

Friends That Play Together, Don't Necessarily Pay Together

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The saying, "People, places and things," can often be heard in the rooms of AA, from our therapists, family and anyone just partly familiar with sober living. The notion that "People" is the first word in this wildly pervasive AA tenant is not lost on me, for the people we associate with is the biggest influence and predictor of our behaviors. One could say, "Birds of a feather, flock together," which has been widely researched by social psychologists and proven to be true but not in the sense you're probably thinking. Bad seeds don't gravitate toward other bad seeds just because they want to be bad, no, bad seeds, just like good seeds gravitate towards others who confirm their own self assessment. In other words, if you feel like you're a bad person you will surround myself with others who confirm your own thoughts about yourself.

Now, when you're struggling with addiction those people in your life can serve to keep you right where you're at or bring you even further down the rabbit hole of addiction, denial and negative consequences. Sometimes these people will be struggling with the same level of addiction as you come to find yourself and at other times they are functioning in their world without many repercussions (that you know of). If you find yourself with those who appear to be functioning in their world while you're floundering with each step you make, you could find yourself languishing even longer in the throws of addiction because you're identifying with your peers, who are functioning, providing your system of denial with some very good ammunition. Common thoughts in circumstances such as these include, "Bob is doing alright, so I must be too. If Mary can handle it, so can I."

This is why being able to see yourself clearly and completing a daily self assessment is so important if you want to remain sober. The people we surround ourselves with whether they can handle their addiction or not usually only serve to keep you in your addiction to whatever extent you find yourself. It's not realistic to think you can handle your addiction if you surround yourself with others who appear to be functioning because in the end, these people do not live your daily life, nor experience the negative repercussions of your addiction, YOU, AND ONLY YOU, DO.

So the short of it, if you want to remain clean and sober, remember, "PEOPLE" come first in your journey of long lasting sustainable change.