

## *Addiction: How Much is Too Much?*

How much is too much? There is always a lot of debate about this inside the families of Addicts and Alcoholics. Of course, the Users always defend their selves and claim that they can, "quit anytime I decide that I want to." But, just what is too much? The treatment field gauges this by looking at the word "Problem". When has it become a "Problem"?

There are a wide range of things to be considered to include in the Problem area. First and foremost is "relations". In the family, anytime "your" using and/or "drinking" affects "me" it is a problem. At work, tardiness, absenteeism, productivity, and safety usually show the first manifestations of using becoming an Addiction or Problem. The family most-in-generally overlooks the Problem at home until they see it develop into a potential problem "on the job" because it affects the finances and thus the lifestyle of the family members.

Sadly, friends and family, outside of the nuclear family see a Problem and for many varied reasons take it as "not my business." This is not only sad but most likely a proper response, since the User will just eliminate most of them from their daily life if things are said that they don't want to here. Their only means of intervening is in coordination with and immediate family member! Denial totally dominates early stage Addiction. In early Addiction, usually only family that has gone to the trouble of learning some real factual information regarding Addiction, can successfully intervene with their family member. Other than that, only Law Enforcement and the Criminal Justice System have a profound effect on the "Denial Stage" that enables the User to continue with the Addictive Behavior. When they intervene there definitely is a Problem!

Lets look at the "Problem" thing directly:

It is simple to come up with a working definition. If anything that can be considered a Problem can be directly connected to the alcohol or drug use, then the alcohol or drug use has become a Problem. The debate always ends up centered on, "well I don't think that, that is really a problem". This keeps discussion at a petty level while the Addiction evolves. Truthfully, something as simple as not being able to get up in the morning or getting up in the morning and it taking longer than is usual to become functional can be a major problem. This can manifest into dangerous driving, safety problems on the job and using to "feel good" or "get going" for the day! The "Key" is to judge this "What is a problem?" and facing this reality once determined. The fact is that "Illicit", or commonly abused illegal drugs, are against the law. That's a Problem, period! With alcohol, a heavy drinker can get up in the morning with their BAC (blood-alcohol content) beyond the limit of the law. That's a Problem, period! Inability to eat properly on a normal schedule, is a problem. Change of temperament, almost always a side effect of any drug use, is a Problem. Decreased personal hygiene is a Problem. We should get the point by now, I think. It's not that hard to assess when "Using" is Problem. Getting the User to see it, is where the real Problem comes in to play!

A "User" rationalizes and justifies "problems" on a daily basis as their "use" continues and grows into an Addiction. A very strong "ego defense" mechanism evolves. It's the, watching the hands on a clock move, syndrome! It's definitely happening but so gradual that it's nearly impossible to see. By the time any confrontation takes place, neatly, well evolved excuses protect the "User" from most criticism. Here, for any constructive intervening to take place a well thought out rebuttal is crucial. Otherwise, intervention will surely become just another "Argument" in the

endless number of these that take place between Problem Users and those concerned enough to risk confrontation.

So, being absolutely truthful, the need to use any mind altering drug, is where the "Problem" started, and in fact, is the actual Problem! Of course there are those who can safely use recreationally. But, they usually use very seldom and sparingly, eventually discontinuing use all together. They are capable of identifying use as a problem and can react objectively. As time goes by and we learn more and more about the Addictive Personality, we are realizing that if you never experiment with "Using" to start with, you will never have to face all of these Problems that come with Drug Abuse and Addiction.

In summary: If you "Use" or someone close to you is a "User", some sort of rational evaluation of problems is a necessity to ever be able to confront this "Use" and its far reaching effects. This kind of "problem confrontation" is the basis for the, now prevalent use of, the "Cognitive Behavioral Therapies" approach used in very many treatment programs. Most "Self Help" programs have used this kind of problem confrontation for years, not identifying it as a Therapy, and combining it with some level of Spiritually developmental Life improvement concept! This accounts for the evolution of the highly successful and widespread involvement in "12 Step Programs" Worldwide. Their belief in the power of Spirituality combined with rational Problem confrontation and a plan to effect change, has inspired the development of "Groups" meeting on a regular basis, to individually address hundreds of different Problems that can be classified as "Habitual" or "Addictive" behaviors. This whole concept was originated in the birth of "Alcoholics Anonymous" in the early 20th century. It has led to the formation of the Groups Narcotics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous and Overeaters Anonymous, to mention only of few of many. I provide a lot of Resources, Facts and Information about Self Help at my web site, [Addiction: Why Me?](#)