

Living with the addict/alcoholic

Living with addiction can and is lonely and hard. One of every six families in the United States is affected by addiction. Constantly reacting to their addiction is living in the eye of a hurricane.

They were your friend, your lover, your child, your parent. You shared your dreams, desire, the good times and the bad. Your life has progressed from the Friday night parties to really making your way in this world, but theirs has stayed in that high school mentality. When they acknowledge you, they are in some kind of trouble. Trouble seems to plague them and you are beginning to believe that if it was not for bad luck, they would have no luck at all. They need a place to stay for the night. They need to be bailed out of jail. They need money. They need you to do something, call in sick, lie for them, help them, take an action for them, give them. Each time you see them they look a little worse. Each time you deal with them, they are a little more snide, negative, manipulative, demanding, or just plain mean.

How could they let themselves get this way? Why can they not see what they are doing to themselves? The fact is they can, but cannot see a way or reason to stop. Call it what ever you want, addiction is baffling. It affects the body and the mind. The compulsion to use is overwhelming. It impacts everyone the addict or alcoholic comes in contact with. You were their friend, and you can help.

There is a lot of literature that has been written about detachment, and enabling. It seems everything we do to help or support the individual in getting into recovery is enabling. How do you detach? How do you keep your house going and turn your back on a husband or child? You know they are a good person, it is just the disease. They are dying, and pull at your heart strings. You need to decide to stop the chaos in your own world and continue on with your life. This is where the road forks. Decide for yourself whether you will take charge situation, or continue to be sucked into the vortex of their disease.

There are many circumstances, and many different scenarios. We like to believe that our situation is unique and special. The recurring patterns of addiction, however, give us clues as to what actions we can take to maintain ourselves, and support the addict alcoholic with out falling into their manipulative self serving environment. It requires us to have strength of character, much stronger than we can imagine. We need to steal ourselves for the inevitable. We are the ones that need to take control of all situations and through our action, stay the course.

To begin with, you need to understand that the addiction is, is only a symptom. That it is part of the problem. To deal effectively with addiction we must tackle not only the physical, but the behavioral and emotional issues as well. Their denial of the addiction, is part of the disease. This is what brings them pleasure. This is what stops the pain. They cannot see how using has changed them at all. This is especially true for alcohol.

In many ways you are dealing with a teenager. Actually, most individuals stop maturing

based on the age that they start using. Far too often you are looking at a 40 year old man who is acting like a 14 year old boy. Look at the entire picture, and see if you do not agree. Using adult logic falls on deaf ears. If you are finding yourself asking the question, "Why did you do that?" The answer 9 out of 10 times will be I did not think. That is the difference between an adult and a teenager. They simply never thought of the consequences.

For example, the Maplewood man that stopped at the bar with his 1 year old in the back seat. He stopped for a single beer. 5 hours later he is being arrested for child endangerment. He simply did not notice that the time had gone by. What non alcoholic parent considers stopping for a beer in the first place as a good adult choice? Responsibility for someone other than himself, simply disappeared. If he were 14, you would chalk that up to childish behavior, but he was 37. Is he a criminal? He is simply a drunk. His disease is progressing and now he is not laughable but a danger to others.

You can make a difference. You can stop accepting behavior that is child like, and raise the bar. You can draw the line in the sand, and tell them, "No more. You come up to my level and do for yourself." It is okay to say no and force them into the corner, simply by not allowing their antics to wash over you. When they ask for you to help them again, ask them what is different this time. You will listen to a flurry of promises, justification, and rationalization, excuses and blame. If you disagree they will try another tactic, perhaps screaming at you convincing you that all their misfortune is your fault. They will try many different techniques to get you emotionally enmeshed in their universe. Here is where we fail the addict or alcoholic. We lower ourselves to their emotional level. At this point, you have the power to succeed in making a difference. In the up coming teleclass, May 7th and 13th, we will be talking about specific tactics you can use.

You need to take the emotional power out. Here is a skill that creates result. You must be prepared. They will change tactics in mid sentence when they realize one is not working. They may go in seconds from gently talking, to screaming. Imagine the small child that asked for a balloon and was shocked when they did not get it. As the only adult in the room it is your responsibility to stay calm. Be as emotionless as possible. Do not allow yourself to be sucked into their emotional mess.

Stop compromising, and start standing up for you. Only you can help them set their bar higher. They have lost that ability to try to reach for success. For more information, and to join a tele class focused on living with addiction, go to fnfclass.motivate4success.com

You have the power to change a life, but only if you are willing. Make a difference today.

<http://www.motivate4success.com>