

Angie's Marriage Column - April 8, 2009

How to Let Go of Trying to Control Husband's Drug Addiction

Ask Angie: I am finding it hard to trust my husband again. We've been married for 31 years. this Valentine's day and in year 28 I found out he was heavily into drugs, which he now claims to be free of, but I still have a hard time believing him because of the extent he wants to hide his use. All the lies, deceit, and now the unwillingness to discuss it with me, leaves me with many unanswered questions.

He denies that other women were a factor in the drug use, but I do not believe that is true, because our intimacy is non-existent, and has been for some time. He claims to be unable to perform. I don't buy it. So here we are, I don't trust him and I constantly look for clues to make sure he's not using. I hate living this way, I am a born-again Christian, and I pray for God to guide me and help me to truly once and for all forgive, and I will think I have, and then he'll be late or not acting like he normally does and I find myself watching him.

Marriage Guidance: Your situation is very typical for married couples when one is addicted to a substance. You are so emotionally and mentally attached to the actions, feelings, and behaviors of your addicted husband that it is driving you crazy...the not knowing and the fear of being "out of control" scares you to death. Actually, heavy drug and or alcohol use both cause impotency and so your husband is probably telling the truth.

Although it is sad to see anyone waist away their life in addiction, the truth is you cannot control what the addict says or does – it is impossible. The first thing you must understand is that you cannot "be in control" of what your husband does, which means, who he sees, where he goes, when he comes home, what he says, and how he treats you. You have to let the addiction be so you can find peace for yourself. Once you realize you are powerless over the addiction you can finally bring some contentment into your life.

You can't overpower addiction...the more you try, the more it will swallow you up with it. And that is what's happening to you. Your husband's addiction is literally taking you with him. I'm going to throw you a life preserver, grab onto it and allow God to pull you into the shore. Neither I, nor anyone else can pull you into safety...you have to have the willingness to do so and to trust in Christ to pull you into safety. OK?

God Grant Me the Serenity to Accept The Things I Cannot Change

Ask God to give you the strength to accept, that which is out of your control. God grant me the serenity to **accept** that my husband's addiction is something I cannot change. How does a wife accept that she can't stop her husband from using drugs or drinking? By backing off and giving every aspect of addiction over to God. It can be

difficult to do at times, especially when the addict is abusing you in some way, which happens often in homes where addiction is present.

Most loved ones of addicts want to throw out the booze, throw the drugs down the toilet, Take the car keys, scream and yell for the addict to stop in their addiction. But none of these efforts will do any good whatsoever. Addiction is more powerful than anything a mere man can try to do to stop it. Overcoming addiction and the affects of what addiction can do to a family can only be overcome through the power of God working in our lives.

Even to your old age and gray hairs I am God, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you. Isaiah 46:4

The problem is we're trying to rescue our loved ones instead of handing that over to God. Only God has the power to save us from the temptations of this life and only God can save us. Without God we are nothing. Wives who try to rescue their husbands from addiction become so entangled within the insidiousness of the addiction that they become mentally, emotionally and spiritually sick with the addict.

When a wife is spiritually sick how can she even begin to see clearly enough to help herself. Don't allow yourself to get pulled into addiction one more second. You are finding it hard to trust your husband again because you **can't trust your husband**. As long as he is wrapped up within the web of addiction there is no trust. The reality is you can't trust addiction so how can you trust the person who is addicted?

I realize it hurts to think that the man you married is with other women but the fact is if he is addicted and using drugs or drinking, the chances are he has been with other women. Addiction makes us do crazy things. So then knowing that, should we blame immoral behavior on addiction? Yes, we should!

Does it mean that once the user quits using their substance of choice they will not behave immorally? Of course not – that would be ridiculous to think.. **But it means that being addiction free he can now make proper and right choices for his life.** It is at this time that a wife can support, encourage, and influence her husband and help him to stay addiction free!

Courage to Change the Things I Can

So now that you know you cannot change one iota about your husband or the addiction, let's take a look at what you can change. You can stop looking for clues that he has stopped using. This is not going to change anything. You can stop worrying about his inability to perform. This is not going to change anything. You can stop living for the addiction and start living for Christ. This WILL change your attitude. Ask Christ to give you the courage to change those things that you can!!

Don't expect anything/changes (from your husband) so you won't get disappointed!!

...I can do everything *through Him* who gives me strength! Philippians 4:12-13

When we begin to find positive things that we can change in our life, it will make us feel better. ***You cannot change what your husband does, but you can change what you do about what he does.*** You can change your reaction towards what your husband does or doesn't do. Learn to detach from his miserable behavior. You can change the way you think about your husband. You can change your attitude about addiction and know from the bottom of your heart that addiction is something you have no power over, whatsoever.

[How Do I Detach from an Alcoholic Spouse](#)

This ebook will help you immensely!

You can choose to forgive, even though you will have to continue to forgive his addictive actions every single day. By forgiving you will be freeing your heart and mind of pent up resentment. You can start to take better care of your spiritual, mental and emotional self by detaching from the addiction. You can choose to allow Christ to pull you into safety and trust that He will keep you safe from addiction.

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9

Courage to change the things I can change...

These changes are changes that you have the power, through Him, to change. You can do everything, through Him. They are all things that involve you and your attitude toward your situation and toward your husband. Once you make these small, but sometimes-difficult changes you will discover a sense of peace within yourself that will actually be supportive to your husband. Whether or not you see that now or not doesn't matter.

Understand that once you stop trying to be responsible for your husband's actions you will feel a big burden lifted from your shoulders. Jesus Christ has lifted that burden from you and has given you a sense of peace in the midst of turmoil. You allowed that burden to be gone from your heart and mind. Now that you are on the shore and out of danger of drowning with your husband you can help him.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loves us. (Romans 8:35 –37)

And The Wisdom to Know the Difference

Wisdom from God is the most important because it shows us how silly it is to try and control the actions of an addict or alcoholic! And it shows us that we can change how we react to the addict or alcoholic. We don't have to suffer emotionally over the addict because IT IS OUT OF OUR CONTROL. Do you now understand what you cannot

change and what you can? If it has anything to do with your husband and the addiction you cannot control it or change it. Give it to God and let Him change it. Give up the burden of responsibility and all aspects of addiction. Let your husband know that you love HIM, but you do not love the addiction. Love him not the addiction. Separate the two so you can learn to emotionally detach from the behaviors of the addict.

Change your attitude and begin to take better care of you, through Him. Change what you can about yourself and that will make a big difference in your husband coming out of denial and getting help for his addiction. Only after you help yourself, through Him, will you be able to help your husband. Let God pull you into safety.

May God Bless,
Angie and Frank
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“Thought the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you. Isaiah 54:10

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