

## Interventions

This summer I had the privilege of attending a conference on Interventions. It was taught by Candi Finnigan of the A&E reality television show “Intervention.” This training was offered by the 1-800 Gambler Help Network. Interventions can teach loved ones what involvement may be truly helpful and put an end to needless bailouts, lies, excuses, and other patterns which enable. Some attempts to help are not truly helpful, but others are life saving.

Over the years on the farm I have learned this the hard way. Did you know that helping a baby chick from its egg is not helpful and could prove deadly? The process of hatching is designed to strengthen it. Butterflies must also hatch from their cocoons themselves lest they too become damaged. This is not the case with calves and horses though. If they are having trouble giving birth both the adult and the unborn animal may die.

The Bible is full of mandates to help others. Scripture tells us in Galatians 6:9, (NIV)<sup>9</sup> *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

Helping others can frequently be difficult. God obviously knew that it would be easy for us to sometimes get weary. It can be frustrating when we invest time and resources and nothing seems to get any better. We must guard our hearts against apathy and cynicism though. Maybe this is why in scripture God used teams of people to minister to the needs of others.

We must make sure that we are empowering others rather than letting our hurt or pride get in the way. Rarely does the attitude “They made their bed let them lie in it work.” Without interventions, more damage can occur.

In our training we were taught about the importance of family-community meetings. In this way ideally everyone could be on board with the intervention plan. All parties involved know of the other helpers’ involvement. This eliminates duplication of services, uninformed decisions or manipulation, and gives support to all involved members. This also helps the “client” to get off the hamster wheel of continued enabled addiction and negative behaviors. Sometimes this approach simply helps a needy person receive the best of services.

To be truly helpful we must take time to understand others' needs. We may need to offer to babysit while they return to college, work, or attend a 12 step program. Sometimes we may need to offer rides to the services which are available. They may need help with budgeting their checks and locating resources. They may even need to be taught to cook the strange items they receive at food pantries. Frequently they need an advocate and an encourager.

Professionals will tell you that early interventions are the best. It is awfully hard to help once a "psychological gangrene" has set in. In fact late stage interventions cost a whole lot more in finances and energy. This "psychological gangrene" is also highly contagious and can impact future generations.

It is easy to become self righteous when we look at those around us. We made it! Why can't they? Newsflash! We are not all the same. We have individual DNA, different environments, and different support systems. We are not all impacted by things the same way. Admittedly, some people make poor decisions, yet others just appear to have bad circumstances to no fault of their own.

In the difficult times ahead, we must work lovingly and wisely. We must have a goal of empowering people and not enabling them. Honestly, empowering may actually require more of our time, energy, and resources. We must make a commitment to help others through their problems and practice good self care at the same time. Daily we must ask ourselves, "What would Jesus do?" and put that plan into action.