

## **Eat, Drink, and Be Merry, Sucker**

A friend of mine once told me about her brother's family. He was married and had two pre-teen boys. Neither parent was consistently employed. They lived for a while in a house they purchased before the bank foreclosed on them – after they stopped paying their mortgage.

It appears the couple had other priorities. Apparently, they spent so much money on illegal drugs and alcohol, they could not afford their mortgage payments.

What to do? Well, my friend's father stepped in and offered to buy them a place to stay. I am not certain if there were any preconditions to this arrangement, but I would bet that drug and alcohol counseling was included in the deal. And, it worked for a while.

Until the couple again grew deep in debt – from their purchase of more drugs and alcohol. Seeing that they had no other source of money to pay off their debts, they sold the house the father had bought for them (apparently, gratitude and responsibility are not among their vices). This left them with some money, but no place to stay, again.

So, the father stepped in, again. This time he bought a house under his name and allowed them to live there. Since he legally owned the home, they could not sell it.

Because of his generosity, some might consider the father to be a hero in this story. Although he was upper middle class, another mortgage hurt him financially. Still, it was preferable than seeing his son's family breakup, and his son and daughter-in-law serve jail time. Others might consider the father to be a sucker and an enabler.

Now if I were to tell this story to some local official or politician, they would provide a standard reply. Let's use government programs to get this couple off drugs, off alcohol, and assist them with government training to make them more marketable for acquiring better employment. Our society accepts that strategy as a realistic solution to the problem.

Until you understand the couple involved. They did not want to give up drugs or alcohol. They saw nothing wrong with being drunk and stoned all day. Nor did they care what it meant to their children. Fortunately, the kids were not starving, and they always found a place to stay. In addition, the couple did not want to work. They wanted to party. They even saw their unsteady employment only as a means to purchase more drugs and alcohol.

What should be done in this situation? Arrest the parents? Force them into addiction counseling? Put the children in foster homes?

The last I heard both parents remained unemployed. They now receive disability payments – I presume for their drug and alcohol addictions. Although the wife is obese, neither of them would be considered disabled by anyone who knew them. Luckily, for their sake, the government doesn't know them.

However, I guess there is a happy ending to this story. The couple has a house to reside in with their children, they avoided jail, can continue to purchase illegal drugs, and get drunk and high for as long as they want. Instead of being a financial burden to the father, they are now living off the state. Consequently, they continue to eat, drink, and be merry on the backs of the taxpayers.

Some might say that we are all heroes for supporting this couple. But, I believe that most would consider us to be suckers and enablers.

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