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Season 06. Episode 09

## Podcast Title: Tony and Bruno. Talk It Over - Part 2

This is episode 9 (Part 2 of 2) of season 6.

This presents an opportunity for Tony, 30 years old and four years clean and sober, to share some advice for those how care for and love the addict or alcoholic. Most of the time, it's the mom who is deeply invested in helping her son or daughter get the help she believes her child needs to get clean sober, and hopefully, stay that way.

By this time in the progression of the disease, she has come to understand that she cannot do this on her own, nor can her loved one, of course. She is now experiencing the desperation, guilt and anxiety that has arisen as her loved one enters even darker territory.

Bruno J. " Tony, let's start with the time the light when on for you after you entered treatment and made progress in reversing what

had become, in your own words, a hopeless condition of body and mind".

Tony: " At some point I saw the doors open, and my confidence grew, and I also felt some measure of peace that I had not experienced for a long time. I found myself able to give and receive love. I was able to go with the flow".

Bruno J.: "And yet you were able to remember all that you put your family through. How does one make that right"?

Tony: "As to giving love, I knew I had to give it back one hundred-fold to my mom and dad. They were ready to sacrifice it all just to see me get better. The really painful thing for them and for me now is that my parents didn't know what to do as the disease made its progression".

Bruno J.: "But there are things one can indeed do when parents (or anyone close to the addict or alcoholic) realize that they have a big problem on their hands".

Tony: "The key thing is to get educated on the disease of addiction and/or alcoholism. The substance differs, but the disease is the same, as is the treatment, except for the detox part. Research it online and see what the scientific community says about it. Go to the best scientific resources, and don't trust hearsay.

Visit the NIDA web site. That stands for the National Institute on Drug Abuse, to be found at [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov). Visit the NIAA web site. That stands for the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse, part of the National Institutes of Health, a vital part of our battle against Covid-19. That web site is [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)

Books that address the issue directly are: Beyond the Influence by Katherine Ketcham, and Addiction in the Family by Louise Stanger.

Find an AODA counsellor or psychiatrist. That stands for Alcohol or Drug Addiction. Make sure that whatever medical professional you

see that they have undergone specific training in addictive disease. Turns out that in the US only half of medical school graduates were ever given any training in the diagnosis or treatment of addictive disorders.

So, what can happen is that an untrained clinician or therapist will mis-diagnose the real problem and treat what they believe is anxiety or depression, instead of addressing the underlying addiction that presents the symptoms the mom is worried about".

Bruno J.: " And, of course, the addict sitting there is still protecting his ability to get and do the drug, so he's not about to tell the truth. And he's happy to get some Xanax to treat his so-called condition. I know because I did it myself."

Tony: " Think about an intervention. Read [Love First, A Family's Guide to Intervention](#) by Jeff and Debra Jay.

And most important, [get help for yourself](#).

Addiction is regarded as a family disease. The addiction has sucked all the good oxygen out of the room; there is no room left for joy or peace. Normalcy has been left behind, and the sad truth is that the family is now as sick as the addict.

The family has learned to cover (lie) for the alcoholic, become control freaks, don't trust, live in fear of what's next and are ashamed to admit that the disease now rules the house.

The best place to get help for yourself we know of is called Al-Anon which was set up for people who love their still-suffering addict. You can find them at [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org) They are known as Family Groups whose purpose is not to teach them how to get an alcoholic sober; rather their purpose is to teach them how to develop a healthy detachment from their loved one's insanity and start to live life in a healthy way, and still love and care about their addict or alcoholic.

So yes, education is yet again the key to freedom".

What we learned from this conversation between Tony and Bruno J. is all about educating oneself, that is:

1. It's only in the latter stages of the disease's progression that the family member(s) actively seek help from the outside. Up to that point, they rely on their own resources without effect, and are then subject to confusion and despair.
2. The family becomes as sick as the addict, reverting to all forms of controlling behaviour, lying, denying, hiding, covering for the addict, and living in a state of fear and shame.
3. Connect to a qualified professional who is trained as an AODA, Alcohol or Drug Addiction expert. Be aware that some clinicians are not trained in this disease and could easily misdiagnose the condition and take it for something else.
4. Rely not on hearsay and instead go to the best scientific resources and books we have listed above. Trust the science.
5. Find help for yourself, above all. You need to heal, too. At Al-Anon, you will meet people who will help you find the peace you deserve.