

Day 78

MEDITATION

“The rewards of detachment are great: serenity, the ability to give and receive love, and the freedom to find real solutions to our problems.”

- Melody Beattie

Letting go of our need to control can set others and us free. It opens the door for God to send the best to us.

If we weren't trying to control someone or something, what would we be doing differently? What would we do that we're not letting ourselves do now? Where would we go? What would we say? What decisions would we make? What would we ask for? What boundaries would be set? When would we say no or yes?

If we weren't trying to control whether a person liked us or his or her reaction to us, what would we do differently? If we weren't trying to control the course of a relationship, what would we do differently? If we weren't trying to control another person's behavior, how would we think, feel, speak, and behave differently than we do now?

What haven't we been letting ourselves do while hoping that self-denial would influence a particular situation or person? Are there some things we've been doing that we'd stop?

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How would we treat ourselves differently? Would we let ourselves enjoy life more and feel better right now? Would we stop feeling so bad? Would we treat ourselves better? If we weren't trying to control, what would we do differently? Make a list, and then do it.

Today, I will ask myself what I would be doing differently if I weren't trying to control. When I hear the answer, I will do it. God, help me let go of my need to control. Help me set others and myself free.

*Source:
The Language of Letting Go,
by Melody Beattie ©1990
Hazelden Foundation*

Day 78

Recovery INSIGHT

Stay honest

Compulsive behaviors require dishonesty. We have to lie about our sexual activities, how we've been spending our time, consequences of our behavior, and our spiritual lives. Any addiction or compulsion is full of lying. From the beginning of our sexual struggles, shame about our behaviors led us to cover them up. As time went on, lying got easier. After a while we got so good at lying that we ended up lying to ourselves. That's why addicts don't know who they are or what they really believe.

Another problem with lying is that we can't respect ourselves when we lie. We can't look ourselves in the mirror. Lying traps us in our addiction. The more we lie, the less we like ourselves, which makes us want to escape, which leads to more acting out and more lying.

Nothing changes, if nothing changes

Ask yourself this: will more lying, more isolating, and more of the same make you feel better? The expression in AA is: nothing changes if nothing changes. If you don't change your life, then why would this time—when you say you're going to

*"Nothing in life is
to be feared. It is only
to be understood."*

- Marie Curie

stop your behavior—be any different? You need to create a new life where it's easier to not act out.

Recovery requires complete honesty. We must be completely honest with the people who are our supports: our family, our therapist, the people in our 12 step group, and our sponsor. If we can't be completely honest with them, we won't do well in recovery.

When we're completely honest we don't give our addiction room to hide. When we lie we leave the door open to relapse.

Honesty won't come naturally in the beginning

We've spent so much time learning how to lie that telling the truth, no matter how good it is for us, won't feel natural. We'll have to practice telling the truth a few hundred times before it comes a little easier. In the beginning, we'll have to stop ourselves as we're telling a story, and say, "now that I think about it, it was more like this..."

Honesty doesn't mean telling everyone everything all the time

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*"Whatever games are
played with us,
we must play no games
with ourselves, but deal
in our privacy with
the last honesty
and truth."*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Show common sense. Not everybody is your best friend, and not everybody needs to know about your addiction. Not everybody will be comfortable with knowing about your addiction, or comfortable that you're doing something about it. There will obviously be many people who you don't want to tell about your recovery.

But the issue today is: what are you doing in those relationships that **are** safe? Don't be reluctant to tell the people close to you about your recovery. You should never feel ashamed that you're doing something about your addiction.

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Recovery ACTION

Today's recovery action step is to look at your relationships with family, friends, support group members. Are there ways that you're not being honest with these important people in your life?

Take a look at the people you have disclosed to ... the people who know about your sexual struggle. Are you starting to drift away from total transparency with them? It's very tempting to do this, but very destructive.

Be ruthlessly honest with yourself about this reflection: *"Am I letting myself be too vague, or even outright lying to the people who can help me recover?"*