

Extreme Consequences

Excerpt from Smoke and Mirrors

“Extreme consequences are necessary if reality is ever to break through.”

“The pain of consequences must outweigh the relief the addictive behavior brings. In our society, we do not handle pain well. We are taught to be sympathetic; when others hurt we hurt with them, so it is in our own interest to prevent others from hurting or to ease their pain as soon as possible if they do hurt.

We are taught that pain is bad; if someone hurts we should help them get relief. While this teaching was helpful in the case of the Good Samaritan, it is not helpful in the case of addicts. In this paradox-filled disorder, preventing or lessening pain is the most dangerous, destructive thing one can do.

Addicts need to be jailed when they break the law. They need to be left where they are when they pass out, even if it is in the car on a cold night. They need to reap any mental, psychological, biological, and spiritual consequence of their behavior short of death.

Only through extremely painful or multiple painful consequences does reality crack denial, giving addicts an opportunity to see their disease and make movements toward recovery. Pain is what gives addicts and those who suffer with them a spiritual edge.

As a great saint said, if you are going to sin, sin boldly. This is because sin’s consequences are painful and great sin brings great consequences. In this universe’s spiritual economy, pain is a major way God gets one’s attention. And since being in relationship with God is one’s greatest happiness, the chemically dependent and those who suffer with them have the opportunity to become most blessed.”