

Angie's Marriage Column – April 22, 2009

How to Deal With an Alcoholic Husband

Ask Angie: Hi Angie. My husband is a severe alcoholic and has tried detox & rehabs several and I mean several times. He has been an alcoholic for 20+ years. We have known each other since we were teenagers and then started dating again about 8 years ago. He was in recovery when we started dating and I really didn't know what an alcoholic was at that time. The longest he has ever been sober is 7 months and that was in 2001. Ever since then he has gotten worse the disease has really progressed over the years. During the last 4 years I think he has been sober for 3 months at the longest and in 2008 and now 2009 he has gone 3 weeks as the longest stint of sobriety. He is always emotionally abusive and sometimes physically abusive. I try to take the suggestions from everyone to create my own self worth however, he won't leave me alone, he follows me in every room, and if I lock a door or try to leave the house he stands in my way and acts like he is going to hurt me. He tries to scare me and threaten me constantly. He is Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. He recently got arrested for alcohol and is now on probation and he is still drinking, he drives drunk and whatever else. He won't let me leave the house unless I give him money for alcohol because he can't hold a job because he is a non-functioning alcoholic. We rent a house that my name is the only one on and I want him out of the house. I just need a Christian woman to talk to, I pray daily and God is the only thing keeping me going right now. I work in the healthcare industry and have a very important job and a 17-year-old son, who is at his wits end. He leaves for college next year and I don't want to be there with him by myself when my son leaves. Please give me some guidance!

Ask Angie: My husband and I have been married for a year and we have been struggling for a while. He is an alcoholic and I have depression problems. He now says that he can't take my depression anymore and that it's not a safe environment for any of us. He has a bad temper and hits things. He's telling me all these reasons why we should get a divorce but when I ask him if we are he says he hasn't made up his mind. What am I supposed to do? I know that a lot of what has been going on the past 6 months is my fault I haven't been taking the initiative to help myself as much as I should. I don't want to lose him but I can't make him listen to me. How can we stop this cycle from happening again? He won't forgive me for the things I've said and done. My husband and I are Christians but he just doesn't want to follow God's word. Help please!

Please print out this marriage column and read together with your husbands while they are NOT drinking. Never attempt to have a rational conversation with an alcoholic, even if they only had one drink.

Marriage Guidance: The best advice I can give you both and anyone else who loves and lives with an alcoholic is, "Don't go under with the alcoholic! Swim quickly to the shore." So how do you swim to the shore if your husband is trying to pull you under with him? Well, your husband is not trying to pull you under with him--the disease of

alcoholism is. Don't be controlled by alcohol with your husband. You have to take care of you!

If your husband is not in any danger then why interfere with his alcoholic shenanigans. Let him be responsible for what he does while drinking. You are not responsible for your husband's behavior when he is drinking, any more than you are responsible for a stranger's behavior.

But you are responsible for your behavior. Don't let alcoholic garbage control your behavior. Swim back to the shore! Once your husband has to tread water all by himself he will come to take responsibility for his behavior. It's not your fault your husband is an alcoholic, so why are you acting as if it is? **Only after you understand all this about taking care of you will you understand how to help your husband.**

Your husband is controlled by the insidiousness of alcoholism. He's stuck out in the water but you're not. You can swim back to shore. Your husband can swim back to shore but not on his own free will like you can. He is powerless until He accepts the working of Christ in his life. Your husband needs a spiritual intervention to happen in his life before he can actually swim to shore. You also need to allow Christ into your life but in a different kind of way. Read on.

You have to stay one step ahead of the insidiousness of alcoholism to keep yourself mentally, emotionally, and spiritually well. Don't let addiction take you down with it. Addiction is cunning and sly and will try and pull everyone into the whirlwind of this sickness with it! But you can be prepared. The more prepared you are for the next round of garbage that comes your way, the better off you will be. Remember, stay one step ahead of it.

Anyone can get sober. Skid row bums can get sober **if** they put their trust with God. You see, that's the problem. Most alcoholics and drug addicts don't have a personal relationship with the living Christ. We hide our faults, sins, and weaknesses behind the cloak of addiction instead of going to God and becoming all of the person we can become.

I quit drinking several times before I finally got sober for good. Why couldn't I get sober? Because I didn't like myself sober. I had to face my demons and that scared me. I finally quit drinking for good NOT because of my own will power but because I allowed God to intervene in my life—I decided to trust in Him for my life. I confronted my emotional problems with God as my healer, teacher, counselor, and guide. My full testimony is in my book [*Journey on the Roads Less Traveled*](#).

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you. Psalm 32:8

“Quitting Drinking Is Easy, Staying Sober Is Difficult”

Addicts almost always have underlying emotional qualms and baggage within them from their past they are not willing to confront. Whether it is shame, guilt, anger, resentment, or denial it will keep the alcoholic drinking and the addict using. Past baggage plays out in our lives in several different forms. Alcoholism is just one way we act out with our emotional baggage. Some people eat too much, work too much, gamble, look at pornography, and have anger management problems, etcetera. This is why staying sober is difficult without God.

We ALL need God!!

We Must Allow God To Guide Us In The Direction He Wants To Take Us

We want to row our own boat but in doing so we row ourselves away from God and into worldly temptations. God will work miracles in our lives but we have to put our faith and trust in Him. We do that by allowing God to be at the helm. We still have to row our own boat but He is the Captain telling us where He wants us to go. It's never the other way around. To overcome our past and become all God has planned for us we have to surrender our old life for a new one with Jesus Christ. This is how it works.

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." John 3:3

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come!
2 Corinthians 5:17

Let's say you are in a grocery store shopping and someone comes up to you out of the blue and says, "You are ugly and fat! Why don't you go on a diet?" You can either let their rude remarks embed themselves within your spirit and attitude and cause a reaction from you of bad, angry words back to this rude person, or you can smile and walk away, letting the words roll right off your shoulders. Which is it going to be resentment or detachment?

When we realize that anyone who would say such unkind words, out of the blue, to a stranger, has a sickness, then you can just let it go. The only time you would become sick with them is if you treat them back the same way they treated you. In the same way, this is how you have to deal with the sickness of addiction. You have to treat addiction with this kind of attitude or else it will pull you under with it. If a husband is being physically abusive you will have to separate yourself from him.

If you are married to an alcoholic, every single day you will have to be on your guard because addiction is baffling and cunning. Who knows what is going to happen from one day to the next. The more you arm yourself with knowledge about addiction the better off you will be. **You need to put your faith and trust in God and know that He will protect you with His umbrella of love and guidance.**

The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. (Psalm 121:7-8)

So What Are You Going To Do?

You can either let God throw you a lifeline and come back onto dry ground and put your trust with Him. Or you can stay in the water with your husband and get sick with him. Which is it going to be?

Source Books

[The Alcoholism Trap: Understanding Why You Drink and What You Can Do To Beat Alcohol Addiction and Achieve Total Sobriety](#)

This book will show you how to detach from the alcoholic in your life. It will give you the encouragement and support to know when to detach and when to be supportive to the alcoholic. It will also help the alcoholic when they come out from denial and are ready to understand why they drink and are willing to do something about it. This book will make you feel better about yourself. It teaches you how to rescue yourself and then finally help the alcoholic you love. [Buy The Alcoholism Trap](#)

Below is a passage from the book **The Alcoholism Trap**. You can also come on over to our new forum and I will be adding more material for those who are married to an alcoholic and for the alcoholic themselves. Do you have something you would like to share with others? <http://fatbusters.myfastforum.org/>

A Healthy Detachment Chapter 16 of the book “The Alcoholism Trap”

The best thing you can do when dealing with an alcoholic spouse is to detach from the abuse of the alcoholic. A healthy detachment is for you and not the alcoholic. You can learn to detach and help them to possible sobriety. The more you focus all your energies on the alcoholic, the less likely they are to get sober.

If you have never read any of the Al-Anon material then you probably don't know that you are making alcoholism your problem. But it is not your fault because all you're trying to do is help the alcoholic in your life. But sometimes we tend to help in the wrong ways, such as doing too much for the addict, or helping them to deal socially with life and to pardon them when they do not get along with others. Maybe we get shamefaced and feel at fault when the alcoholic treats others badly. Trying to pardon the alcoholic's

behavior means that you are in the depths of the addiction with them. Maybe you are in denial too. Or maybe you just do not know of any other ways to cope with the alcoholic's antics and drinking bouts. The problem with this is if you are trapped with the alcoholic within the addiction then how will you be able to pull them out? One of the sad facts of living with an alcoholic is we tend to become just as mentally and emotionally sick as the alcoholic. This happens because every step of life we take, and every breath of air we breathe has some involvement with the alcoholic. Our emotions overtake our own mental health as we try and cope with the deterioration of the alcoholic in our life. What are we doing wrong? We are concentrating too much on the alcoholic, instead of concentrating on our mental and emotional health. We may as well be tipping the bottle for them. Better yet, we may as well be drinking with them!

Most spouses of alcoholics don't realize they are helping their spouse drink just by a few simple behaviors and actions. Several ways in which you may be enabling your spouse to drink is by buying them alcohol, drinking with them, calling the boss and or family members for him because he is too hung over or too drunk to do it himself. Lying to friends, boss, family and co-workers about him and his drinking problem. Driving them to the store, arguing with them, and behaving like a victim. You are not the victim of alcoholism until you make yourself become the victim.

Get Off The Pity Pot?

When was the last time you did something for yourself? You have a life - you do know that, right? Get off of the pity pot and begin living for yourself, instead of living for the alcoholic. *Oh poor me, everyday I am suffering and I can't take it anymore* attitude won't get you anywhere. You need to take care of yourself and that cannot be done if you are focusing all of your attention on the alcoholic and what he or she is doing or isn't doing. Start focusing on what you can do for yourself! If the alcoholic is drinking, I highly encourage you to not be around them, and to not let them abuse you with their harsh alcoholic words. If you care about the alcoholic in your life, this is what helps them more than anything else. You see, the alcoholic needs someone to lash out on when they drink, and that would be you. For the alcoholic these is how they get some of their suppressed emotions out and feel better about themselves. The alcoholic feels so bad about his or her life that they have literally thousands of saved up emotions just waiting to get out...

Stop Rescuing The Alcoholic And Start Rescuing You

You're so busy throwing out the lifeline trying to rescue the alcoholic that you didn't notice that you were drowning with them. How does it feel? It does not feel very good, does it? You have been giving all your strength in the saving and rescuing the alcoholic in your life that you don't have much strength left for yourself.

Here's what I want you to do. Next time you feel like throwing out a line to the alcoholic, don't do it...

Buy The Alcoholism Trap at Lulu. <http://www.lulu.com/angielewis>

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