

# **Understanding Ambivalence in The Transition to Addiction Recovery: A Family Perspective**

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Entering treatment and moving toward recovery is often a tumultuous process for many individuals, marked by resistance and ambivalence. This transition into recovery is frequently accompanied by conflicting feelings, with people with a substance use disorder standing at the crossroads of continued active addiction and the path to recovery.

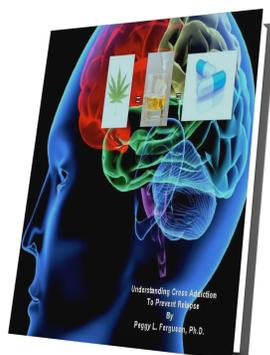
Ambivalence is a common and prominent theme during this critical juncture. At the crossroads, people with a substance use disorder may grapple with conflicting emotions about quitting. Some may want to stop but believe it's impossible for them. Others may acknowledge the self-destructive nature of their substance use yet wish to continue to drink or use drugs. Some doubt that life can be fulfilling without alcohol or drugs. Some may attempt to quit but abandon the effort when the pain of detox becomes overwhelming. In this complex moment, many people with substance use disorder recognize the need to stop drinking or using drugs but lack consistent motivation and abstinence skills to give up all mood-altering substances.

For non-addicted family members, understanding the afflicted person's perspective proves challenging. To family members, the substance (whether alcohol, prescription drugs, or street drugs) is "the problem." However, the person with disordered substance use may not identify the substance itself as the root issue. Examining the difficulties in one's life becomes challenging, and the prospect of change results in fear and anger. The person standing at the crossroads may attribute the problems in their life to family, law enforcement, employment, or other circumstances, seeing these external factors as the true source of their troubles and blaming them for the necessity to quit. The chemical substance, in their eyes, remains the solution.

As awareness of the accumulating negative consequences starts to break through denial, individuals may become motivated to change. Still, the desire to eliminate the harmful results of uncontrolled use may continue to involve a desire to discover the magical solution that enables them to regain control over their substance use or life. By the time the person with a substance use problem commits to abstinence, they have likely attempted multiple times to regain control without success. Crisis moments, marked by significant pain or fear, often provide the catalyst to quit. It's essential to recognize that while pain and fear are good for short-term motivation, these feelings diminish over time, and with a return to comfort, there's a risk of relapse. Fear and pain, without the necessary support for sobriety, are insufficient to break the cycle of addiction. Merely "learning a lesson" is not a comprehensive recovery strategy and is not ultimately successful.

The decision to quit substance use is often fraught with internal struggles. As reality becomes more apparent, defense mechanisms can crumble, and the person trying to give up mood-altering substances must examine the motivating factors compelling them to quit. This realization may occur before or during treatment. Many people seek help, still hoping to regain control over their substance use or to stop using certain drugs only selectively. In the initial stages of recovery, the decision to quit represents a substantial sacrifice to the person who still thinks of the substance as the solution.

The decision to quit seems like the only logical and common-sense solution to family members and significant others observing the process.



People at the cross-roads try many potential solutions to reclaim control over their lives when faced with the reality of the damage created by their substance use. One of the most common "solutions" that people who have substance use problems try is switching to a different drug. Learn about cross-addiction and why this does not work for recovery. This Ebook is a digital download, immediately available.

**\$9.95**