gives us something to look forward to, not a bridge to nowhere but a new horizon.

