

THE CHALLENGE OF DRUG ADDICTION

The treatment for drug addiction, which is similar to that for alcoholism, involves rebuilding the patient mentally and physically. After the patient has successfully withdrawn from drugs and begins to regain his health, it is important that he learns to face his problems instead of running from them. This is the most critical aspect to any treatment that the patient might receive, because the same basic problems which drove him to drugs in the first place will still comfort him after he is discharged from a hospital or institution. He should, somehow, learn to resolve these problems without drugs.

The outlook for the drug addict is generally unfavorable, since it has been estimated that approximately 25% of those who are physically cured remain free of drugs after being discharged. This leaves a rather large margin of 75% who will relapse and return to drugs. Aside from the patient's own efforts to remain abstinent, he would be greatly helped if society could, and in some way learn to accept drug addiction as a form of mental illness, rather than a criminal activity. In some cases the social stigma of having been an addict puts an undue pressure on the patient after he returns home.

Where relapses are concerned, it is important that we know that have been addicted to drugs keep one thought uppermost in our minds; if ever we slip, or even feel that we are about to slip, we should at once seek competent medical care or advise, whether it be at a public or private institution. Those who have led successful A.A. lives of sobriety have found that the best antidote for "THAT URGE" to slip is to call another member of AA and just talk things over with him or her. Even a phone call will suffice.

As a whole, we addicts must particularly guard against certain characteristics, some of which are:

1. Resentment
2. Dishonesty
3. Fear
4. Self-pity
5. Jealousy
6. Criticism
7. Intolerance
8. Anger.

If in a personal inventory, we find one or more of these characteristics prevalent in our everyday living, we should take every possible step to neutralize them. Speaking of Steps, the Twelve Steps of the Alcoholics Anonymous program are sincerely recommended. These Twelve Steps were formulated strictly for the purpose of helping the alcoholic to overcome all of the above mentioned characteristics. And they can apply to the addict.

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