

4 Keys to Confronting an Addict

Recently, my wife and I stopped in at the Chickahominy House Restaurant in Williamsburg, Va. What a meal!

The chili was perfect for a brisk day. And then they brought out the ham biscuits. Thinly sliced, salt-cured ham on a perfectly shaped little biscuit. A little apple butter on it, and I'm instantly transported back to Colonial Williamsburg. For health reasons, I don't eat much pork at all. For Jewish people, ham was and is completely off limits. So is blood sausage, shrimp and a list of other foods.

So when the Apostle Peter was found sitting at the table with Gentiles who were eating these things, it was a big deal. God had told Peter that everything He has blessed is clean; still there was confusion and division:

"But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him publicly, speaking strongly against what he was doing, for it was very wrong. When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile Christians, who don't bother with circumcision. But afterward, when some Jewish friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore because he was afraid of what these legalists would say. Then the other Jewish Christians followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was influenced to join them in their hypocrisy. (Gal. 2:11-14)

The Power of Confrontation

The Apostle Paul felt that he "had" to oppose Peter. He could NOT stay silent! When we talk about addicts and addictions, there comes a time when the people in your life cannot take your behavior any longer. Someone has to stand up and yell, "Enough." Unfortunately, if this does not happen, and if everyone continues to enable and support the addict, they will

continue to get worse. It calls for a confrontation.

Types of Confrontations

Self-Confrontation

You read your Bible, you talk within yourself and confront your problems. As you talk within yourself you begin to face the lies you have come to believe. Confronting ourselves is not an easy thing to do. Our hearts can be most deceptive. That's why using the Word of God as a filter is best. The truth of God's Word never changes. As I expose my heart and mind to God's words, thoughts and ideas, I am changed.

Human Intervention

Someone confronts you because they cannot take your behavior any longer. It may be frustrating or even make you angry that relatives, friends, or co-workers would actually confront you for your behavior. You can look at it this way: what a flattery that people around me care enough to tell me what they see in me.

God-Confrontation

God orchestrates situations in your life and consequences you can no longer deny. God is big enough and creative enough to get our attention. He knows how to make us look upward. It might be a ., perhaps a child that we love so dearly says, "Mommy, you scare me when you get so angry." God will allow us to get far away, he lengthens the rope far enough for us to fall completely.

Four Keys to Confront an Addict

1. Deal with the falsehood you know about. Peter had flip-flopped. He had acted wrongly and became a hypocrite! Can you hear him now? He might have said something like this, "But I thought it would be okay to flip-flop. I didn't want to be rejected by the elders!" You see Peter had come to believe that he could fellowship with the Gentile Christians with no repercussions in his live. Can you imagine him, eating that

big slice of honey-glazed ham with the pineapple and little cherry on top? He was enjoying his newfound freedom with his new homies.

When confronting someone, you must focus on the wrongs that you know about. For substance abuse issues, this requires either a drug or alcohol test or both. I've had people stare me down and swear they haven't used, only to find that the drug test doesn't lie. The urine test for substances and saliva test for alcohol is accurate and will help everyone keep their sanity. Recently, a couple of my guys pointed out a guy they were sure was on heroin. He stared at me with a fixed gaze. Then the excuses began, "I don't have to go right now." Finally, to our surprise, he was clear of all the substances in the test. Then I gave him an alcohol saliva test. It was bright green. He failed.

2. Fight your fears. Peter was afraid of what people would think and say of him. The Jewish leaders had arrived from Jerusalem. They might think something was wrong with him as they actually saw him with that slice of ham on his plate. Paul, on the other hand, was not concerned about what people would think of him.

Addicts are master manipulators. They control with guilt and fear and anything else they can conjure up. Do not be afraid and do not confront alone.

3. Realize Others are Drowning wth him/her. Even Barnabas! "The Encourager," the man who loved people the most, went down with the ship. He also flip-flopped. Let me ask you these questions, "Who is being most effected by the consequences of your addiction? Who will be left behind in the aftermath of your behavior? Who will be in therapy next year explaining to someone how you have effected their lives and wounded them with your words and actions?" Magnify the consequences your behavior will have in the next generations!

If you do not confront, what is the worst that might happen?

4. Renew Your Passion for God and People. Peter had confused his passion and went back to pleasing people. PLEASE GOD! LOVE GOD! If people don't like it, TOUGH! Sometimes you will have to choose. The biggest mistake denial causes is for us to actually think this whole thing is about us. It is about God and having a vital love-relationship of worship with Him!

"Look after each other so that none of you will miss out on the special favor of God. Watch out that no bitter root of unbelief rises up among you, for whenever it springs up, many are corrupted by its poison." (Heb. 12:15)

Do not allow yourself to become tainted by an addict's behavior. Roots of bitterness run deep, but if we confront properly, many people will get better.

We confronted a young man a few months ago and sent him to a rehabilitation farm. He has been there for six months and just informed us that he wants to stay on for another six months and become a counselor!

***Dr. Paul Hardy** is the founder and executive director of Recovery for Life Ministries in eastern Virginia. For the last 12 years, he and his wife Suzie have dedicated their lives to helping people break free from the bondages of addictions and compulsive behaviors.*