

Stop Fucking Newcomers

by: Christopher Malo

Is it too early to say this?

Most will already know who and what I am referring to, but for those that don't, here's the heartbreaking news:

Last weekend there were two ODs of addicts known in the rooms. One died from it, and the other from what I hear is either in the hospital with kidney failure (or not) and may (or may not) be facing some legal issues. Remember, I am an ocean away and haven't found out all the details. Nor am I trying to. The only detail that matters is that an addict we knew and that was well liked, died from the disease of addiction.

(If you are not a member of the fellowship or don't fuck newcomers, you are a) seemingly the minority and/or b) not the audience I am looking to address. If someone says, "People who drive trucks are assholes," I could care less. It doesn't apply to me.

Chances are if you read this and get mad or "feel some type of way," I am talking to you.)

My heart goes out to the addict's family, her children, and the people closest to her. I won't pretend that I am bowled over with grief and emotion, because I'm not. I was friendly with her, but not close enough to pretend to be personally and deeply touched by her passing. What I knew is that she came to meetings, struggled, was honest with her struggles, was very sweet and tried to balance this all with a young child in her arms. Call me cold, but I see addicts come and go all the time and it doesn't usually affect me. Most who go leave because they don't take their recovery seriously or invest in it or have much willingness. But she kept coming, trying. So I do find it sadder than most. She came in, was pregnant, and the baby's father was locked up. The odds were stacked against her from the second she walked in, but she still had every chance to stop using, lose the desire and find a new way of life.

What I am bowled over by is feeling like an opportunity was lost. Both by her. And by us.

I'm sure back home people are struggling to try and come to grips with the loss. Trying to figure out the "how" and "why" of it all. And I would like to throw around my 14+ years of experience here. I have a suggestion on how we can help increase the chances that the addicts who come to the rooms to find a safe place and the relief and freedom they are desperately searching for:

Stop fucking newcomers.

Without all the gossipy details, the two addicts that overdosed were romantically involved and had been for some time. Since she was a newcomer. I don't hold him personally responsible for her death, but I can't help to think that once again, getting involved with someone who is coming in and trying to save their life, handicaps and hurts their chances of staying clean. Thirteenth stepping newcomers has certainly caused more harm than it has ever done good.

While the idea of not fucking newcomers is not a new idea, and I understand that it is always going to happen, there seems to have been this belligerent turn of attitudes where it has now become a free for all, no holds barred on the freshest meat that walks in the doors. And let's make this blatantly clear as well: I am not only addressing the men. The women have become just as flagrant when it comes to this as well. And if the recent events highlight one thing it's this: the results are sometimes tallied in deaths. This is not a fucking game. What people sometimes neglect to admit is that people's lives are on the line.

I have been around here for a minute and suddenly I find myself feeling like this attitude is not only the minority, but somehow flawed. It's like I have landed in some parallel universe. I have had more than a few convos and arguments about fucking newcomers. I know and have heard all the excuses and justifications.

"It doesn't say anything in the Basic Text about not fucking newcomers."

True. But it also doesn't say anything about not driving your car into a brick wall, but I wouldn't recommend that either. And while not in the Basic Text, we do have literature that speaks to this. The [Group Business Meetings IP #2202](#), [Maintaining Strong Home Groups](#) section asks:

- How is the group striving to create a safe environment for the newcomers? Are newcomers subject to sexually or financially inappropriate advances?

I'm thinking that is pretty straight forward.

"Maybe it's what keeps them coming back."

Really? I mean, I guess. But if our retention plan is based on allowing the strong to pick off the wounded... If all that talk about moving away from the self-centered, self-serving, self-seeking nature of addicts is just rhetoric to get new ass in the door so they can be pounced on, we are in a scarier place than I thought. I was under the impression that what kept people coming back for the most part was the promise of freedom from active addiction. My bad.

"That's how people get experience in relationships. By being in them."

True. But we are so historically horrible at them. And if relationships are based off of selflessness and communication, doesn't it make sense to work on these with self first before trying to implement them in a relationship? What can someone with 60 or 90 days realistically bring to a relationship?

"It's just sex."

This line has robbed people of more clean time than heroin has.

"They are adults, they can do what they want."

There is that little bit early on in the step process, right in the First Step, that addresses the result of disease, stating how as a result of our addiction "...our lives had become unmanageable." Yes, because clearly by wrecking their lives and ending up in a 12 step fellowship they have demonstrated their ability to be responsible and make good decisions.

"What about (so and so) and (so and so)? They are doing fine."

First, they might be doing fine. For now. Sometimes these things take time to unravel. And for every "success" story you want to hold up, we can probably name hundreds of examples that have ended disastrously.

"You have never done it, so you can't share your experience. You don't have any."

I have never relapsed since I have been here. Can I therefore not say that relapsing is probably not a good idea?

"You did it, so you can't talk."

So at first I didn't do it, so I can't say anything, now I have done it so I can't say anything? How about learning from mistakes? And, for the record, let me share my newcomer experience. I started dating a girl with 2 months clean. When I had 9 months. I talked to sponsor first, he greenlighted it. She was never fully in and when she had 10 years clean she ODD and tried to kill herself. I don't hold myself responsible, but I think it's naive to think that not allowing her to establish a foundation in recovery, take the time to work on herself instead of being distracted by someone else or a relationship, played no role in how things turned out for her.

And I also have exchanged naughty texts with someone with under a year.

Is any of that ok? Probably not.

Have an effect on someone else's recovery/process? Probably.

I make no excuses and don't even feel a need to defend my experience. If I didn't put it out there I might come across as hypocritical, but lets not forget something else. Those two newcomer indiscretions are over a 14 year period. It is easy to be proud that you have never stolen something from your job. If it's your first day. Check back years or decades later. It doesn't excuse it but it does allow for more chances to fall short. Which I have. There it is, in an effort of full disclosure.

Plus, I try and allow people to be human. To make mistakes and fall short. I am not out to crucify everyone every time this happens. But there are some long career criminals out there when it comes to this. The ones who do the walk of shame when things fall apart with the newcomer, hang their head in shame, recognize the err of their ways, swear they will never go there again. And then do. Repeatedly. I'm not on my high and mighty shit, I just think it's pretty despicable and reprehensible to fuck up someone else's life. Take their life in your hands. You want to fuck up your own, be my guest. But to prey on the weak is inexcusable.

I am well versed in disease, in addiction, in being caught up, obsession, compulsion, total self-centeredness. What blows my mind isn't that fucking newcomers happens. It's the unabated, unabashed, shameless and without remorse, regret or second thought that it happens. It isn't "I am caught up in her/him and it's wrong but I'm struggling." It's "fuck it." And look, if you are ok

with it, then you should have no problem talking about it, from the floor or with other people. But for some reason people want to hide it and keep it a secret. It's no big deal and it's ok, you just don't want anyone to know. So which is it? And allow me to let people in on a little secret: we know. This is a 12 step fellowship and when it comes to who is fucking who, it fucking leaks. Trust me.

Are you really willing to roll the dice with someone else's life? In the end, arguing for getting your nut off with a person whose life has been recently devastated by drugs, while trying to save their life, and in the place that they come for help that is supposed to be safe, just smacks and wrecks of fucking pure, unadulterated self-centeredness. It blows my mind that people, people who are supposed to be able to empathize with the hopelessness, degradation and despair, even attempt to justify it.

In the end I realize ranting and raving probably has little effect. Best case scenario is that at least when there is controversy, people are at least talking about it. But I have come to believe that the children are the future and the only real places to implement change is with yourself. And your sponsees. But that doesn't mean that I will stop talking about it or feeling the way I do.

I expect to get feedback on this. And I expect it to be good. I'm not doing this to sound like a recovery champ. I would do it anonymously, but I want people to know where to go or who to bitch at if they have a problem with what I am saying. People seem fine with fucking newcomers, but not quite willing to step up in public and defend it. Interesting. Maybe it is because when they try to they realize just how silly it all sounds. And it usually sounds like baseless and empty rhetoric. The same kind spit by political sheep who can't articulate or defend their position, just merely mouth the party line. When you ask them to engage their brain and stop and think about what they are saying, you are met by steely reserve, glassy eyes, and more rhetoric.

And if you think it doesn't, or rarely, hurts anyone... ask the addict that just died, her kids, her family or her friends. Or any of the countless others who come in looking for help, a way out, another way to live, freedom from active addiction and instead end up finding a fuck or a boyfriend or girlfriend. Does it always end so horrifically? No. Of course not. But with something that is supposed to be as precious as a human life hangs in the balance, is it really worth it? Watching everyone who is affected by her death, is it not worth it to try and prevent this?

And this isn't to point fingers or cast blame on any particular addict, in this situation or any other. (I hope the other addict in this situation recovers as well. In all senses of the word.) I am also not suggesting the ostracizing and lynching of serial newcomer fuckers. But I am suggesting shining the light on them and the subject as a whole and the repercussions. But it is an opportunity to draw attention to what happens and has been happening rampantly in the rooms in our area recently. And to consider the effect we can have on others lives. Good or bad.

So what can we do to try and not let something tragic like this happen again? I know it's a "we" program, but in the end, if each person on their own just stopped fucking newcomers I would imagine it would have a big impact on the quality of life and number of lives that we are supposed to be here to help.

*(And for anyone upset by this blogpost, it's my blog. I can say what I want. The views here expressed are mine. So before you wrongly go walling on about me breaking Traditions, you are probably the same ones who were upset by the **Punch Drunk Love** thing. Learn about Traditions before you start trying to wave them around.*

*People may get mad and suggest I consider others when pointing my finger.
But I think that's exactly what I am doing.)*