

The Stigma Of Addiction

Understanding the process

*Are you tired of trying the same old ways of looking at your addiction?
Are you weary of taking one step forward and two steps back?
Are you questioning the disease model or do you find yourself sometimes
hiding behind it?*

Perhaps you need a new perspective, a new way of looking at your drug or alcohol use. What if you don't have an 'illness', what if you are in a dance, or a game with your endless desire to use, and sometimes you're winning, and sometimes you feel like you're losing. If this sounds like your experience, then read on!

Addiction as a dance

An alternative view is to see this dance as the relationship between you and your drug of choice. Relationships, as we know, come in many forms, some healthy, some unhealthy.



Take a marriage for example, two people fall in love, decide to spend their lives together and make vows to each other in front of witnesses, to love each other, honour and respect each other, forsaking all others for as long as they both live. Huge promises that cover many years ahead, that may hold many challenges, changes, not to mention the individual growth and maturity of each person.

As the years pass, the love changes, the things that were once endearing may now be irritating, desire may diminish, the ageing process may take each person in a different direction. Yet both parties may be reluctant to let go of the relationship, feeling more comfortable with what is familiar, fearing the unknown and creating numerous reasons to remain as they are, even though neither is happy. If you put your substance of choice in the place of the husband or wife, would these feelings and fears sound familiar?

Too much has happened

Imagine this marriage now becomes undermining, destructive even, where most exchanges are negative and critical. Finally, one or both decide that separation and divorce is the only way forward. The separation is difficult, full of sadness, sometimes the couple fight over belongings only to collapse into tears and then wonder if they have made the right decision. They remember the good times and wonder how it could have come to this. Sometimes they embrace, they make love one more time, then feel guilty, confused, regret and wish it could be any other way. Could they have done it differently, could they have been more aware of the other in order to avoid the ultimate divorce. Alas, they know too much has happened, things have gone too far and they will never have another honeymoon!



Does this sound anything like your relationship with drugs or alcohol?

Is the honeymoon well and truly over?

Has it become unhealthy, and yet you are reluctant to let go? Does familiarity feel more comfortable than

the thought of change?

Is there more negativity, more abuse, more selfishness, less tolerance, less care in the relationship?

Or has it even become more like an abusive or violent relationship, where your partner strives to keep you away from others, to tell you that you need no one else, to say that all your needs can be met by only them, and to separate you from the world, and to change the way you view it.

Transition can be difficult.

Once you have made the decision to separate and divorce, as with the abusive relationship, the transition can be difficult, can even feel dangerous at times. You may often want to go back, to feel the familiarity, this is where you think you know who you are. You might feel lonely and yearn for the one who once made you feel so good. You might even go back for a night and indulge yourself even though in the morning it is difficult to get away. Then you might

decide 'never again' and begin to mourn the loss of the great love that once was, but is now tainted and damaged, one that you had lost yourself in. The loss is so great, and the yearning almost overpowering with its seductive invitation and kindly, selective memories, enticing you with relief and a guarantee to change your view of the world.

Gradually build strength and resilience

So how do you get through?

How do you resist the yearning and craving?

What happens in a divorce, or at the end of any intense and long-standing relationship, such as substance misuse? Dealing with the loss, the accompanying changes perhaps to environment and associates, how do you spend your free time, what do you do at weekends, how do you sleep? You slowly and gradually build strength and resilience with help, with support and by doing things that perhaps you never thought you would! It can be a long journey, yet every day can bring a lovely surprise! Remember, some days, you may have to look for it.

If you're looking for support and interventions, use the link for:

Resilience Recovery Support Group

Group Work, Therapeutic Yoga and One to One

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