

Rebuilding After the Storm

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August 18, 2005. A record breaking day in the history of Wisconsin with 27 confirmed tornadoes in one twenty-four hour period. In one moment, debris was strewn everywhere and the destruction left behind on that day was well into the millions of dollars. Addiction is destructive, like a tornado, and you are left to deal with the aftermath of a person struggling with addiction. Whether the addiction is food, alcohol, drugs, gambling, or pornography, a trail of wreckage is left behind and rebuilding needs to begin. Listed are some ideas for people who want to rebuild trust with an addict:

- **Self-Care:** What are you doing to take care of yourself? People who work on rebuilding homes do not work all day, every day; they take breaks and have days off so as to be refreshed. It is important to take time for yourself and recharge your batteries daily. You can easily become burnt out dealing with an addict.
- **Forgive:** In Matthew 18:21-22 Peter is asking Jesus how often is he to forgive and Jesus responds by stating, “seventy times seven.” Forgiveness does not mean the problem goes away, the addiction is justified, or the event is forgotten. Forgiveness is a choice and a process.
- **Discuss:** Just as in rebuilding a home, there are many details to consider that must be discussed with the person struggling with addiction. Sit down and discuss clear boundaries and consequences in as much detail as possible and follow through with the consequences discussed. It may be wise to talk about what you need to see happen in order for trust to be rebuilt. This is not to say that every detail will happen because it may not.
- **Grieve:** When faced with an addiction there is loss that needs to be dealt with. There are dreams that may have died or have been put on hold. Brick by brick, label these lost dreams and allow yourself to mourn them.
- **Don't give up:** Building a home takes longer than anticipated and there are many setbacks: the order of lumber was incorrect; the shower stall does not fit, etc. Rebuilding trust is not an easy task. It does not happen overnight and there will be some setbacks.

Rebuilding trust, just like rebuilding a home, is not an easy task. It is a continual process that takes time. This is not an exhaustive checklist of “how to”, but some suggestions that can contribute to rebuilding trust. For more on the subject of betrayal of trust, Hosea can be an encouraging book in the Bible dealing with the topic.