



SafeHouse
safe and sound at last

You can listen to all SafeHouse Podcasts at:

<https://safehouserehab.com/safehouse-podcasts/>



Season 02. Episode 01

Tony Tells It Like It Is

Hi, Bruno J here, and Welcome back to Busting Addiction and Its Myths

I call this episode #1 season #2: Tony Tells It like It Is aka the perspective of a young recovering addict and what he has observed among other recovering and not recovering young addicts.

So, here we are again, Tony, my fine young genius friend. I'm going to set 'm up and you're gonna knock 'em down, ready? A few minutes on each topic should do it.

First, a brief take on where you are now, in your life and in your recovery.

T: Thanks, Bruno! I am in a really good place today with over two years clean and sober under my belt, working here at SafeHouse, going to my meetings, busy but content nonetheless.

B: I'll ask you to share your observations based on what you've seen and heard at treatment centers, at your 12-step meetings and also based on your personal experiences. First hand as it were.

Q: First, tell me about all the different drugs that are now available and what addicts are addicted to.

A: It's a new world: almost always alcohol is involved, then coke, meth, heroin – lots of heroin – marijuana, ketamine, and no fentanyl.

Q: Are most addicts addicted to multiple substances, and what are some of the typical combinations, and why do you think that is? Is alcohol typically present in the equation? Is the term drug of choice a valid term in your opinion?

A: Most definitely yes, alcohol almost always, then coke and/or heroin ...get drunk, stay drunk or buzzed, then get a lift from coke or mellow out with heroin.

Q: Explain to our listeners why alcohol is the most dangerous substance to withdraw from.

A: Alcohol withdrawal can cause seizures and delirium tremens aka the DT's, which are hallucinations, a sign of temporary psychosis. We prescribe medications that ease withdrawal and prevent the onset of seizures and DT's, as alcohol withdrawal is a serious business.

Q: And now, for the benefit of those who haven't seen the horrors of addiction from the inside, tell me the craziest horror story you have ever heard when it comes to addict behavior; this can be about anyone you've met or know, and of course we'll use a pseudonym, OK? This is just to give our audience an example of the things parents or other significant others do not hear because...well go ahead, Tony.

A: There are so many stories, but here is one: a middle age English woman who had been confined to her house to keep her away from alcohol scrapes up some loose change, climbs out her window, runs across a field to a small pub in the village, has enough money for maybe two pints, then runs back but has trouble climbing into her window. A neighbor calls the police not knowing what is going on in the blackness of night, then there are a bunch of police cars with lights flashing and a helicopter overhead looking for the so-called intruder.

All for a couple of pints in the middle of the night.

Willing to go to any length for beer.

Q: I know you attend both AA and NA (Narcotics Anonymous) meetings; tell me what are the different reasons that younger addicts go to the meetings...in other words what do they get out of them?

What got them to go in the first place...do the majority who attend get there out of treatment and it's part of the treatment deal. Or how many got there without going into treatment? We have to acknowledge that we are talking about AA and NA in Thailand, but the lessons are still valid, right?

Did you get steered into a 12 step program in treatment and if so, what did they say about it, why did they think it was important to your recovery?

A: So, I might as well answer those questions all in one shot.

I believe that for me and for other young addicts going to 12 step meetings is a critical part of my long term sobriety, to be with others who definitely understand how I feel and what my challenges are. Here I am not an alien, here everyone speaks the same language.

This is so important for young people who may think they are the only ones when they see others of their generation at the meetings.

Meetings are a safe place where you get to learn more about working the 12 steps which are designed to help you grow on the inside, to help you change your attitude toward being held accountable and to help you get more honest with yourself.

Q: Talk about the resistance that newcomers have to the concept of a higher power and why that is.

A: Yes, many newcomers absolutely run from the word God, because it reminds them of the older generation and maybe how they made you go to church and so on. If you explain a higher power as ANY power that is not YOU, like your group, or an idea like the Universe, then the idea of a higher power is made that much easier to take, and it is a good beginning.

Q: Talk about the myths that parents hold dear, the illusions they believe in about addiction, or about their addict, like this is a phase, or he needs a change in environment.

How long do addicts go before their families step in AND is that the major way that they decide to either enter treatment or get into a recovery program.

A: Well, a first parents are totally confused and angry like how could he? Hey just do not know how to handle an addict and they might have some old ideas like just knock it off...they definitely do not see the disease part.

It is usually a long time if ever that parents or other family members decide that enough is enough, we've done everything we can and many just hang on and hope for the best despite the emotional and financial cost.

Q: Talk about how relapsing is typical, and that it usually takes several tries before they get going for real. Also talk about all the different ways you tried to get clean on your own- if that's what happened - and all the different ways you've seen young addicts try to get clean on their own...

OR do they just hit the wall and crash first? And then what...like what happened to you?

A: In my case it was years and years of drinking and desperate attempts by my mother who never gave up. I think I was in and out of rehabs 4 or maybe 6 times. My dad had to write me off, i.e., not speak to me because he could not deal with the pain any more.

Q: What price did your parents pay, emotional and financial, just to get you to go into recovery...what price did they pay, what disruption did your addiction create for your family...

A: My mother, and dad for that matter, spent a fortune, borrowed from everyone, my mom even asked the parishioners at her church to chip in, which they did...all to be able to afford some expensive treatment.

My parents almost went completely under, what with borrowing against their home (our home), my dad selling some of his cherished collectibles, and the agony of seeing their only child relapse over and over.

It wasn't until I made the decision *on my own* to come to treatment as it happens, here in Thailand, that I could stop drinking and smoking dope, and start a life of abstinence and recovery.

That was after I had been brought into a treatment center in handcuffs, and I still thought I was OK and sort of normal. I had no intention even at that point of quitting drinking because I liked it so much. After all that, even.

Q: OK, the BIG question: what is the MOST EFFECTIVE WAY for parents or loved ones to get their addict/alcoholic to finally pay attention, pay a price, go into treatment or get his ass into recovery?

A: Get your addict alcoholic to see a professional who is trained in addiction disorders, if he'll go, and try to get an assessment done. See if what you suspect is true and how deeply addicted your loved really is...if your addict is able to tell the truth. Do an intervention if you can, at least confront him and say: enough is enough and we cannot enable you anymore. Line up a treatment facility. See what you can do to lure or push him in. Get some professional help for yourselves.

Q: What are the one or two things the family should NOT do, that would in fact prolong the free ride the addict is getting at the expense of the family?

A: One thing for sure is not to buy into his lies, or to do for him that which he can do for himself. This is really hard if the addict is living under the same roof, but the idea is to get him to experience real life consequences, or he will never grow up. Covering for him or helping with his excuses is what enables him to stay comfortable and abusing drugs or drinking to his heart's content.

So what have learned from Tony telling it like it is for himself as young, recovering alcoholic/addict?

1. "You almost never find an addict who is using just one drug, or someone who is "only" an alcoholic. The world of addiction today is filled with addicts who are using multiple drugs plus drinking alcohol."
2. "For younger addicts, 12-step meetings are seen as safe places where they meet others who speak the same language of recovery and share similar life experiences. They are no longer alone. Meetings and working the 12 steps are keys to staying clean and sober long term."

3. "There is great resistance to the word God, but less resistance if not an outright embracing of a higher power who is not you. It could be your group or the Universe or another idea that is a power greater than your own self."
4. "It is not uncommon to see many attempts at sobriety, like 4, 6 or more as was my case, before they get it...if they get it at all. Do not give up on your loved one just because they relapse. It is a sign that at least they are trying, but get them back in as soon as possible if it's at all feasible."
5. "I had to make my own decision that I was doing this for myself and only for myself before I took treatment seriously. Up to that point I was doing it just to appease my parents, which set me up for relapse as soon as I walked out of the facility. The same day, the same hour."

You can listen to all SafeHouse Podcasts at:

<https://safehouserehab.com/safehouse-podcasts/>