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Season 01. Episode 01

Podcast Title: Don't quit trying to quit

When it comes to alcohol and drug addiction, the truth is that it's almost unheard of for an addict or alcoholic to get clean and sober and stay that way from the get-go. Fact is, relapse is a characteristic of the disease. Many families and loved ones live with this myth: if only the addict really loved us that they wouldn't go back out there and drink or use again. Here's the myth-buster: love has nothing to do with it.

Commitment, on the other hand, has everything to do with it. When the addict is doing what is suggested in full, things go well, there don't seem to be any clear or apparent issues that cannot be overcome. On the other hand, when the addict stops doing what is suggested and becomes overconfident, complacent or perhaps just careless, . . .relapse happens.

The difference between a recovery that is long-lasting and one that is characterized by relapse – is commitment and to have a solid personal program of recovery set into place ahead of leaving treatment; we call it a personal after-

care program designed to not only prevent relapse but help a recovering person to live up to their full potential for a joyful life. Amazing, right?

The important thing here for the family and the relapsing addict is *not to quit trying to quit*, to know that recovery is one day at a time, that it's better to commit to not using today as opposed to being intimidated by "quitting forever", because it is always today, and today you can actually manage.

"It's always today" is a simple, yet radical concept – that's what the *power of now* is all about.

That said, the truth about "don't quit trying to quit" can be twisted by the addict into believing: "What's the use, I'll only use again", which is just another *con job by the disease* – working subconsciously - that wants to keep the addiction going.

Yes, we know all about how cunning, baffling and powerful an addictive disorder can be. Most addicts who have achieved long-lasting recovery have made many attempts before they got it right. At some point, those who *do* succeed make the decision to look more closely at what they should have done or haven't done and try to answer the questions surrounding what they can do differently this time.

Questions like:

Am I willing to admit that I am powerless over this disease?

Will I be really honest this time?

Will I be willing to surrender my old ways of thinking?

Will I be willing to go to any length to get and stay clean and sober?

When the addict says yes in response to these questions, the odds of a successful recovery go way way up.

To learn more, visit safehouserehabthailand.com where the chance of true recovery is closer than you think. Or email us at info@safehouserehab.com and we'll answer any – we mean any – questions you might have about navigating your way through this phase of your life.

Ok, if you're the wife, mother, sister, brother, daughter or son of an active addict or alcoholic, you've undoubtedly wondered how he could do what he does, how he could so thoughtlessly break his promise to attend his own son's birthday party, how he could embarrass his family with yet another arrest for driving drunk, how our advice goes in one ear and out the other without so much as acknowledging that we say what we say out of love?

"If he really loved me, he wouldn't do the horrible things he does, say the awful things he says, or blame me for his failures in life. If he really loved me he wouldn't" is what you may be thinking.

We honestly hope one day you will come to realize whether he loves you or not has nothing to do with it.

And that all of things you have been doing to control his drinking or using are well-intentioned, but woefully misguided.

The fact is that you didn't cause it, you can't control it, and you can't cure it.

It's kind of a heartless truth, but then addiction is a heartless disorder, isn't it?

Here's an example of how manipulative addicts can be...and unless you are wise to it, it'll get you every time. See if this one sounds familiar:

Keeping you off balance is a favorite game for an alcoholic. Addicts play the blame game to deflect unwanted attention to the problems their using is causing themselves and their families. They might say, "Well, if you didn't work all these crazy hours, we wouldn't be having these problems". So, while we are busy defending ourselves from a ridiculous and confusing charge, the addict makes his getaway. "Wow, I never thought that way before." we hear parents say.

The insight we just quoted comes from Jeff and Debra Jay, authors of a well-regarded book on addiction and intervention called "Love First".

Bottom line, you need to be better informed on how addicts actually think and what causes them to stay stuck in their disease. You need to make an informed decision on what your options are, and what to do next. Perhaps you and your loved one have debated which way to turn, and one day he wants to go and the next he changes his mind, or goes back out there. That's just the way it goes.

We've seen addictive disease ravage families for decades, and we've also witnessed the very best of what a strong recovery program can do. We've seen hopeless men and women reclaim their lives and experience the true meaning of love. Not love as an addiction, or as a means of manipulation, but as a selfless state of being and acting.

There's a myth out there that says an addict or alcoholic has to hit their own bottom before they are really ready to recover - and that there's nothing much you can do about it.

This myth is loaded with misconception, is a barrier to taking action and is the cause of needless suffering. Have you ever heard this: "I don't know much about this problem, but one thing I know *for sure* is that you can't help an addict or alcoholic until he's ready for help."

This is the "most unchallenged myth about addiction and the one that stops us from responding to a deadly and destructive disease." We are quoting Jeff and Debra Jay, experts on addiction and authors of a well-regarded book called "Love First, A Family's Guide to Intervention."

They go on to say: "It leaves us standing on the sidelines while addiction runs through our families like a freight train."

This myth, that you can't help an addict until he's ready, has us silently thinking "therefore, there's nothing you or I or anybody can do about this problem."

Which is the biggest lie of all. It's blatantly not true.

But when we challenge the myth with *this* question: "If an addict won't accept help until he's ready, *what will it take* to get them ready?", we completely change the way we think about the problem, and how we should approach it.

We smash this dangerous myth to pieces. Feels good, doesn't it?

It's well known that addicts who get help on their own do so not because they see the light but because they feel the heat.

If something comes along that shakes them up so much that they would rather accept help than continue drinking and drugging, we call that shake-up an *intervention*. An intervention when it's done right (and most are not) *raises the*

bottom, saving perhaps years of misery that it might have otherwise taken before he felt the heat enough to seek the help he needs. Sadly, many, if not most, addicts and alcoholics never make into recovery.

It doesn't have to be that way. Not at all. Not on your life.

What you may need more than ever at this point in your life is to *make an informed decision about what to do next based on reality*, not based on a myth.

Yes, you love the addict by not loaning her money, not making excuses for her absences, not taking over responsibilities that belong to her. When you enable a person, you deny your loved one the learning that comes with experiencing consequences. About feeling the heat of repetitive behavior that harms the addict and others in her life. About growing up.

The sad truth is, there are exceptions to the "no enabling" rule, and one of them is taking care of the active addict's children (she would otherwise be perfectly capable of taking care of them herself), but what are the heartbreaking choices now?

Believe it or not, this sort of thing happens more often than you think. Grandparents becoming parents to their own grandchildren is an unfair heartache no one should have to bear. Believe it or not, mother's heart is torn too, but the disease is way more powerful than her love for her children...that's an immense amount of power, right?

This is an insight into the mind of the addict who sees a family member as the obstacle to what we wants... to get high. Therefore you, not his disease, are the problem.

This is a radical thought, yes? Fact is, to the active addict, drugs are not the problem, they are the solution. So while we talk about his use of drugs as the problem, he is talking about *you* as the problem, because you are in the way, you are an obstacle to his attaining his goal – to get and stay high.

Have you ever experienced this: the addict is telling you a completely plausible story of why he needs an extra \$500 from you so that he can make a repair to his

car, and he looks you in the eye exuding love and innocence and later you learn that he used the money to buy what? Cocaine!

Happens every day of the week. Fact is, the addiction has taken over the addict's power of choice, sabotaged his decision-making process, and has him violating every value that he used to hold dear.

His self-esteem is shot. He puts up a defiant front, yet he feels like a total loser; he thinks you can see right through him, and he gets so used to lying, he lies even when he doesn't "need" to. He lies to make himself look better, to look normal, because what other people think of him is one of the most important things in his life.

Denial is a way of life for him. He becomes a chameleon, making himself blend into whatever environment he inhabits so that he can look normal and feel accepted. He doesn't want to stand out too much, yet he craves attention...he is a truly needy and contradictory specimen.

Does this give you an idea of how an addict really thinks, how different the addict/alcoholic is from normal people, people who are not dependent on a chemical to feel normal?

The active addict talks a different language, uses twisted and self-serving logic, and uses people who love him to advance his self-centered lifestyle.

And yet, and yet, he is worthy of our love, for he is a sick person, not a bad person. That's a hard one for some of us to believe, but it's true. You know it to be true, for underneath that awful behavior is the son you used to love, the brother you once admired, the husband you fell in love with.

It just breaks your heart. But there is hope, there is always hope, hope of making an informed decision that improves the odds of success.

In this Episode we learned that;

1. Relapses are common, so do not get too freaked out if your loved one goes back out there. Just get him or her to get back in from the storm as soon as possible. Do not let too much time go by.

2. Addicts play the deflection game but do not fall for it, you did not cause the addiction, you cannot really control it and you sure as hell cannot cure it. Surrender to this truth with all your heart. It's the only way for you.
3. The addict does not see the addiction as the problem. He sees you as the problem, and drugs and alcohol as the solution – you only get in the way, that's why you are the problem. Crazy but true.
4. The idea that the addict will only accept help when he hits bottom is a terrible idea and has you standing by while the addiction runs through your family like a freight train. The real question is what will it take to get them ready? It's not about the addict seeing the light, it's about the addict feeling the heat.

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