

Why is Recovery From Addiction so Hard?

"I struggle so much with letting go. I have to make my subconscious mind absorb the new information that I've been learning. Do you know of a hypnotherapist you can recommend? I am not sure how many courses I have to take in order to get it!" -Recent comments from a mom with a 21 year-old, addict son

Here are my answers to four questions the mom also asked:

- 1) *"How many successful recovery cases have you found in your years of practice?"*
Answer: "I don't know, I don't keep track"
- 2) *"What are the statistics of addicts who fully recover?"*
Answer: "Check the Internet and you will see a wide range of answers and claims"
- 3) *"What methods are most effective in leading to a full recovery?"*
Answer: "Whichever methods an addict accepts"
- 4) *"What family strategies are proven to have the highest probability of success in helping their loved ones?"* **Answer: "Detaching with love and treating the addict as an adult"**

These are great questions about recovery from addiction and my answers were over-simplified and obviously biased. But the truth is that it's difficult to get straightforward answers to these questions. That's because the disease of addiction is so radically different from other diseases and there are so many different, and often conflicting, opinions and claims on this subject.

With diabetes, for example, the solution to successful recovery is well known and quite simple. The disease of addiction however, is more complicated and therefore the remedy for successful recovery from addiction is not so simple or clear *-one size does not fit all.*

In most cases a *diabetic will feel better* when getting help and will thus be motivated to do what is required to accept recovery. A diabetic most likely will also be willing to devote the time and work necessary to develop a regimen of habits supporting his recovery for the long term.

For the addicted, it's *not* so simple. When finally accepting help for addiction, most often an *addict will feel worse* for awhile (can't get that good feeling from alcohol or drugs any more). Also, an addict can continue to deny or minimize their alcohol or drug problems and then have little or no motivation for recovery.

Even though treatment for both diabetes and addiction is available to all, when it comes to addiction, the motivation to seek and accept help is often missing. The diabetic may only have to give up certain foods and take medication in order to eliminate the suffering of un-treated diabetes. However the addict may feel he has to give up his hopes, dreams, and his entire life when giving up alcohol or drugs to enter recovery.

Yes, those are important questions to ask. Here are two other questions I recommend you ask:

"What is it going to take for a person to be motivated enough to be willing to give up the relief and pleasure of alcohol and drugs and go through the pain of recovery?" And: *"What can families do to help loved-ones reach that point of motivation?"* This is important because from my experience, I learned that "when the student is ready, the teacher appears."