

## About Helping the Addict

I spent most of my life addicted to drugs, one or another. Actually I had three periods of addiction that each centered on a different drug-or-choice. For a long time I was just a user and anything that altered my mind was OK! My first period of use exclusive to one drug featured “*Cocaine*”. Second on center stage was “*Alcohol*”. Finally, the absolute destroyer was “*Methamphetamines*”! The whole scenario covered life from ages 11 to 45! I was a full-blown addict for nearly 30 of these years. Mind you, I was for various substantial lengths of time, what is termed as a “*functional addict*”! This is actually a misconception because I only “appeared” to be functional. A lot was going on that I was able to hide from the casual observer, and even most relatively close family and friends. This is a story of it’s own! The point to be made is this... the most tragic commonality over this period of three decades in addiction was... the pain, fear and grief that I brought on those who loved me, were part of my life, or inadvertently got in the way of my using! The Victims...

Addiction is such an annihilator of a user’s life that they, users, are almost always the predominant “focus of their own attention”! Not only that, but society’s focus is directed at them because they wreak so much havoc on it’s structure and the safety of the citizens and their property.

True enough, it’s high time that this problem be addressed through an educated, open-minded method of problem solving. Treating addicts as criminals has failed for long enough. The disease concept is really the only hope for a solution that has a positive outcome for everyone involved, which is, quite frankly... everyone! Treatment programs

understand the importance of who it is that is around an addict on a regular basis. The problem is that these people are being subjected to that addict for years, sometimes decades, before the first treatment episode begins. With some education, advice and concern these *victims* can help themselves while the addicts' addiction and life circumstances are still only leading up to treatment. In fact, helping you, if you are reading this, I think I can safely say "you"... you will probably be helping the addict as much as you do yourself. With nothing but the best of intentions, the one's who love an addict the most, are usually their greatest enablers. That's because you are the easiest to use! Though it's often subconscious, not always but often... they can count on being able to get away with abusing your love. It's not meanness, heartlessness or carelessness... it's just addiction changing the brain into a sick one. This is how you are going to learn to protect yourself and shield yourself from much of the harm that you can inflict on yourself, or allow to be inflicted upon you! Addiction is like a beast you have encountered by surprise and you have to figure out how to fight back with what you have available, at the time. If you don't do this, you'll suffer nearly as much as the addict does!

The one thing you have that they do not, is your own mind, but it will suffer too if you can't become open-minded and teachable. It's not rocket science, though.

It's really more about being "*willing*" to learn, and "*willing*" to change, than it is about being "*able*" to do these things. We have to learn to be, objective, in our dealings with the *addict* that we love, or care about, and love and concern make objectivity a very difficult proposition.

Believe me, when you come to know what makes an addict an addict, a lot of your difficulties become less ominous because of one reason; you can most often stop blaming yourself. You'll learn that "blame" doesn't need to be assigned. It doesn't matter where the fault lies, so you can even stop blaming them, too. Nobody needs to be the "scapegoat".

Confrontation only works well if you know how to do it well, and with an addict, confrontation not done well is usually a disaster for both parties. Pleading to love, and to common sense, never works, at least, it doesn't work until denial has been properly addressed.

Until you know "the disease" your "take" on things is... well... kind of... just... OFF! That's why helping an addict with their problem is so frustrating and defeating. I have an EBook on my Site, *Addiction: Why Me?* that is a plain language explanation of the physiological and psychological nature of addiction. It is based on the disease concept that virtually all treatment centers now use. It is designed to help both the Addict and their Victims.

If you are having a life problem because of your own or someone else's addiction to alcohol or drugs, I suggest educating yourself about how to address this problem. Dealing with addiction does not come naturally, as it is a very complicated disease. For victims, there is a splinter group from Alcoholics Anonymous called Al-Anon. This is a good place for support and help whether the problem is alcoholism or drug addiction. For the addict and alcoholic, Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous have the best results of any other form of addressing the

diseases of addiction. It is not absolutely required that one enter a "treatment program" to recover, but if you have the financial means, it is almost a "must do".