

Heather Locklear: What Is She Running From?



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No matter how talented, beautiful, or rich you are, none of those things are sure antidotes for misery. Heather Locklear is a clear example of this. The Melrose Place actress was rushed to the hospital last week, reportedly because she mixed alcohol with prescription drugs, after her sister found her unconscious. This newest crisis follows years of trouble and heartbreak including two stays in rehab, an arrest for a DUI, two divorces, and her more recent break up with Melrose Place costar Jack Wagner. With all this in mind, it seems that Locklear's latest episode might be part of her attempt to outrun her unhappiness, but unfortunately she doesn't seem to be getting any traction.

There are many ways people try to escape their sadness. Alcohol is a big one. Illegal and prescription drugs are another way. Sometimes the two are mixed which can lead to dangerous consequences as we saw with Locklear. As a result, the substance abuse becomes the problem that is focused on, but what really needs to be looked at is what got her to the place of needing to use it and what is it that she is unable to deal with.

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Lots of times we see the troubled behaviors – drinking excessively, using prescription drugs, the rehab visits, the DUIs – as the issue when, in fact, they are the person's best effort to bury whatever is torturing them. It is in the core of that sorrow where the real complication that is holding them back from moving forward lies. Instead of focusing on what they are doing to block it out, it can be more helpful to look at what is underneath and when it started.

It is hard to know exactly when Locklear's depression began and what she is working so hard to avoid. With Wagner, it seemed that for a while she was trying to walk down the aisle but, for whatever reason, was unable to get there. Could she be considered a runaway bride even though she had been married before because she may be afraid to remarry after her two failed marriages? I do know that one of the awful things she had to deal with in her past was the betrayal of her second husband Bon Jovi guitarist Richie Sambora when he cheated on her with her best friend Denise Richards. In a situation like that not only are you reeling from the betrayal of your husband but from a best friend as well, leaving you confounded and wondering who can I trust? Sometimes these emotional assaults take their toll not just when they happen but in the future where they can rage on below the surface. As a therapist I see this every day, people soldiering on in the face of upheaval, be it an unfaithful partner or a broken marriage, and for many the aftermath of that event can become

too much to handle. It has leveled their foundation, oftentimes destroying their ability to trust themselves let alone another person. In my book *How Could You Do This To Me? Learning To Trust After Betrayal*, I talk about how so many people get on with it, but they don't get over it. They try to leave their pain behind but it is always at their heels.

The broken trust becomes too much to bear and often they are left scarred. Consequently it feels almost impossible to trust again. Perhaps this is what is keeping Locklear from making another trip to the altar.

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In order to avoid the rollercoaster that Locklear and so many others have been on, it helps to appreciate the blow you sustained and not only give yourself time to get over it, but realize you have to take measures to come to terms with what happened and begin to fix the damage. With support you can do this so you can give yourself room to heal from broken trust.

This means redefining what you base your trust on, and learning what to look for so you can determine if someone is trustworthy. Then you can avoid jumping into a new relationship before you have gotten over your fear that you will get kicked in the teeth again, and feel safe to trust again.

For Locklear it may be that her fears of the past have become her fences of the present. Hopefully she will get the help she needs to be able to tackle the underlying problems, instead of trying to numb what she is feeling, so that perhaps she can finally be able to stop running. Sometimes the best thing to do is to stand still.

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