



SafeHouse
safe and sound at last

You can listen to all SafeHouse Podcasts at:

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



Season 02. Episode 02

How Can the Power of Now Heal the Pain?

Welcome back to Busting addiction and the myths that travel with it.

Let's approach the issue of addiction and what it does to an ordinary family, a loving, typical well-meaning and yes educated and even affluent family – let's approach the issue from a completely different angle and see if there's healing to be had there.

Let me start with this idea: that most families who have never had addiction strike the family have no idea how much pain addiction can inflict the mom and dad, sisters, brothers, husbands or wives - I call them out individually because each person experiences the pain of addiction uniquely unto themselves. Make no mistake: addiction and alcoholism are recognized by all professionals as family diseases. Which means there is no escaping the effects of this disorder, there is no escaping the pain that this disease inflicts on each individual in an individual way.

For mom, there is the pain of seeing the dreams she had for her handsome son shattered beyond recognition.

For dad, there is the shame he feels when he sees his son failing at one thing after another.

For the addict's wife, there is the humiliation of discovery infidelity.

For the alcoholic's children, there are the secrets they are forced to keep about dad's troubles with the law.

There is an old saying that goes something like this: happy families are pretty much the same, while unhappy families are unhappy in a thousand different ways.

That concept applies perfectly here, except that the unhappiness has a common source: addiction and all the dishonest, destructive, dysfunctional, hostile things that it brings into the family to tear it apart. Without the family knowing what's really at work here. The family does things out of love but they end up enabling the addict unknowingly, sub consciously, without their permission.

What dominates the life of the family is one very big thing: FEAR of what MAY happen.

The wife is afraid to talk about where her husband was last night. For FEAR of learning the truth or of getting into a screaming match. Again.

Mom is constantly worried about her daughter meeting a sexual predator, or of getting beat up or kidnapped. Yes, she does worry about things like that. There is unfortunately evidence that this sort of thing happens often enough to be credible.

Dad is afraid that his son will get fired from his job and embarrass the family: you know shame is a master emotion and it is the source of some of the deepest pain a family could possibly endure. One does not underestimate the power of shame... there books written about toxic shame.

What's going on here? The family obsesses over what the addict did in the past or what he might do in the future. To them, the present moment hardly exists yet it is the key to healing the pain. How is this possible?

Well, once you come to accept that you as the significant other of an addict have zero control of the addict's disease, that you are powerless over his drug use or alcoholism – truths that you would learn in al anon, then what?

One thing you should never give up on, even as you start to dis-engage from your addict's disease, is the possibility that your loved one could make the u turn and ask for and accept help. That's different than admitting you are powerless...you still have the ability to offer the option...in a loving way.

Here at SafeHouse Rehab Thailand, we stand ready to answer any, we mean any, question you could possibly have about your situation, because we want you to make an informed decision at this important time of your life. Just contact us at info@safehouserehab.com or visit safehouserehab.com and call the number that matches the country you are calling from. Easy, local call.

We offer a life-changing experience in the perfect environment for recovery, and it's closer than you think. Take advantage of our \$1,000 airfare allowance and don't forget to ask about our referral rewards program.

One thing you can do for yourself right now is: you can turn your attention if only for one day at a time, on ending the *delusion of time*. *Oh oh...here comes the radical part you say.*

This idea is radical only because it makes too much sense. I'm going to quote from a great spiritual thinker Eckhart Tolle who in his book *The Power of Now* goes on to say this about healing the pain of fear. quote Here is the key: end the delusion of time. The compulsion to live almost exclusively through memory and anticipation creates an endless pre-occupation with past and future and an unwillingness to honor and acknowledge the present moment and allow it to be.

The more you are focused on time, past and future, the more you miss the Now, the most precious thing that is...because it is the ONLY thing that is. End quote.

Here is another radical thought from Mr. Tolle: the eternal now is the space within which your entire life unfolds. You can't live in the future because it doesn't exist. You can't live in the past because it too does not exist (except as a memory trace). Why then are we compelled to do both...live in the past one moment and live in the future the other?

Well, here is what the philosopher Eckhart Tolle says: The compulsion arises because the past gives you an identity and the future holds the promise of

salvation, of fulfillment in whatever form. For families of addicts the future also holds the terrifying promise of death in a variety of disguises.

All are illusions, creations of the mind when it identifies with any other time other than the Now.

Therefore our ability to heal comes about only when we are liberated from the enslavement of the past and freed from the fear of the future.

Where can we find the joys of being with our family, without regret, fear or resentment except in the now, in this very precious and perishable moment that will never ever come again?

Where can we ever experience those tiny sparks of pure happiness that only happen among people who once shared life together except in the now?

When forgiveness rules the day, if only for now, and only now?

The now is when love that is truly unconditional comes to life. If only for now, and that's OK.

You say: I feel awfully guilty going ahead and enjoying my life in the moment when I should be doing *something, anything* to help the addict. This is where I tell you that you must, you simply must start to focus on taking care of yourself first.

That is heresy, you say. That's ridiculous, you say.

The fact is this: you have been so busy trying to control the addict, control an uncontrollable disease over which you are powerless, endlessly obsess over what the future may hold, you are in constant fear, you never have time to truly enjoy yourself, you are the perfect codependency candidate.

The subtitle of Melanie Beatty's insightful book, *Co-dependent No More* is "how to stop controlling others and take better care of yourself."

This is the big lesson from another 12 step program designed for family members of addicts and alcoholics and what it is NOT, contrary to popular opinion, is a group of whiners and blamers, a place where family members and other loved ones learn how to control the addict's substance abuse. It is in and of itself a loving program for people who come together to make life better for themselves regardless of whether their loved on is clean and sober, or not.

It starts with the admission that you the family member are powerless over drugs and alcohol and that quote: “our lives have become unmanageable.”

So, you begin to believe what it says on these little signs in the rooms;

“Didn’t cause it, can’t control it, can’t cure it.” The “it” is addiction and/or alcoholism. I’ve seen people who stare at the sign and it hasn’t quite sunken in yet, and they say: those are some absolute statements, and I’m not so sure.

But after a while, after they stop obsessing about their loved one addict or alcoholic and start focusing on how they should start living life one day and one moment at a time, after they start letting go of the resentment and fear, and begin the process of recovery themselves, the truth of these statements sinks in.

After some time in the Alanon program, people like me who have suffered the indignity and guilt that come with loving an addict, we change from the inside even though our outside circumstances may be exactly the same or even worse.

We used to spend our time and energy in resentment, self-pity and blame, or in attempting to get out of difficult or embarrassing situations; now we spend it in positive action. We used to have starry-eyed fantasies or dystopian visions of the future now we strive to live for today, one day at a time, fully present for each moment, empowered by the power of now.

Our lives were once characterized by compulsion to control, and by self-centered fear, obsession with the addict, and resultant isolation. Now they are characterized by genuineness and a healthy desire to be of service, by the integrity that comes with living guilt free and being fully present to experience the true joy of living.

So what did we learn today?

1. No one in the family is spared the damage that comes from addiction by a member of the family.
2. Fear of what may happen in the future is the underlying emotion that drives the inner life of family members. Imagination turns to the disastrous, away from joyful.
3. It is possible to regain sanity by the family, starting with an appreciation of the power of now.

4. Al Anon is recommended to family members so that they can put the focus back on their own well-being.
5. It IS possible to enjoy life whether the addict is in recovery or not.

You can listen to all SafeHouse Podcasts at:

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