

## **Bro. "B's" experience with Addiction**

Addiction to substances, are Yahweh's gifts misused, which propel individuals toward inward pain, guilt, and shame that drive the addictive cycle. Some years ago I too began the downward spiral into the addiction lifestyle. Whether or not the addiction was genetically based is of absolutely no consequence as I began and maintained this lifestyle. Each addict has his or her personal "drug-a-log" (a personal account of what he/she used), and it isn't my purpose to elaborate on mine. Suffice to say – it was an addiction. Although I prayed for strength to stop, I could not bring myself to the task and my addiction continued, until it began to get out of control. Finally I was confronted by co-workers and at long last found a way out. I admitted to my addiction. This is in many ways, the first step in the road to recovery - admitting to the disease of addiction. Bear in mind that this was no easy task for a Christadelphian. After all, I should have been setting the example, but instead I was an example of what many would not want to be. Not only did I lose my job, but I lost my self-respect; my integrity; and worst of all, my sin brought a rift between me and our God. In the depths of my addiction, I had missed Bible classes, Memorial Service on more than 1 occasion, and had distanced myself from my Brethren.

One day, having come home early from work, the first thing I did was to call my Sister-wife and painfully relayed the fact that I had been confronted by my employer and had been put on leave from the Medical Staff. She was understanding and supportive, and immediately came home to care for

me. Ideally, a good support group is, first, a place where recovering addicts will find true acceptance and a sense of unconditional love. I then called an older Brother and Sister and recounted my recent experience. We then began having a weekly Bible Study, which became an anchor for me; a non-judgmental setting and a regular time for study. This time, in retrospect, enabled me to regain a sliver of the self-respect and integrity I have lost while in my addiction.

Next came the Drug Rehab center, where I spent 3 weeks in group therapy. Again, it was time away from my wife and children, and my Brethren. The consolation in this, was that the time away was for productive purposes as opposed to the "time away" while in the addictive process. The path was then clear to me, and I knew I needed to devote my time and energy in a good recovery plan, which involved counselling, countless AA and NA meetings, and most importantly – regular Bible Classes and Fellowship with others of Precious Faith.

I have been drug free for 6 years now, and each day is one in which I am extremely thankful to awaken to. Recovery agrees with the spiritual truth of becoming a "new creation" in Christ. The term "recover" actually appears in 2 Timothy 2:25, where according to Vine ("Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words") is "ananepho" which means to "recover"; to return to a state of soberness, as from a state of delirium or drunkenness". Recovery is a process much like our growth in the Truth, and it needs to be sought after and time tested.

*"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." James 5:19*



## **Coaching for Life**

*A sister and her families' experience in supporting an brother with an addiction*

If you're wondering about helping someone with an addiction to drugs, you should realize you will be taking on a huge commitment. This is not something you do lightly. Your involvement is likely to last many years. Along the way you will have wonderful days, and days in which you feel as if your heart will break. You are signing up for daily contact, both in person and on the phone, with periods of very frequent phone calls depending upon the type of day your friend is having.

A commitment like this requires a conviction that you are in each other's lives because God made it happen. You must both feel this. It is a fact that will hold you together, and keep you going whenever you feel that you are in over your head. I say both, because ideally this is a two-way relationship, with each of you signing up for the journey. It is also critical to have the total support and involvement of your spouse, providing advice, stability and encouragement, and limiting the many risks associated with one-to-one counselling.

It goes without saying that prayer is crucial. The addict will likely be praying for personal strength, and resolve. As the helper, you may also pray for a broader set of outcomes, like a job, or avoiding another prison term. In my experience, when you have your friend's interests at heart, God will answer your prayers in amazing ways. I ask for specific things — with deadlines — and God delivers again and again. It does wonders for your faith!

When I began I knew that I had to educate myself. I read many books on addiction, on addictive personality behaviours, on substance abuse. This is serious and important work, and deserves diligence. In all the reading I have done, I learned that there are common characteristics amongst drug users. Some of these characteristics are the result of using drugs, and some are the reasons they use in the first place. Knowing which ones apply to the addict you are helping is invaluable. Addicts are full of self-doubt and fears; they have a tendency to lie to themselves and others. They have a strong sense that they are a disappointment. They are ashamed of their past, yet they don't have a notion of consequences. They live in the moment, without much thought for the future, with little sense of time and a poor memory bank. This means they don't have short term goals, let alone long term ones. They want to be happy, but feel that life has let them down. They hang out with other addicts who don't understand what love is — although they all desperately want to be loved.

The reality of supporting an addict is that they will probably fall off the wagon, slip up, give in to temptation, etc. What do you do? First of all, stress that you aren't disappointed *in* them, but *for* them.

This has to be true for you. If it isn't true, then you need to get your head around the concept. They need to know that you still love them, that you are still here for them. They need to know that they can trust you. Sympathize, but encourage them to put it behind them and move on. Remind them how long they went without using, tell them that they can do it again. It is not the end of the world. Pick up and carry on. You do



### ***Some Tips on What To Do if Someone You Love Shows Signs of Addiction.***

*Taken from the booklet, Perils of Drug and Alcohol Abuse.*

**DO** look out for the signs of continued drug misuse:-

- sudden and persisting changes of mood
- unusual irritability or aggression
- loss of appetite
- loss of interest in hobbies / sports / work or friends
- increased evidence of telling lies or furtive behaviour
- unexplained loss of money or belongings from the home
- unusual bouts of drowsiness / sleeping

**DO** check the facts.

**DON'T** jump to conclusions.

**DO** take your time to assess the situation.

**DO** stay calm when the truth comes out.

**DO TALK** however reluctant you may be or difficult the

situation. Parents are the most important influence in a child's life. They do hear what you say and notice what you do. But they also care a lot about what their friends and peer group think and that is the great dilemma for young people.

Above all,

**DO LISTEN.** Your child needs you to try and understand how things look from their point of view. You won't necessarily agree and it may be difficult to discuss certain subjects but try to talk about their BIG issues not yours. Drugs and alcohol will certainly be one and may be their real concern as well as yours.

**DO** take a young person seriously.

**DO** take time to get to know their views, feelings and friends, but give them space.

**DON'T** bully, lecture, preach or scare your children about drugs. This will not work.

**DO** let them know your feelings about drugs. Your child is more likely to respect them if given in a sensitive and straightforward manner.

**DO** set an example with regard to alcohol and tobacco especially.

**DO** get them to think how they can refuse drugs or get help / advice.

**DO** work with them and not against them.

Try to instil a sense of personal responsibility when help or support is required. For example drugs and alcohol services however well intentioned can not be forced on anyone. In other words

**DON'T** do everything in trying to help someone but rather

try to help them to help themselves. If a "big problem" emerges **DON'T** panic, stay calm.

**DO** find out the facts about the drug taking and the type of drug(s) in question. Get information from any / all sources

**DON'T** be devious or break confidence as your relationship with the young person may be the most important factor in preventing deterioration and aiding recovery.

**DON'T** assume complete abstinence from drug taking has to be the first or only goal.

Dealing with addiction may take some time. Small steps in the right direction are more likely and achievable for a drug misuser than the huge gains that are often expected immediately by friends and family.

**DO** encourage these small steps and

**DO** praise achievements however slight these might be initially.

**DO** show real tolerance to continuing difficult and challenging behaviour. Surely we have a wonderful example in the Lord Jesus. Our foundations may be shaken but a testing of our faith can bring rewards in the long run. No one who has personal experience of drug misuse will readily dismiss the rich blessings of an "ordinary" life and ever forget to be thankful for the love that is shown to us by God through his Son. We should never forsake a drug misuser by saying that there is no hope of a change. But occasionally we have to withdraw to a safe distance if

there is real danger to ourselves or it is deemed to be in the best interests of that person. Take advice.

Unfortunately those who misuse drugs have to go all the way down into the gutter before they can pick themselves up again. Remember the prodigal son!

**DO** take advice from the professionals i.e. Drug Agencies, Addiction Units, Counselling Services (and yes, this might /should include The Care Group). There are many sources of help,

some statutory, some voluntary; KEEP asking especially if you are unsure what to do next or where to go for help.

**DON'T EVER** let pride or denial prevent or delay help being accessed.

**DO** take heart that not all young people who experience drug taking become the stereotypical "drug-addict" on a destructive, downward spiral.

Finally **DO pray**. Positive outcomes are not in the hands of just those that care for, support and treat drug misusers.

## Caring Network Resources

- **Christadelphian Care-Line**, 1 866 823-1039 toll-free
- [www.caringnetwork.ca](http://www.caringnetwork.ca)  
Caring Network Website  
[http://www.caringnetwork.ca/Wisdom/Substance\\_Abuse/SubstanceAbuse01.htm](http://www.caringnetwork.ca/Wisdom/Substance_Abuse/SubstanceAbuse01.htm) (this site includes among other information, questionnaires to help identify addiction and a comparison of the 12 Steps of AA and Biblical principles)

## Christadelphian Resources

- <http://www.wcfsolutions.org/Alcoholism.html>
- <http://www.wcfsolutions.org/DrugAbuse.html>
- **Perils of Drug and Alcohol Abuse**, publication by the UK Caregroup and available from Sis. Joy Jennings Joy Jennings. 6 Stodola Drive, Brantford, ON, N3R 6J5 (519) 754-0902, [bobnjoy@vif.com](mailto:bobnjoy@vif.com)

## Non Christadelphian Resources

- <http://www.dependency.ws/>
- <http://www.arf.org/>
- <http://al-anon.alateen.on.ca/>
- [http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org/en\\_information\\_aa.cfm](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org/en_information_aa.cfm)
- **Opposing Viewpoints: Addiction**. Louise I. Gerdes (ed).
- **Addictive Thinking: Understanding Self-Deception**. Abraham J. Twerski.
- **The Addictive Personality**. Craig Nakken.
- **7 Tools to Beat Addiction**. Stanton Peele.
- **Alcoholism: Myths and Realities**. Doug Thorburn

**REQUEST** Please direct comments, suggestions, or useful resources to Sis Jennifer Daniel, 250 656.2396; 824 Falkirk Ave., North Saanich, BC V8L 5G8 [jenniferdaniel@telus.net](mailto:jenniferdaniel@telus.net)