

The 5 Commandments for True Addiction Recovery

A partner of an addict has often been deceived by the addict's addictive life style. Addicts by nature, have become masters of dishonesty over the years. I can't tell you how many partners of addicts I have counseled who have been married many years and honestly had no idea as to the addict's behavior. I remember one wife who found out about her husband's addictive behavior by breaking into her husband's safe and finding the evidence of his addiction. During all their years of marriage, she believed he was one person and found out he was really someone else.

I counseled with these partners years before the conception of the internet. Now I receive phone calls and emails regularly from partners checking the history files on their computers and finding out their spouse is an addict. Ongoing deceit is exactly what a partner of any addict does not deserve to have happen over and over again.

One thing that I have learned over the years of counseling addicts is that they are the single most motivated people in the world. The greatest part about their motivation is that it is all internal motivation. Think about the addict for a moment. If an addict wanted to develop a hobby or get involved in a sport or social activity, wouldn't they go all-out to do this? If they wanted to learn how to paint or golf, they would probably buy the best equipment money could buy. They would read every book and go on the internet to learn more about their specific interests. They would even meet the local or national experts in that field so they could maximize this activity. Almost every partner married to an addict can identify with this aspect of their addicted spouse. Unless they are clinically depressed, the addict will generally have this quality.

When an addict comes into my office, I know they already have all the skills needed for them to get better. They know how to meet new people, they know how to make phone calls to people they don't know, and they know how to read; even better, they know how to stay 100% focused to get something done when they want to. They know how to create time to be somewhere if they want to. Every time I tell an addict this, they always laugh because all (and I do mean all) their excuses not to give 100% in their recovery are totally taken away.

When I ask an addict to start recovery by doing the basics which we call the Five Commandments of early recovery, I know they can stay focused to do it. The Five Commandments are very simple, but when applied to the addiction, can put the addiction into remission. These are all behaviors the addict actually does, not intends to do or promises to do. When addicts do these Five Commandments during the first 100 Days of recovery, you can expect progress. The Five Commandments are simple:

1. Pray: in the morning, asking God to keep you clean today.
2. Read: literature related to their addiction recovery daily.
3. Groups: attend a 12-step group as often as possible.
4. Call: someone in the group daily to report your recovery status.
5. Pray: again, thanking God for a day of sobriety.

These five steps may sound simple enough to you because, honestly, they are easy to do. If your addict only wants to do 1, 2 and 5, then he is not ready for recovery. Attending a group and making calls are the hallmarks of someone who wants to get better. Only those who want to get better and who are internally motivated get better. Those who want to do it their own way are simply lying to themselves and their partner. Remember, if you believe a lie instead of believing behavior, you are actively choosing denial. That would not only be them

lying to you, that would be you lying to yourself.

Believing their behavior is the only way for a partner to stay sane. If they don't attend groups or make recovery efforts, they don't want recovery, and you need to make hard choices for yourself and your family.

Also, in this same stream of thought, if you keep hearing that they "have to" do all these things instead of an attitude of "I get to" recover, be concerned. Those who realize they are sick and that they can get better are generally so grateful that there is a name for what they have and that there is help for them. Look for creativity in your addict's recovery. They will begin to create time for meetings, phone calls and reading recovery material; you will begin to see them do more than just the minimum.

Remember, always believe behavior. {eo}

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