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Busting Addiction and Its Myths Season 3 Episode 10

What It takes to Fail

Welcome back to Busting Addiction and Its Myths. This is episode 10 of Season 3. In this article, we discuss the question: "What about the things that signal a potential relapse in the making"?

There are key signs that the addict typically does not notice or will not acknowledge. Essentially the things that signal a coming relapse are not doing the things that keep us clean and sober, as in the actions described in the previous article. But there's more.

Probably the most prominent sign of a coming relapse is DENIAL which stands for Don't Even Notice I Am Lying. So even if one were to call the addict on his slippery behaviour, he will minimize, evade, lie, blame a family member, or bad luck, or anyone but himself,

Not getting a sponsor or not talking to him or her is an almost-sure sign that the addict's program is adrift. That inaction goes hand in hand with not having a regular schedule of meetings. An addict without a sponsor is like a ship without a compass. He doesn't know in what direction he should sail his ship and has no idea what to do in a stormy sea. Knowing which way True North lies

is critical, and will keep him running straight, and avoid wrecking his hard-won sobriety on the rocks.

Not acknowledging and understanding the consequences of one's actions, good or bad, is a sure sign that the addict has something else on his mind. The sad problem is that by the time a parent or any loved one calls the addict on his action or inaction; it may be late in the game. It is a truism that the addict has begun relapsing in his head quite a while before he takes that drink or picks up that drug. Again. This is where the game of denial starts to play out.

Best at this stage to have a talk with his therapist, counsellor, sponsor, or anyone else the addict might be close to in the recovery context. But avoid speaking to non-recovering so-called friends who are just as likely to lie as to tell the truth. We get caught up in trying to help the addict any way we can that makes sense to us, and therefore it's natural to try to "figure this out" without having an objective perspective on the disorder and how it works. So, we may end up talking to uninformed but well-meaning people who may give us terrible advice.

Another danger sign is spending way too much time on regrets of what the addict did in the past, the "would have and should have" done this or that. This is a more dangerous thing than it appears since it contains elements of the truth, and therefore sounds like a perfectly logical thing to feel and say. The problem here is twofold: one, the gloomy mind state might give rise to the desire to make oneself feel a whole lot better by taking a stiff drink of the finest vodka or by a good snort of cocaine and believe me: "I know where to get some, no problem".

The second problem is that by focusing on the past, and not letting it stay there with the occasional glimpse in the rear-view mirror as learning tool on what not to do, it steals the most important thing in the world. We allow it to *steal the present* which is the only thing that we have. We teach that the past (and the future) do not exist in reality, and that the present moment is where we live.

That concept is what gives the idea *One Day at A Time* such immense power.

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