

Relationship Advice: How to Cope with a Loved One Who Is an Addict

By Dr. Jane Greer

When someone you once loved dies, it can be devastating, even if you haven't been in a relationship with them for a long time. If that person had problems, such as a drug or alcohol addiction, learning about their death can also be confusing and can conjure up all sorts of feelings including guilt. Ariana Grande is heartbroken over her ex Mac Miller's death, according to an inside source. The rapper was found dead last week after what is thought to be an overdose. Some people have lashed out at her, saying she should have done more for him. Others have strongly supported her, saying she did everything she could.

Either way, it is a hard place to be and it raises the question, when someone is in a difficult relationship with an addict, how much is too much, and when is getting out the right thing to do, even if that person might be in danger? Here is some relationship advice.

It is never easy to end any relationship with someone you

love, and if they are struggling with personal demons it can be even harder. Anyone who has ever been involved with someone who is alcohol or drug dependent knows how hard it is to separate even if it has reached a point in which staying seems just as impossible, and sometimes even harmful to your own well-being. There is a natural amount of guilt that goes along with any breakup, but when there are these added complications the guilt can be overwhelming. When a tragedy occurs after you are no longer together and there is a death or overdose, those feelings can take over, leading you to wonder if you “abandoned” them and could have or should have done more.

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The most important place to begin to reconcile these feelings is to recognize that you did everything you could possibly do when you were in the relationship to help them, and if you had remained it would have been to your own detriment. Acknowledge that leaving it was not easy for you. If you were able to remain friends, there might have been the opportunity to further illuminate that in order to have a better understanding of what happened. So in that case, it might be clearer to you that there was nothing more you could have done, and that you simply couldn't continue to handle the struggle. If you didn't remain friends or stay in touch and an overdose or death comes as a complete surprise, remind yourself that you chose to end the relationship because it took a heavy toll on you, and recognize that you had no choice in the face of their continuing destructive behavior. Understand that there are limits to what you were able to do to help the other person. Ultimately each person is responsible for him or herself. Accept and respect that you made the decision out of necessity to invest in your own safety and happiness, that it was either sink or swim for you. Being able to see and do that is vital to your healthy self-esteem.

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Keep in mind that what you want to do is remember who the person was to you, what they meant and what you shared together. Ariana paid tribute to her relationship with Mac by posting a picture of her memory of him. Hopefully she has been able to find peace.

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