



The Pain Devil - Part 1

November 7, 2010 By [Richard Ferri, PhD, ANP](#)

Writing for me is like masturbating. It is intentionally self-indulgent, rousingly painful (if done right), self-aggrandizing, and ultimately freeing. After the intensity and the release is the mess. This blog is about the mess. (Part one of it anyway.)

The mess in question is pain. Specifically the treatment of pain in HIV with a laser beam pointed to addicted and recovering patients. Points of remembrance: I have AIDS, am a recovering drunk and addict, and know pain with an intimacy that appalls most people. With that being said here is what I have been struggling with for a few weeks. - many patients with HIV are their own worst nightmare. It is a catastrophe that has got to stop and stop now. It is time for the bullshit to end.

The bullshit and the catastrophe are the same thing. It is the constant scamming of pain meds. I know HIV is painful. I live with the pain. I am also one of the few HIV clinicians that treats pain and treats it to the max. I have taken serious pride in this for decades. I will go out on a limb and swing from the neck to help someone with HIV/AIDS.

But guess what? Even I am getting fed up with it. I am tired of people not taking responsibility for themselves, their pain, and trying to make changes in their lives. Some days I feel like a big clown's head that people simply yell into and demand pain pills. At the pick up window they are expecting a script for a couple HUNDRED pills. And only short acting narcotics seem to have any value in so many patients. Narcotic patches or time-released preparations don't do the trick...and the reason? Frankly, no street value. (A little truth telling here.)

If you have pain it is needs to be treated. However, that does not mean narcotics are the sole answer. Other interventions actually do work. But you have to give them a try. You have to help yourself.

I want to treat people's pain, but I no longer want to be made out to be part of the problem. Many times treating the underlying cause of the pain will greatly resolve the pain issues. If you need

back surgery have it done if it is at all realistic. (Again, I did.) Do some straightforward things to improve your life like losing the extra weight, eating better, stopping smoking (and don't you dare bitch about your med co-pay when you slam down \$8.00 bucks a pack for cigarettes!) You simply cannot live on pain pills forever. (Or sell what you don't use to supplement your disability. There is that damn truth thing happening again.)

Take your anti-depressants and other psych meds since they will help you cope and feel better.

You know what really sends me over the edge? People telling me that are so scared even THINK about antiretroviral therapy to save their lives because of possible side effect yet are willing to swallow handfuls of pain pills without blinking an eye. Ah come on folks.

Also stop being pissed at me when your urine tox screen comes back positive for meth, coke, heroin, or booze and I tell you that you are cut off from getting pain meds. Really folks, I am a human being not a prescription monkey. I actually care about you and will not enable your addiction. I don't want to be part of your overdose. I am not the enemy. Your addiction is. I know mine was (is) and I take great joy in being free one day at a time from those demons.

So what to do? Why not fly to the devil you don't know and try some serious attempt at living sober. Face what God gives you both good and bad. Do the best you can. I will stay with you.

If your pain is real I will crawl over broken glass to help you. I am a 9/11 survivor, I have been critically ill and in pain so severe I prayed for death as a blessing, I have widowed without warning. All three of my parents died unexpectedly with months of each other. Life can be hard. No one gets out alive. But life can be wonderful also even after rupturing heartbreaks.

It has been over four years since my husband John died and I slid into hell so deep I never thought it possible to see light again. But I can see light. I can laugh, and I have fallen in love again with wonderful man and plan to marry soon. God has been very good to me. Let God be good to you too. Work for it.

The only way to stop the insanity of addiction and pain med scams is to admit it, face up to it, and stop it. Tell on yourself. Go to an AA meeting (yes, buddy they do work. Don't ask me how but they do. And deep down inside it you know they do.)

Don't stay away from recovery for fear of it working. Isn't the fact that AA will ruin your addiction one of the reasons you stay away? I know it is what kept me on the other side of the doors for years. What if the fucking thing worked I used to think. Then what? What would I do with my life? I found out. I had to live it and live it well. It is sometimes hard and sometimes even worse but it is worth it because I am worth it....and so are you.

Now stop the bullshit, tell the truth and know I will be here for you. In the game of life it is your move. Make it a wise one.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

<http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/the-pain-devil---par>