

## The False High of Addiction

### The Doctor Who Had Everything

While scanning the information on the Titusonenine blog, I recently read a post entitled "A Bout With Addiction, for the Doctor Who Has Everything" that captured my interest. According to the post, Dr. G. was an anesthesiologist who became addicted to drugs. After entering a drug rehab clinic, unfortunately, he never returned to his medical practice.

### The Need for Excitement

Dr. G's story was interesting for a number of reasons, but at a very basic level of analysis the problem was clear. To everyone else, Dr. G. had everything: power, financial resources, prestige, position, and respect and admiration from others. Apparently, however, there was one thing that Dr. G. didn't have: excitement--something thrilling that would add zest to his life. Unfortunately, Dr. G. looked to drugs to provide the "high" his life was lacking. Apart from the unfortunate reality that Dr. G. never returned to his profession, there is something else that leaps out from this story that needs to be articulated.

### Healthy Excitement Boosters

There is virtually an endless supply of healthy "excitement boosters" in our society that Dr. G. could have sampled. He could have planned ahead and made reservations to go to the World Series, Super Bowl, Kentucky Derby, Wimbledon tennis championship, NCAA college football championship, Masters Golf tournament, Indy 500, or to the "final four" in college basketball. He could have traveled throughout the world visiting his favorite places. He could have purchased a boat that would have allowed him to spend quality time fishing or cruising on his favorite lake. He could have learned how to play a musical instrument. He could have gone "back to his roots" by visiting where his parents or grandparents came from.

To add to these "fun generators," Dr. G. could have started a hobby that he has been passionately interested in since he was a youth. Based on his musical tastes, he could have made arrangements to see his favorite groups or artists perform live and in concert. He could have learned how to snow ski, water ski, or ride a motorcycle. He could have set aside time each year to attend his favorite operas and performances by the best orchestras in the world. He could have learned how to fly a plane. He could have purchased season tickets for his favorite professional sporting events. He could have taken adult education classes for a subject matter that he has been passionately interested in since he was a young adult.

If even more options were needed to satisfy Dr. G's need for excitement, he could have learned how to skydive. He could have researched a special topic in his profession that he didn't have time for earlier in his career. He could have taken ballroom dancing classes. He could have purchased a motor home and traveled with other sightseers to various locations throughout the country. He could have become a "big brother" to troubled youth. He could have pursued political aspirations that he placed on hold for many years. He could have created a special garden retreat in his backyard. In a word, Dr. G. could have involved himself in an unlimited number of healthy activities that would have added more meaning and excitement to his life.

### The Denial of Addiction

Instead of using his intellect and creativity to add "natural," healthy "highs" to his life, Dr. G. took the course of least resistance that eventually led to his downfall. Ironically, moreover, Dr. G. was a member of the one profession that is most intimately associated with prescriptions and with the effects and side effects of drugs, namely medicine. Perhaps Dr. G. thought that his "special" medical knowledge would enable him to rise above and avoid the damaging effects of drugs. If so, then Dr. G. was in denial and out-of-touch with the realities of addiction. In the final analysis, however, Dr. G. should have known better than to involve himself in the negative spiral of drug addiction.

### Conclusion

There are three main lessons to be learned from Dr. G's story. First, addiction to drugs or alcohol is an equal opportunity destroyer that affects all races, people from all occupations, religions, nationalities, socio-economic groups, and from all political parties. In a word, if an anesthesiologist can become addicted to drugs, virtually anyone can. Second, whoever is not involved in drug abuse or drug addiction should continue refraining from this destructive habit. And third, whoever is abusing drugs or addicted to drugs should get professional help as soon as possible.

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### About the Author

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