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CONTACT: Dennis Marcellino (503) 650-8840

Email: Dennis@AddictionFreeForever.com

What a Concerned Parent or Spouse of Someone with a Drug or Alcohol Problem Can Do

As an addiction recovery counselor and author of a book and program that shows how to permanently end an addiction, I receive calls and emails from concerned parents and spouses asking how they can help their loved ones. Here's the crux of what I say.

Q. How can a concerned parent, spouse, relative or friend help someone end a drug or alcohol problem?

A. Going to a rehab center or getting into counseling can be very expensive. But they are unnecessary if a person does my program. And that works fine for someone who already desires to get rid of an alcohol or drug problem. But what about someone who doesn't? How can you convince them to do the program? There are 5 things you can do.

1. Above all else, follow the Holy Spirit's lead and express and do what the Holy Spirit puts in your heart. And go into deep prayer to sort those messages out from just being reactionary.
2. Put yourself in the addicted person's shoes to understand WHY they're addicted, and see if you can help them find a solution to the underlying problem (that they don't seem to be able to solve on their own).
3. In a loving, caring way, ask them what the deep reasons are why they are addicted. In this way you can help them explore the deeper feelings behind their behavior so that they can get control over them, rather than be a slave to them.
4. Tell them that you are concerned about their addiction and that you are offering to partner with them in ending the addiction if they are willing.
5. Tell them about my inexpensive program that offers a once-and-for-all end to their addiction that both I and God guarantee and that you're willing to go through it with them if they'd like. You can also say that I used drugs and alcohol for 18 years, was ridded of that problem very quickly, and for the last 25 years now they are something I wouldn't use, not because I have a weakness for them and need to will them out of my life, but just because I've achieved a positive inner life that wouldn't want to be negatively effected by the harsh effects of drugs and alcohol.

Q. What about someone who isn't willing to end a drug or alcohol problem because they just see drinking and taking drugs as fun?

A. Well, to a normally healthy and sensitive person, those things aren't fun. So a goal here is that a person will need to get to a "normally healthy and sensitive" state, which my program shows how to do. Like I say in it, "You can't expect that a person will 'say no to drugs' until they have something better to say yes to'. Ways that you can persuade them to want to end drug and alcohol use are (from the negative perspective) ask them, "Are hangovers and bad drug experiences and ruining your health, finances and relationships fun?" (And from the positive perspective you can say) "There's an inexpensive program, that I'll pay for, that guarantees that you'll not only get rid of the negatives, but you'll keep all the positives plus" (like love, peace, happiness, deep fulfillment, confidence, eternal security, an inspired life, and even high states naturally.)

Recently I received an email from a parent saying that their 16 year old son was addicted to drugs and even wrote a suicide note a few months back. He said that when he was on drugs he felt a certain kind of peace, but when he was not on them he felt very depressed. He refused to get treatment and just wanted to drop out of school, get a job and do drugs.

They bought my program (which he refused to do) and asked my advice as to how they could handle this situation. Here's what I said back to them in email.

"Regarding your son refusing to read the *Addiction Free Forever* book, there are a number of things you can do. I'll give you some suggestions, but only you know the whole situation and what you feel would work.

You need to communicate to him that if he feels like he can make independent decisions from his parents, then you and his father have some independent feelings and decisions also. You can say that you both are not comfortable with how things are going and if he wants you to consider his feelings, then you need for him to consider your feelings as well...at least enough to read the book and do the program. Even if he does that half-heartedly, the process of him reading the book and doing the program could open up his eyes to better possibilities, which he would thank you for later. You could also say that to hear of a suicide note makes you very upset because you love him, and you want to do whatever you can to try to make it so that he doesn't feel that way. Your mind and heart won't allow you to just let it lie, and you feel like you need to take action of some sort to quell these upset feelings. And you feel like him doing the *Addiction Free Forever* program has the potential of showing him how to be happy and not depressed. But you just can't stand by and feel settled unless something is done.

All of that would be the gentle approach that respects his independence. But really, his position is less than independent because he is living in your house and is under age and you are his parents/guardians. But only you can feel out if giving him some tougher options (of which there are a few) would be productive or counterproductive."

In a phone conversation with these parents I ended up saying that they should feel a green light within by their instinct for any decision they make. There are cases where tough love works in that it creates a discipline which the addicted person is not able to carry out. (But deep down they are appreciative of that help, although they might not admit it). For others, tough love might push them further away and maybe even over the edge. For some, soft love might work in that they'll feel like somebody really cares. For others, soft love is an opportunity to take advantage of someone to further their addiction.

That's why I recommend relying on a peaceful, prayerful, energized, feeling within their instinct as to which of these approaches to take. And the approach is not just centered on the addicted person, but it is also centered on the helper's feelings as to what they need in their life. That is, they might not be able to be comfortable with themselves if they are aiding and abetting an addiction in any way. In that case they might want to assess their bargaining position with the person who is giving themselves over to alcohol or drugs and say, "I can't peacefully live with such a person and therefore I need for you to move out." (Or they would move out). That then paints a different picture for the person who is giving themselves to drugs, as they make an overall evaluation of their life and what the best way to go would be.

What about something as extreme as arranging an "intervention"? Well, going to prison is a kind of intervention that society will force upon a person who won't take responsibility to not do harmful actions. Therefore, a non-prison intervention might be a good thing if it is going to keep a person out of prison (where they could get worse) or from killing themselves or hurting others. But this should only be done not just to stop a person from using drugs and alcohol, because even if you stop a person, whatever drove them to alcohol and drugs in the first place will drive them back again if it isn't fixed. An intervention should be done only if the people arranging and doing the intervention are positive that they have a program that really will work in getting a person to not want drugs or alcohol anymore, and they feel that an intervention is the only way they are going to get the abuser to see that (for example if they are lazy, stubborn or blind, but not totally irresponsible and would opt for the better yes if they knew it existed and really would lead them to a better life that wouldn't be hard to live out).

The bottom line here is: people use alcohol and drugs for a reason. Therefore, they would need a reason to stop using them. Unfortunately pain and tragedy will often step in and give them that reason. And hopefully they won't have a fatal or severely damaging tragedy (to themselves and/or others) in the mean time (which also is often the case). But the way that I say it in my program is: "You can't expect that a person will 'say no to drugs' unless they have something better to say yes to." So as part of my program I convince a person as to what the better, natural, without-alcohol-or-drugs "yes" is and how to transform themselves and their lives to it.

I discovered this better "yes" after 18 years of addiction. And it has worked extremely well for the 25 years since I stopped drinking and using drugs. Now drugs and alcohol are too negative of experiences for me to even want to allow them into my being. That is why

- Addiction Free Forever (page 5) -

I call myself an EX alcoholic and drug user and not a recovering one. There is no temptation to want to use something that will give me nothing anymore (because of the sensitivity I've developed and how I've grown) other than a headache or hangover or a "bad trip". Therefore I'm very inspired now to want to share how anybody can achieve the same thing I did and end up in a deeply satisfying, very inspired life.

Dennis Marcellino's inexpensive Addiction Free Forever book and workbook can be purchased at www.AddictionFreeForever.com.

To book him for a media interview, go to www.AddictionFreeForever.com/mediakit.html