PAL Lesson 7

PARENTS OF ADDICTED LOVED ONES

Roles: Addict/Alcoholic and Family

Families unconsciously slip into unhealthy roles with their addicted loved ones. Whether your son or daughter is living in or outside of the home, there is one common dilemma: Treating someone as a child rather than as an adult. Your loved one may choose to play several different roles - using a select role that's beneficial depending on the circumstance or the audience.

Role of Addict or Alcoholic

Circle roles you recognize in your loved one

- 1. Intimidator uses anger to drive people away
- 2. Intellectual mistakes knowledge for understanding
- 3. Victim blames negative events for addiction
- 4. Blamer blames other people for addiction
- 5. Playing Dumb "I don't understand"
- 6. Avoider tries to keep a low profile
- 7. Socialite keeps a high profile but is superficial
- 8. A.A. Expert speaks in slogans but doesn't get personal
- 9. Bible Expert quotes scripture but doesn't get personal
- 10. Con Man thinks he/she is fooling people
- 11. Closed-Minded "I know what I have to do"
- 12. Magic Bullet "I know what caused my addiction"
- 13. "Yeah, But" "That's a good idea, but it won't work"
- 14. Deflector tries to focus attention away from self
- 15. Lip Service agrees to follow through but never does
- 16. Controller *tries to control the course of own recovery*
- 17. Rabble-Rouser stirs up conflict between people or groups
- 18. Suspicious "What will you do with this information?"
- 19. Poker Face non-responsive

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Role of Family

Circle roles you recognize in yourself

- 1. Co-dependent has a strong need to take care of and to please the loved-one and everyone else
- 2. Enabler has a strong need to take care of and to please the loved one
- 3. Rescuer inadvertently keeps loved one in dependent position
- 4. Enforcer plays the part of policeman
- 5. Ignorer gives up because "nothing works"
- 6. Punisher uses punishment to force changes
- 7. Controller makes all decisions in an effort to help
- 8. Jailer tries to help loved-one change by keeping them safe at home
- 9. Lecturer uses lecture, criticism or advice to try to get loved one to change
- 10. Pretender acts like everything is fine while hoping things will somehow get better
- 11. Avoider keeps busy in order to avoid loved one and perhaps other family members

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In recovery, it is desirable if your loved one seeks a healthier role as a willing student or an apprentice. This should lead to learning life skills and coping skills that will help on the road to recovery. It's beneficial if they connect with someone who coaches or holds them accountable to this new role. This person may be a counselor, sponsor, pastor or a sober member of the recovery community.

A f ____ member, however, is not a good recovery partner.

Parents, spouses or family members must also evolve into new roles. You can develop the skills to be a boundary setter, listener, cheerleader or encourager. In support groups like PAL or in a counselor's office, you may connect with those who give encouragement, suggestions and support.