

Unhealthy Justification/ Healthy Justification

Lesson 8

“The second most important human need is the need for justification. The first is oxygen.” – Mark Belling

“When you stop justifying yourself, you start getting better.” – Dr. Thomas Lehmann

One aspect of AA's First Step – “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable” – is admitting that we are powerless to justify ourselves

- Look at the addendum entitled “Justifying the Addiction/Offender Lifestyle”. How have you tried to convince yourself and other people that you're okay?
- What have you thought you needed to do to be justified?

Romans 3:20-28 – Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished – he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

1 John 1:8-10 – If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

- How is God's way of justifying you different from ways you've tried?
- What happens when you start to give up justifying yourself and start to let God do his job?

Addendum: **JUSTIFYING THE ADDICTION/OFFENDER LIFESTYLE**

[from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice]

People involved in Addiction/Offender behaviors often deny responsibility for their actions and the harm they inflict on themselves, their family and on others.

A wide range of psychological maneuvers emerges when addicted and criminally inclined people unwittingly protect themselves from the reality of what they are doing. All of these maneuvers distort reality. This distorted reality can be similar to the armor worn by knights of old. Worn to ward off the blows of life, it makes it very difficult to see, hear, or feel what is really happening.

Addiction and Offender Thinking Errors can be arrested when openly confronted. **It is the denial of addiction and crime that kills people.**

Denial has many faces:

- Impaired Judgment
- Self Delusion
- Selective Recall

Simple denial: Saying something is not true, when in fact, it is, e.g., insisting that chemical dependency isn't a problem, when it is seen as such by those around you. The person in denial frequently does not tell the truth, but is unaware of the fact. "I was framed, I'm innocent!"

Minimizing: Admitting to some degree of a problem with chemical usage or criminal behavior but in such a way that it appears to be much less serious or significant than is actually the case. "I only stole from a company, not from an individual" or "I only drank some beer".

Blaming: Denying responsibility for certain behavior and maintaining that the responsibility lies with some- one else. The behavior is not denied, but its cause is placed "out there", not within the person. "She/He/They made me do it!"

Projection: Attributing one's own feelings, shortcomings, or unacceptable impulses to others. "They're the thieves, not me!"

Rationalizing: Offering alibis, excuses, justifications, and other explanations for behavior by giving reasonable but false reasons. "I only sold because I couldn't get a real job."

Diversión: Chemically dependent people and offenders change the subject to avoid a topic that is threatening to their usage and related behavior. "It is just baloney, the real problem is the way I was treated by my parents!"

Hostility: Becoming angry and irritable when reference is made to chemical usage and drug related behavior or criminality. This is a good way to avoid the issue. It serves to get people to back off. "What do you mean I'm an addict? I wouldn't have to use if you weren't on my back all the time!"

Assimilation: Taking everyone else along for the ride. Pretending the problem is normal behavior. "Hey, everyone drinks."

Dehumanizing: Treating someone as less than human to avoid guilt over using or hurting him or her. "They are just a bunch of _____, nobody cares what happens to them."

After years of living in an addictive or offender lifestyle, these defense mechanisms become automatic. The addict/offender is now living a lie.