Should I Date a Former Drug Addict?

* **Kris Swiatocho, Cliff Young**
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* COMMENTS **0**

***EDITOR'S NOTE:***[***He Said-She Said***](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/) *is a biweekly advice column for singles featuring a question from a Crosswalk.com reader with responses from a male and female point of view. If you've got a question about anything related to singleness or living the single life, please submit it to* ***hesaid-shesaid@crosswalk.com*** *(selected questions will be posted anonymously).*

**QUESTION**: I'm looking for advice, and truth, about the potential challenges of dating someone who has formerly struggled with substance abuse. This person is a missionary with an organization that sent him overseas to serve in the area of recovery from abuse & addictions; the same program he went through in his home country. Therefore, I know that he has shown leadership qualities and is trusted by other Christians who know him well. I have a lot of respect for him, but am curious about what impact his experience could have on a relationship.

Besides answering this question, are there any additional resources you can recommend that speak to this issue?

**HE SAID:**

I don’t have any professional or direct experience with substance abuse except for knowing some who have struggled in the past, and what I have learned from those few encounters was, addictions don’t ever “go away,” but are a constant daily battle to overcome.

From what I have found, about a third of those who successfully complete a recovery program never experience another relapse. This is not to say the other two-thirds fall completely off the wagon into a destructive lifestyle, but statistically most stumble along the way to a “complete” recovery.

There could be a variety of reasons for the addiction – emotional, genetic or otherwise, but one of the most important parts of maintaining a “non-addictive” lifestyle or challenge of any kind is to be in community with others in order to stay accountable.

Since your friend has been through a recovery program and is now a missionary reaching out to and helping those with similar struggles, he puts himself in a better position of protection from a possible relapse than one who isolates himself.

What you can do is educate yourself on how to best support your friend. I’m sure you can obtain information from an organization or center who deals specifically with his particular form of substance abuse in order to know what signs to look for in the case of relapse, ways to encourage and maintain a healthy lifestyle and environment, and other ways a partner or friend can be supportive.

Each case will be different, but gaining some understanding with some professionals will best help you in preparing yourself for what might be ahead.

With many addictions there seem to be hereditary factors which come into play and you may want to look into how genetics may have played a role in his situation so you know what you might be stepping into. If his parents and or grandparents had problems, it is possible your friend’s offspring may be at risk.

**SHE SAID:**

While there are many Christians who are former (or event current, struggling) addicts, drug and chemical addictions are some of the hardest to recover from. However, it's not impossible.

I personally dated and was later engaged to a wonderful Christian man who told me he was a former drug and alcohol addict. I didn't judge him because I've got past issues and baggage, too. However, after we dated a while and got engaged, his behavior changed. Even though he was in seminary, extremely involved in his church and could lead a Muslim at the local convenient store to Christ, he was in fact not being truthful about his drug addiction. He was still struggling and had fallen back into the lifestyle several times while we were dating.

Why do I share all this with you? While it sounds like your boyfriend is recovered and even helping others through addiction (praise the Lord), you are still taking a risk. Many people never beat the kind of addiction he is recovering from. But then again, life is about risk! None of us has any guaranteed that our loved ones won't fall back into their old lifestyle, lie, or betray us. This is where we do have to trust - not only the person you are dating, but God.

Bottom line? Pray about this situation, spend more time dating him, and more time getting to know who he really is. God is still in the healing business. Also, continue to seek God for each step of the relationship. In my case, I prayed, I asked friends and [**family**](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/) for advice ([**Celebrate Recovery**](http://www.celebraterecovery.com/) is a great resource for guidance) and because the trust had been broken and he had no remorse, there was no way to heal the relationship and move forward.

While there is no way to ever know what a person may or may not do in the future, our God is still a part of that future.

*“He trusts in the LORD,” they say, “let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him”* ([**Psalm 22:8**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=ps+22:8-8)).

***HE is …******Cliff Young****, a Crosswalk.com contributing writer and a veteran single of many decades. He has traveled the world in search of fresh experiences, serving opportunities, and the perfect woman (for him) and has found that his investments in God, career and youth ministry have paid off in priceless dividends.*

***SHE is ...******Kris Swiatocho****, the President and Director of* [***TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries***](http://thesinglesnetwork.org/) *and* [***FromHisHands.com Ministries.***](http://fromhishands.com/) *Kris has served in ministry in various capacities for the last 25 years. An accomplished trainer and mentor, Kris has a heart to reach and grow leaders so they will in turn reach and grow others. She is also the author of* [***three books.***](http://www.thesinglesnetwork.org/bookspdfs.html)

***DISCLAIMER****: We are not trained psychologists or licensed professionals. We're just average folk who understand what it's like to live the solo life in the twenty-first century. We believe that the Bible is our go-to guide for answers to all of life's questions, and it's where we'll go for guidance when responding to your questions. Also, it's important to note that we write our answers separately.*

***GOT A QUESTION?*** *If you've got a question about anything related to singleness or living the single life, please submit it to* ***hesaid-shesaid@crosswalk.com*** *(selected questions will be posted anonymously). While we are unable to answer every inquiry, we do hope that this column will be an encouragement to you. Click here to visit the He Said-She Said* [***archives***](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/)