War stories: Glamorizing addiction

“If a person spends time thinking obsessively about getting high or telling war stories, it means they probably aren’t ready to quit.”

You’re at an AA or NA meeting, everyone is focused on recovery, when someone starts glamorizing their addiction: talking about methodology (“Let me tell you how I used to do it...”), the “good old days of romance and fun” (“Remember when...?”), or fixation on using drugs (“I wonder what happens if you mix X and Y...?”) These stories are war stories, and they stand in the way of recovery.

Most people in recovery tell war stories without meaning to, but these stories are problematic. Answer the following questions to learn more. If you aren’t sure, ask your sponsor or google it. Follow the arrows.

Start here:

1-What is an addiction war story?
   1. glamorizing drug memories
   2.
   3.

2-What’s the difference between healthy talk about addiction and war stories?
   1. healthy talk focuses on recovery
   2.
   3.

3-Why are war stories a problem?
   1. they can jumpstart cravings and relapse
   2.
   3.

4-How do war stories get in way of recovery?
   1. you’re focusing on addiction instead of recovery
   2.
   3.
**Addiction: Glamorizing addiction**

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**Keep going**

5. Seriously: why do you want to stop glamorizing drugs?

1. No one will take me seriously about quitting if I keep telling war stories
2. 
3. 

6. Do you really want to stop? If not, return to #1!

7- You’re ready to let the past go? Here’s your final question:
What should you do if you catch yourself glamorizing addiction in the future? Jot down three ideas.

1. 
2. 
3. 

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**Down here!**

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Next time you find yourself romanticizing/obsessing about drugs or alcohol:

**STOP!** Stop talking! Then...

- **Talk about something else instead.** Weather, sports, recovery...
- **Call your sponsor, call someone you trust.** Tell them how you’re feeling (not the war story itself) and ask for advice.
- **Get busy:** distract yourself by pacing, watching TV, thinking about your family, thinking about your dreams, playing guitar, something.
- **Avoid triggers.** Stay away from people or situations that worsen cravings and relapse.
- **Deal with cravings in a healthy way.** Don’t give in!
- **Say yes to sobriety.** Remind yourself why you want to stay clean, and be proud of every day you’ve achieved sobriety so far
- **Say “no more” to consequences.** Remember the consequences of using. Remember the stuff drugs made you do that you regret. Use that to motivate you to stay in recovery.
- **Decide for today.** Make a decision to avoid war talk in the future, even if it’s one day at a time.
- **Pull out this worksheet.** And read it!
- **The goal:** move away from drug identity and focus on recovery!

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“Tomorrow is the most important thing in life. Comes into us at midnight very clean. It’s perfect when it arrives and it puts itself in our hands. It hopes we’ve learned something from yesterday.” – John Wayne