

## Contents

---

Foreword by George McGovern	xi
Preface	xiii
Acknowledgments	xvii
Note to the Reader	xix
<b>Section 1: Insights into Alcoholism and Other Drug Addictions</b>	<b>1</b>
Love First	3
What Does It Take to Get an Alcoholic or Addict to Accept Help?	6
Are You Barking Up the Wrong Tree?	9
When You and the Alcoholic Are Speaking Different Languages	11
When Keeping You Off Balance Is a Good Thing for an Alcoholic or Addict	13
What Science Has Learned about the Genetics of Addiction	18
The Addicted Brain	24
Eleven Misconceptions about Chemical Dependency	29

<b>Section 2: Understanding Family Responses</b>	<b>33</b>
Good Intentions Can Take You Down the Wrong Road	35
Combine Love with Denial and You Have Innocent Enabling	38
Combine Reality with Fear and You Have Desperate Enabling	42
What Are the “Rewards” of Enabling?	47
Detachment: A New Recipe	51
Are You Seeing the Addict as a Bad Person or as a Sick Person?	54
Using the Power of the Group	58
<b>Section 3: Preparing for an Intervention</b>	<b>63</b>
Building a Team	65
A Few Things to Consider before Picking Up the Phone	71
Involving Doctors and Other Professionals	75
Involving the Workplace	80
Finalizing Your Team	84
Becoming Aware of the Influence of the Group	87
Understanding the Role of Leverage	89
What Do You Need to Know?	96
Using the Planner	98
Keeping Tabs on Your Progress	103
Calling Treatment Centers and Asking Questions	105
Choosing a Date and Time	107
Choosing a Place	111
Selecting a Chairperson	115
Do You Need a Professional Interventionist?	118
Choosing Inpatient over Outpatient Treatment	121
Finding Low-Cost or No-Cost Treatment	123

Writing a Letter to Your Addicted Loved One	126
Letters Written for Real Interventions	135
Your Bottom Line	140
<b>Section 4: The Intervention</b>	<b>147</b>
Listing Possible Objections and Your Answers	149
Rehearsing the Intervention	155
Some Thoughts for Intervention Day	160
Notes for the Chairperson	163
Making Team Decisions	167
Intervening on an Adolescent	170
Intervening on Someone Over Age Fifty-five	176
What an Intervention Looks Like	184
Intervention: A Portrayal	186
A Different Ending	194
Helping without a Family Intervention	200
Executive-Style Intervention	203
<b>Section 5: After the Intervention</b>	<b>209</b>
Talking to People Who Did Not Take Part in the Intervention	211
Sending Your Intervention Letters to the Counselor	214
Understanding What Goes On during Treatment	217
Preparing for Objections during Treatment	224
Supporting the Alcoholic or Addict during Treatment	228
Your First Al-Anon Meeting	231
A Few Words about Alcoholics Anonymous	235
Preparing for the Possibility of Relapse	238
Using Family Intervention for Other Problems	243
An Instrument of Love	257

<b>Section 6: Tools and Resources</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>Tools</b>	<b>259</b>
Building a Team	261
The Planner	262
The Checklist	271
Enabling Behaviors	274
Evaluating Treatment Centers	276
Objections and Answers	279
Bottom Lines	284
Family and Friends Commitment Statement	287
Self-Quizzes	289
Quiz: Is a Family Member Chemically Dependent?	290
Quiz: Signs of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse in Older People	292
Quiz: Is Our Teen Chemically Dependent?	294
Quiz: Signs of Inhalant Use in Our Teen	296
Quiz: Are You Troubled by Someone's Drinking?	298
The Jellinek Curve	300
<b>Resources</b>	<b>301</b>
Web Sites	301
Books and Publications	303
Twelve Step Organizations	304
Alcohol and Drug Treatment Centers	306
Low-Cost Alcohol and Drug Treatment Centers	309
Alcohol and Drug Treatment Centers for Special Populations	312
Help Lines	317
Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous	318
Index	319
About the Authors	331

**Section 1**

---

***Insights into Alcoholism  
and Other Drug Addictions***



## Love First

---

Mother Teresa wrote, “There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread.” She wasn’t the only one to understand the power of this deep human yearning. The great religious figures, philosophers, and psychologists have all identified this driving force within the human spirit. It is the basis for the Golden Rule: “Do unto others what you would have them do unto you.”

Alcoholics and addicts crave the approval of their families and friends. Outwardly, they may act as if they don’t need anyone, but this is a deception. Alcoholics push others away to protect the addiction and to hide their shame—not because they’ve stopped caring. In fact, it is by giving alcoholics what they *really* want—love, appreciation, and respect—that we can persuade them that accepting treatment is the right thing to do.

People who are addicted have lost all hope, all faith, all belief that they can survive without alcohol or other drugs. These substances are not just stress relievers or a crutch, but life itself. Without the drink or the pills or the powder, they cannot imagine survival. The drug is the oxygen that fills their lungs, the blood that rushes through their veins, the spirit

[ 3 ]

that inhabits their souls. You are going to take that away? It's no wonder addicts fight for the drug like a man fighting for his life. It is their life. They can't see beyond it.

Love restores lost hope. When the most important people in an alcoholic's life come together with a sincere and honest outpouring of love, they ignite a profound emotional shift that signals a new solution. For the first time, all involved—including the addict—see the problem not as a failure but as an illness that can respond to professional care. Loved ones bring with them a promise that the real person, whom they have loved dearly, can be set free and delivered from this sickness.

On the following pages, we lay out a plan to transform love's power into a course of action we call intervention. Intervention gives love direction. It's a love armed with knowledge. It's a love that doesn't depend upon gratitude or thanks. It's a love that asks friends and family to demonstrate integrity and honor, by making the hard decision to do what is right, not what is easy.

During an intervention, love is best described as *divine energy*: the capacity to work with compassion and strength. Loved ones reveal truth to the addicted person in such a way that he will hear the message and say yes to treatment, while keeping the door open to all relationships. Intervention is first about achieving sobriety, but in the end, it is about restoring family and friendship. Alcohol and drugs have taken loved ones away, and family members want them back.

Some still advocate toughness as a means to an end in intervention, but not all means are acceptable. The goal is to preserve dignity—both the addict's and the family's. Regardless of how severe the addiction, addicts can still be approached with love and respect, even when setting boundaries and presenting bottom lines. The means used to reach a goal speak



to the future. Is the family furthering the damage or setting the course for the path to healing? Love is more powerful than brute force. It also requires more from everyone involved.

Sister Wendy Beckett in her book on prayer speaks of love as reverence. Reverence, she says, allows us complete acceptance of another person, wanting only good for her. When we accept our alcoholics and addicts, not for their addiction, but for their struggles in the face of an all-consuming adversity, and by remembering who they truly are when they are healthy and whole, then we can find it within ourselves to search for a way to set them free.

When we intervene on the disease of addiction, we use love as a means to an end, because it is the means—not the end—that defines who we are and where this journey will take our family.