



THE TEN "DON'TS" OF ENABLING

It is easier to find a list of "don'ts" in dealing with chemical dependency, for it is easier to understand why you fail than to know why you succeed. The following list is not inclusive, but it makes a good beginning.

1. Don't allow the dependent person to lie you and accept it for the truth, for in so doing you encourage this process (enabling). The truth is often painful, but get at it.
2. Don't let the chemically dependent person exploit you, or take advantage of you, for in so doing you become an accomplice (enabler) in the evasion of responsibility.
3. Don't let the chemically dependent person outsmart you, for this teaches him/her to avoid responsibility and lose respect for you at the same time (enabling).
4. Don't lecture, moralize, scold, praise, blame, threaten, or argue. You may feel better, but the situation will be worse.
5. Don't accept promises, for this is just a method of postponing pain. In the same way, don't keep switching agreements. If an agreement is made, stick to it.
6. Don't lose your temper and thereby destroy yourself, and possibility of help.
7. Don't allow your anxiety to compel you to do what the chemically dependent person must do for him/herself.
8. Don't cover up or abort the consequences of chemical use. This reduces the crisis but perpetuates the illness (enabling).
9. Don't try to follow this as a rule book. It is simply a "guide" to be used with intelligence and evaluation. If at all possible, see good professional help. You need it as well as the chemically dependent person.
10. Above all, don't put off facing the reality that chemical dependency is progressive illness that gets increasingly worse as use of mood altering chemicals continues. Start not to learn, to understand, and to plan for recovery. To do nothing is the worst choice you can make.