

Supplemental Materials for the Intervention Workshop video series

BOTTOM LINE EXAMPLES

Bottom lines should answer the following questions:

“How have I, in the past, unwittingly supported your addiction?”

“What am I going to do differently, beginning today, so I only support treatment and recovery?”

If you aren’t able to accept help today, how am I going to take care of myself (and dependent children) until you do choose recovery?”

Sometimes, a relative or friend doesn’t have leverage. As you’ll see in the examples below, there is still a way to write a bottom line.

Here are several examples:

“Jack, when you have come to me in the past for money, I always give it to you. You offer me pretty good reasons for needing the money, and I’ve accepted those reasons at face value. But I know that cocaine is the real reason you come up short for mortgage and car payments. I can’t give you money anymore. By doing so, I’m supporting your addiction. I love you too much to do that. If you choose not to accept help today, I must also take care of myself. I’ve made a commitment to start going to Alanon meetings, to learn how to deal with a loved one’s addiction. If you decide to change your mind and get help, I will pay for your treatment. As your mother, I love you and want to see you get well. Won’t you please end the more pain and heartbreak and accept the help we’re offering you today?”

“Sue, you know how much Ally and Ryan love their Aunt Susie, but they need a sober aunt. They smell the alcohol on your breath when you come over and notice the difference in your personality. It is so hard for me to say this, but spending time with the kids has to be suspended until you get into treatment and recovery. The kids have to take priority over the alcohol. I will explain to them that their aunt is sick and can’t visit until she gets well. As for me, I can’t talk on the phone or see you when you’ve been drinking. I have to begin taking care of myself. We’ve always been close, so losing you to alcohol has been very hard for me emotionally. I love you, but I can only see you when you are sober. My deepest wish is that you’d turn your back on alcohol, once and for all, and accept treatment so we can be as close as we used to be. Please accept the help we are offering you today.”

“Dave, our marriage has always been the most important thing in my life. We’ve had our ups and downs, and I’m far from perfect, even if I hate to admit it. But we’ve always worked through the tough times. Now we are facing a disease called alcoholism, and I know that the disease affects the brain in ways that prevent people from wanting help. I can’t make you want help, I can only ask. But if you refuse, I have to protect our children and myself from the effects of alcoholism on the family. It’s not that I don’t love you, but the disease can’t have free reign in our household. If you can’t say yes to treatment, I am prepared to file legal separation papers, and we won’t live together anymore. Healing our family begins with saying yes to treatment. Won’t you please accept the help we’re offering you today?”

“Maria, I’ve been in your shoes, so I have a pretty good idea what you might be feeling right now. At least I know how I felt when I faced going to treatment for my addiction to marijuana and alcohol. I thought I could handle the problem on my own, and I was furious at my boss for even suggesting I needed help. Never mind that I routinely showed up for work with hangovers, and my lunch breaks consisted of smoking a joint before pigging out at MacDonalds. Never mind that my productivity was in the toilet. I just congratulated myself for showing up every day. But I can tell you, treatment was the best thing I ever did for myself. My life has never been so good. I go to AA meetings during my lunch hour now. I have great friends in recovery. You can’t believe how many interesting, smart people are sober! I look back on the way it used to be and can’t believe how I fought against getting well. I am here for you all the way. Why not take the first step in the right direction? Come with us and find out what treatment is all about.”

“Kevin, I’ve been around for 83 years, and I’ve learned a few things about living. I suppose the most important lesson is that making the right decision at the right time can make all the difference in the direction a life goes. This is probably one of those days for you. You stand at a fork in the road. You know that alcoholism runs in our family. I saw my father’s brother die a broken man from alcoholism. And my brother Ralph was an alcoholic. His wife finally left him and he drank himself to death when he was only 57-years-old. It’s caused much heartbreak in my life to lose these people I loved. You’re my grandson. I need to know this disease isn’t going to take you, too. All you have to do is make the right decision today, accept help and follow through. Alcoholism may run in our family, but you can choose a different fate than those before you. Please do the right thing.”

“Sammy, I know that people suffering from addiction fight tooth and nail against accepting treatment. It’s one of the symptoms of the disease. So your refusal doesn’t surprise me. Now it’s my job to tell you that I won’t do anything that makes it easier for you to stay sick. All you kids know that when your mother and I are gone – and at our age, we don’t have that many years left – you will inherit a fairly substantial amount of money. We feel good knowing we can do this for you. But, Sam, I cannot make it easier for you to stay in your addiction, so I have an appointment set with my lawyer for tomorrow. Your inheritance is going into a trust with the stipulation that you won’t see any inheritance until you have demonstrated two years of sobriety and an active involvement in a program of recovery. I won’t have you wasting your potential, because you think you’re ship will come in someday. Your ship won’t come in until you put your life together. I love you too much to let my money ruin your life. I’m going to ask you again to make the decision today to get help and get your life back.”

For more information on intervention, visit <http://lovefirst.net/>

Supplemental materials for the book, Love First, by Jeff Jay and Debra Jay
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