

Top 3 Ways to Deal with a Partner's Addiction

Most people who are dealing with a partner's addiction find it to be a significant challenge, because the addiction affects all aspects of the relationship. And yet, it is HOW we choose to deal with the situation that can determine how manageable the challenge will be.

I have learned (from both my personal and professional experience) the "Top Three" most helpful things to know, when dealing with a partner's addiction. They are listed as follows:

1. Before any change can happen, we first need to figure out WHO has the power to make a change.

We all know that the only person we can really control is ourselves – but to actually live according to that philosophy takes a lot more effort and perseverance than what most of us expect. When we are dealing with a partner's addiction, we keep wishing and hoping that our partner will just get over it and be done with it. We convince ourselves that, if only they would change (i.e., give up their addiction), then everything would be fine in our relationship. So we may beg, or cry, or yell at our partner, to try to convince them to give up their addiction. And yet, the longer they DON'T do what we want, the more we feel angry, helpless, and hopeless. At that point, we start feeling stuck, because everything we have tried so far is still not getting us what we want. That is when we start to realize how true it is that ultimately, the only person we can really control is ourselves.

2. When we start to gain "CONSCIOUS awareness" of what is currently going on, then we can start to see new options that we did not think of before.

Most of us live on autopilot most of the time, because it helps us get through each day as efficiently as possible. Then we can focus our time and energy on all the things that truly require our focus (such as participating in a conference call, working on a major project under deadline, and addressing unexpected or unforeseen situations.) Unfortunately, the longer we operate on autopilot, the more we get ourselves into a "same ole, same ole" rut -- and we don't know how to get ourselves out of it, because we are so used to things being the way they are. The best way I have found to start getting out of our rut is to figure out NEW ways of doing things. We do this by first practicing "CONSCIOUS awareness". Another term for this is "mindfulness". In applying this concept to a partner's addiction, it's one thing to be aware that we are having yet another argument with our partner about their addiction. But CONSCIOUS awareness means that we are paying attention to things like our tone of voice, our facial expressions, and the tension in our neck and shoulder muscles while we are having the argument. When we focus on these minute details, we start to notice how we react in a particular situation. Then we can start figuring out other ways that we would want to react to that type of situation in the future.

3. When we give ourselves new options, we re-connect with our power to CHOOSE.

By using our conscious awareness to figure out new options, we no longer feel stuck in doing what we have always been used to doing. We can actually make a conscious choice of whether we want to keep doing what we have been doing -- or whether we are ready to try something different. In dealing with a partner's addiction, our ability to choose how we want to deal with it gives us a sense of self-empowerment, so that we no longer feel so helpless or hopeless. And as we learn to stay connected with our power to choose what we want for our lives, we can then start making positive changes toward the happier life and happier relationship that we always wanted.

If you are struggling with a partner's addiction, you do not have to go through it alone. Please call me at 949-678-9530, and let's see how I can help!

Wishing you all the best,

Ceci