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Love First: A Family's Guide to Intervention

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“Love is very patient and kind,” the Apostle Paul writes in his famous letters to the Corin-thians. When one person loves another, he continues, “You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him.” When confronting a family member or friend about addiction, this degree of love should be the motivation for intervention, say Jeff Jay and Debra Jay, authors of *Love First: A Family’s Guide to Intervention*.

This kind of love is a ground-breaking concept for addiction recovery. Most resources advise people to show tough love; letting alcoholics hit bottom helps them to see the importance of treatment. Not true, say the Jays, who are nationally recognized leaders in intervention. The time to intervene is whenever you feel you’re losing a loved one to addiction.

Even with the mildest alcoholic, intervention may seem daunting. Fortunately, the Jays have designed *Love First* to help readers understand why it’s important to act immediately. In the initial sec-tions of the book, they provide insight into the alcoholic mentality and discuss why family and friends often choose the wrong response by enabling alcoholic misbehavior. The Jays argue that real love is not about mak-ing problems go away. It’s about confronting an alcoholic with loving family and friends so they un-derstand the importance of seeking professional treatment. “When we intervene on the disease of ad-diction, we use love as a means to an end,” they write, “because it is the means—not the end—that defines who we are and where this journey will take our family.”

While their argument is convincing, the sections in *Love First* on planning, performing, and fol-lowing up the intervention are the most valuable. The authors have included worksheets and checklists to plan every step of the intervention, along with straight-forward encouragement. “Keep moving ahead, even if you feel like you’ve hit a brick wall,” they write. “Brick walls turn out to be nothing more than mist—you can’t see past them, but if you keep walking, you get through them easy enough.” An intervention with love is the one process that can show an alcoholic that you believe in them, expect the best in them, and in the grip of a devastating disease, will always stand your ground defending them.
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