

Is someone that you love struggling from addictions? Are their addictions driving you up a wall? Is your rope ready to break?



If so ... you may benefit by reading this brochure.

Dan Leaf
Finding HOPE

Heavenly Options for Pain and Emptiness

Finding HOPE For a Loved One by Dan Leaf

If you picked up this flyer, chances are you are in a lot of pain. You probably have dealt with the disappointments of broken promises and an endless cycle of frustration. Your loved one may be a spouse, child, parent, someone in your family, or just a close friend. You may feel as though, regardless of what you have tried, all seems to fail. **God has Hope and answers for your frustration.**

Thank you for picking up this flyer and for your interest in this subject. This is evidence that you have not totally given up on your loved one. One thing you always need to remember is that in Christ Jesus there is always HOPE and you always have options. Never stop praying. There is power in prayer. **Never stop believing in God's power to transform lives.**

Doing Something Different.

The most important part of finding a solution for our loved ones in addiction starts by taking ownership in things that we can change and letting go of things we cannot change. The difficulties come when we try to fix or rescue them from their self-destructive behaviors. We may make excuses for them or even bail them out so they won't face the full consequences of their actions. The reality is, we don't make things better; we just become more frustrated! We are trying to make an irrational behavior fit into a rational mold. We make boundaries, but those boundaries are broken; we then swing to the opposite and practice tough love. When we do, some other family member bails them out or makes excuses for them. The cycle of pain continues and so does the war going on inside of us. We become more and more frustrated. Health issues may arise because of the stress and strain we are under. Addicts know how to play people until they get what they want. We don't realize how enabling helps them continue their addictive lifestyle. All of those involved need to give a consistent message so their disease doesn't kill them or us.

The Serenity Prayer - *"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference."* This prayer has been an anchor for many who have addictions and is equally helpful for the families that are affected by the addict's bad choices.

Setting Boundaries

One thing we must do is set a clear distinction between the addict's behavior and our responsibility. We cannot let their choices/disease kill us. Addiction is brought on by choice and can spread its destruction throughout the body. It can even bring death. When we internalize our loved ones' addiction, it brings that same destruction to us. We need clear boundaries of what is our responsibility and what responsibility belongs to them. We need to understand what we can control and what we cannot control. We must not make ourselves vulnerable to participation in any form of abuse either physical, spiritual, or mental. If the addict continues to choose the path of destruction, we must exercise the freedom to choose not to be a part of it.

What We Cannot Do.

1. **We cannot CONTROL their addictions.** Yes, choice is what led to addiction, but after awhile the addiction takes over and controls the choice. Addiction is the master. Trying to control their addictions for them will not work.
2. **We did not CAUSE the addiction.** Many times the one who is addicted tries to blame their addictions on others. The truth is, each person enters addiction by their own choices.
3. **We cannot CHANGE them.** Stopping addiction is a personal choice. They must stop because they choose to stop. It can only stop when they desire a change and then choose to make that change.
4. **We cannot CURE them.** If wanting it hard enough for them would have worked, they would have stopped a long time ago. Their own will power is not enough; they need help to make this journey of recovery.

What We Can Do.

1. **We can CARE unconditionally.** Love sees past the behaviors and wants the best for the person. They need to understand that when they are ready to stop, we will be there to help them as they need it not necessarily how they want it.
2. **We can help them to see their CHOICES.** There are always options; although sometimes they are hard to see when one feels trapped in the seemingly endless cycle of addiction.
3. **We can help them to accept COMPLETE responsibility.** Many times the addict continues the cycle because others bail them out. We can show them options for treatment and come up with solutions for the arguments that they present for not getting help.

The Prodigal Son

There are some lessons that we can learn from the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. The story is about a young man that treated his father as though he was dead and asked for his inheritance. He then set out for a far country, got in with the wrong crowd and spent all his money on a wild party lifestyle with his friends. The text says that when he got enough of himself, he had a moment of clarity. He had hit his own personal bottom and decided that the only way out was up. He realized that he was powerless over his sinful lifestyle and that it would be better to be a servant in his father's house than to stay where he was. The only way to regain his life was to surrender it and put himself back under the control of his father. So far, this is a summary of someone working the first three steps of a 12-step program.

Notice the attitude of the father. First, and most importantly, the father never gave up hope. Every day he would pray and go look to see if the son was coming home. He expected God to answer his prayer. Second, notice that he never went after the son, but patiently waited until he was ready for recovery. He did not go and try to rescue him from the pit. Third,

he was not judgmental and critical when his son returned, but he was loving and supportive. Forth, it had to be the son's choice or it would not have worked.

God has given each person the freedom of choice. As much as we would like to, we cannot make choices for other people. Our loved ones have disappointed us, but until they desire to change and make right choices, it will not work. The time when they are the most able to make that choice is the time in the cycle after they have acted out on their addiction. At this time, they are struggling with guilt and shame. This is when you can get through to them. You can plant the seed thought of recovery in a very loving way.

Getting help for your loved one.

Make sure that you make a clear distinction between the sin and the sinner. Learn to love them while at the same time despising their addiction. In helping them, it is important that you do not come off as judgmental. If they come to you feeling shame and guilt, don't start telling them all the ways they've hurt you, but realize this may be the only opportunity in the cycle of addiction to get through to them. Start by telling them positive characteristics that you appreciate about them. Remember, our struggle is with the behavior, not the person. Continue by telling them how their addiction is hurting you and others. Use only examples that you personally know. Don't focus on their bad behavior, but on the way it made you feel. Tell them of specific times that their addiction has hurt you or you saw others hurt or in danger because of their actions. Offer help in getting treatment or solutions and refuse to help them in any way that would allow them to continue in their addiction. Do not rescue or bail them out of facing consequences. When the pain of using becomes greater than the pain of not using, treatment then becomes an option.

Getting help yourself.

Not only does your loved one have the freedom of choice, so do you. Choose to do something smart today not only for your loved one, but also for yourself. Remember, we at "Finding HOPE," and the Southside family are here to help you. Also, in my sheet of "Emergency Phone Numbers," you will find many helpful numbers, especially the section under: "Addiction Services/Referrals/Centers." Find support groups to attend with people who have common experiences and can share their experiences, strength and hope. Also, it is important to learn about addictions and how they work. Be sure to read my flyer, "The Cycle of Addiction." Knowing how the enemy thinks, feels, and behaves is important to coming up with a successful battle plan. Addictions all carry certain characteristics that are common. This will keep us from taking things personally when it has little to do about us, but all to do with the addiction. You may also consider seeking professional assistance. Remember, there is always HOPE in Christ.

Finding HOPE A 12-Step Based Christian Support Group

Located in Room 107
Sunday mornings 11:00 am. - 12:00 pm.
Wednesday nights 7:00 pm. - 8:00 pm.

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