

This is Lieutenant Roger McCort from The Salvation Army in Eureka with today's Community Comment.

Like most who have helped people in addiction recovery efforts, I am about as anti-drug as you can get. If it were up to me, we'd ban them all and impose harsh penalties on anyone selling or using intoxicating substances. I've seen too many lives ruined, picked too many individuals out of the gutter, and presided over too many funerals to soft-pedal it. We should not allow possession or use of any of the mind-altering poisons people put in their bodies. Meth, opioids, alcohol, tobacco, weed – ban it all and save lives. We are probably going to come to a time where we realize we needed to regulate caffeine better as well.

But I recognize that our culture lacks the political will to make such drastic changes. So, we must do all we can to help people escape the tentacles of addiction.

The trick is that most people are happy to be addicted. They like the edge they feel it gives them or how it numbs the pain or the way their chemical cocktail of choice helps them feel normal.

Those of us trying to get people up on the wagon must help them understand they SHOULD get clean, that they CAN get clean, and that they are WORTH getting clean.

The first of those is surprisingly easy. Most people recognize that they have a problem long before they end up in an alleyway with a needle in their arm. There is a nagging feeling that something isn't right which starts when they take that hit or that drink to unwind. Some people rationalize it away, telling themselves, "I don't really NEED this," but then they take it anyway. Whether that's snorting a little powder or testing the bouquet of a nightly libation, that little voice you're ignoring is the one which says you should get clean.

It's not much harder to convince someone that they CAN get clean. Most people are overconfident about their own ability and willpower. "I can stop any time!" they'll tell me, "But..."

Like most "buts," this one tries to keep them seated firmly in the position they've gotten themselves into. It usually takes time and encouragement and a lot of help to get someone to lift their "but" from their seat and start moving away from it. That kind of help doesn't come from other people who are stuck in the same place, though. Misery loves company, after all. The

farther down you've fallen, the harder it is to remember that you are valuable. And the more others are likely to tell you that you're not.

That's because we forget that people's lives are worth our effort. When we get frustrated with someone's addiction, we tend to take it out on them. Addiction is worthless and has no value to anyone. The addict, however, is still a person. The drugs and alcohol or whatever it is that has its claws in them is nothing more or less than a demon which needs to be fought off and then struggled against so that it doesn't reattach itself. Don't like the supernatural image? Then think of it like a backpack. It may have been put on willingly, but the straps have been tightened too much and now it's hard to get off and harder to put down because it has all your stuff in it.

You are worth more than the addiction which is trying to absorb you. Get some help getting it off you. Stop poisoning yourself! You can be restored to all that you were and strengthened to be more than that. Believe me: You're worth the effort and so is the life you'll have on the other side of healing.

Grace and peace to you. This has been Lt. Roger McCort with today's KINS Community Comment.