



Addictions & Attachments: Avoiding Pitfalls in Recovery

By Renée Siegel

Riding on waves of relief of early recovery is often a wonderful ride. The race for self destruction appears to be over and the journey of healing can begin. Lies are uncovered and the need to grow shame is gone. We are free to move about in life feeling lighter and can begin the repair with those people, places and things we have been avoiding.

Oftentimes an internal restlessness surfaces and we have urges to return to use and crave the substance or process we have released. If we do not return to the addiction we left, this is a high risk time for either turning to another addiction or self-destructive behavior, or to develop attachments. We see ourselves as avoiding pain and discomfort, all of which is essential to face in a healthy way in order to remain in recovery and not merely abstain.

Having attachments is a universal human phenomenon. We as humans cling to, crave, grasp at and hold on to various aspects of our life - our roles, possessions, friends, family, identity, recognition and other things as well. As addicts we seem to crave both the intensity and drama associated with all of this.

Perhaps there is a relationship between addiction and attachment. Let us look at each of these as existing on a continuum.

Not all of our attachments are addictions in life, but all have the potential of becoming addictions. Addictions are primary relationships with people, places and things that have become primary relationships that we covet, forsaking all else and we are powerless over them. We cannot stop. Addictions are usually life threatening. We become negligent of other responsibilities in our life as the addiction spins out of control.

Attachments have the potential of becoming addictions as they are relationships we hold with people, places and things where we forecast an outcome. It is important to note here that all attachments are not unhealthy, but to realize that attachments have the potential to become addictions. When attachments cause suffering, we can be sure



that there is a warning sign that we need to heed as the potential of addiction is growing.

So what do we do to avoid the progression of attachments growing into addictions in our lives? The fellowship and community of recovery with meetings, sponsors and therapy is helpful. Trying to create balance with food, sex, money and relationships is important as well. These are some of the ways to assist us and guide us toward serenity and contentment. Serenity and contentment are states that discourage the growth of both attachments and addictions.