

Angie's Marriage Column – June 10, 2009

How to Cope Being Married to an Alcoholic Spouse

Ask Angie: Angie, I have a question: How do you not let your alcoholic husband drive and not talk or give attention to the disease? And is it free to be a member of your site?

Ask Angie: My spouse abuses alcohol on a nightly basis and then uses verbal abuse and mind games which upset me greatly. When I arrive home from work tired and ready to rest, my spouse is ready to drink, argue and fuss. I do not remember the last time I was able to get a full night of rest. My spouse is bitter, chooses not to forgive and blames me for the drinking. I pray constantly for God is my only refuge. We go to church and it used to be that my spouse would not drink the day of services but now that doesn't seem to matter. My spouse finds something negative each day against me in order to have yet another excuse to stop and pick up the alcohol she abuses the remainder of the evening. Thanks for any assistance and for your prayers.

Marriage Guidance: Alcoholism is a very cunning disease, meaning if an alcoholic wants to go buy some alcohol they'll find a way to get it, whether you hide the keys or say they can't drive. Loved ones can't really stop or control an alcoholic from driving, or doing anything else for that matter, but they can control what they do about it. In other words, don't help them to drive.

Do Not Enable – Do Not Rescue!

We should never do anything to help the alcoholic to drink. Spouses of alcoholics absolutely have to take the *enabling and rescuing aspect of addiction seriously* if they want to really help the alcoholic. This is what tough love is all about. Be tough but be loving at the same time. Ironically helping and rescuing the alcoholic is what keeps them in denial.

10 Obvious Ways You Enable or Rescue The Alcoholic

1. You appease them when they are drinking
2. You drink with them

3. You take them to the store to buy alcohol
4. You pay their bills for them
5. You pay their court fines
6. You bail them out of jail
7. You fight and fuss back
8. You make excuses to the boss, the kids, and their friends
9. You clean up their vomit and other messes
10. You tuck them into bed after they have passed out on the floor or car

10 Subtle Ways You Enable or Rescue The Alcoholic

1. You let them define you
2. You let them tell you what you are going to do when they are drunk
3. You talk to them while they are drinking
4. You disrespect them
5. You threaten to leave
6. You let them see how worried you are about them
7. You allow moments of sobriety to put you in denial
8. You remain hush-hush about his or her drinking problem to others
9. You allow them to batter you with disrespect, accusations and hurtful words
10. You are in denial with them or you don't realize they are sick

Do Not Fuss and Argue With The Alcoholic

Alcoholics love to argue and fuss—it's what they do best. Most alcoholics once they start drinking get disrespectful and downright nasty. They want someone to blame for their unhappiness and that someone is invariably the person or people they are closest too, the spouse and or family members.

You cannot stop the alcoholic from spewing their garbage in your face, no matter how much you plead, scream, beg, fuss, or argue back. In fact...the more you argue and fuss with them the more they will argue and fuss back! But you can walk away, leave the house for a while, go into another room and lock the door, or take a walk.

Fighting, fussing, and arguing will not get you anywhere with the alcoholic. It would be complete nonsense to think it would. The alcoholic loves to argue, blame and accuse. This makes them feel better about themselves, and

when you argue and accuse back you become trapped in the addiction with them.

My husband used to wear earplugs to drown me out when I started on a rampage with him. He learned to never fight and argue with me, He'd pay no attention to my fussing until the next morning when I was sober. And then of course he would relate some of what he happened to hear of what I said and did while drinking. This is an ALANON method to get the alcoholic to *realize they have a drinking problem*. And this is what you need to do with the alcoholic you love and live with.

Back Off From the Alcoholic and Rescue You!

The book, [The Alcoholism Trap](#) discusses in great detail about the enabling and rescuing aspects of loving and living with an alcoholic. It will encourage you to take the steps needed to back off from the alcoholic and rescue you before you become trapped with the alcoholic in the addiction. This is a wonderfully useful book on addiction because there is also a section in there that encourages the alcoholic to sobriety and helps them to understand “why” they drink.

Loved ones of alcoholics need to take care of themselves, not the alcoholic. This works in two ways to help the alcoholic. Once you release your attachment to the negative aspects of the addiction (enabling and rescuing) they have to be responsible for themselves and realize they have a problem, and can *now* take the needed steps towards healing. The other way this works is once you climb out of the addiction and start healing yourself, they will want that for themselves also. They will become intimidated to see that you aren't stuck inside the addiction with them, and that you are happy, even though they are drowning in a pitiful existence of alcoholism. You don't have to separate yourself physically from the alcoholic to do this. My book [The Alcoholism Trap](#) shows you how to do it with the least amount of stress on the household and rest of family.

Detach From the Alcoholic When They Are Drinking

The main thing about living with and loving an alcoholic is don't allow yourself to become trapped in the addiction with them. You need to be the one safely on shore basking in the sun. They are in the water drowning, which is exactly what addiction is. It should never be the other way around

where you are both waiting for someone to throw out a life preserver. You shouldn't let yourself to drown with them.

Detaching yourself from the alcoholic when they are drinking is an absolutely must for your emotional, mental, and spiritual well being. *In the morning when they are sober*, remind them of your love and support you will have for them *when* they quit drinking. But let them know too that you will not take the abuse, and you will not help them in anyway to destroy themselves and take you with them.

Stay on Top of the Alcoholism Game!

You have to stay on top of the alcoholism game. Here's how it works. Even though the alcoholic seems to be running the show, they aren't. You're still steering the boat, unless you give them the helm by helping them to drink. The alcoholic loves to feel like they are in control, but once you start detaching from them when they are drinking, and stop taking responsibility for their actions, they will finally see they have a drinking problem, and are really not in control after all. Your taking care of yourself is what brings them out of denial, which is the first step toward sobriety.

Here is an excerpt from the book [The Alcoholism Trap](#)

Don't Allow Yourself to Become A Victim

It's very important to understand that loved ones of alcoholics unintentionally make themselves become victims by the way they think and position themselves with the alcoholic. *Oh poor me, I'm having to put up with this drunken behavior every single day; I just can't take it anymore!* The alcoholic is the only victim here when you come right down to it. They are the ones addicted and controlled by alcohol, thus, they are the true victims. Although, they, unbeknownst to them, would love to bring you into the alcoholic sickness with them, so you must be aware of when this is happening.

Here is how it works, when the alcoholic feels like they are sinking further and further into the addiction, they will grab onto you to keep themselves afloat, but that will only pull you both under. This happens in very subtle ways. The alcoholic may pick a fight with you. They expect you to fix everything that goes wrong in their life. They may drive you to drink

with them, or they may try and accuse you of bad things and tell you how immoral and awful you are. When the alcoholic gets a reaction from you, it is their safety line, giving them justification for drinking and continuing in their alcoholic behavior. Some rescuer type people are more susceptible to being pulled under than others. Did you know that a rescuer will always look for someone to rescue, even though they constantly get pulled under themselves. It might have something to do with the environment they grew up in – maybe they had an alcoholic parent or sibling they always rescued, and so they end up marrying someone they can continue to rescue, like an alcoholic or other addict. It is a subconscious thing.

I think it is important for you to know what your responsibilities are as a loved one of an alcoholic.

Take Responsibility for Your Well-Being

Who is going to take care of you? Not to offend anyone, but no one really cares about your health and well being more than you, except for God, your heavenly Father. That means if we seek out God for our life's troubles, such as issues with alcoholism then *that* is taking responsibility. Why is it, we always feel like we have to DO something ourselves? Isn't asking God for help enough? I think it is, but too often we want to control the outcome of events and issues in our life, so we take steps that we feel will control those issues, but most of the time nothing changes, and sometimes we make things worse. Why can't we just settle for God?

God is wisdom – wisdom comes from the Father who created us, therefore, if and when we allow God into our life and we begin exploring the realms of spirituality, that is when we become filled with God's wisdom and guidance for us. God is our safety line, and you are the safety line to the alcoholic until they have spiritual clarity enough to reach out for God on their own. The alcoholic has a difficult time grabbing onto God for their safety line because there are too many hurdles in the way, as we all know, but through you, they can come to see and know God for themselves. Do you see how that works?

The wiser and more knowledgeable you are in God, the more secure you will feel about your position as a loved one of the alcoholic, thus making you feel better spiritually, emotionally and mentally. Remember what I said earlier? Don't deprive yourself of health and well-being just because you

live with someone who doesn't give a darn about their health. It will be your wellness that brings the alcoholic to their senses.

Respect Yourself

Don't beat yourself up over the issues of addiction. Respect and love the person you are and take each day one day at a time, and go from there. Don't look back and don't look forward more than what is absolutely necessary. The more you think of what next week, next month or next year will bring with the alcoholic, the more overwhelmed, depressed, and awful you will feel inside. You don't know what tomorrow or next month will bring, so stay tuned only to today and what you can do today for yourself.

The more you love and respect yourself, the more you will be helping the alcoholic. How can that be, you might ask? Well, the more you respect yourself, the less likely you are to succumb to the control and manipulation of the addiction. Remember, you are NOT the one with the drinking problem, so don't disrespect yourself by the way you think, behave or in any other way as if you did have addiction to alcohol.

Get yourself healthy in mind, body, and spirit, and see to it the alcoholic knows you are taking care of you! Let him or her know you are not in the alcoholism trap with them.

[Order The Alcoholism Trap](#)

Take care and God Bless!

Angie and Frank

<http://www.heavenministries.com>

<http://conqueraddiction.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.lulu.com/angielewis>

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