

## Bad Advice for Lindsay Lohan

By STANTON PEELE

People have been offering advice to Lindsay Lohan since she relapsed soon after leaving her last stint of rehab. Now that she's entering another clinic, it's time to reevaluate many of these recommendations. Following are the four main mistaken pieces of advice:

- *Ms. Lohan should never, ever drink again.* Her father, Michael Lohan, agrees with the treatment programs his daughter has tried and believes that she should never, ever drink again. The elder Lohan swore off alcohol himself not long ago, after a serious car accident led to a drunk-driving conviction. Although this advice is well-intended, it is implausible. What are the chances Ms. Lohan will abstain for the rest of her life? After her second stint in rehab, wearing an alcohol monitor, she lasted about a week before partying all night.

The alternative view is that the 21-year-old Ms. Lohan will almost surely drink again and she needs a fallback position to be safe. This might include having her "people" shut her off from drinking too much, or setting a departure time for leaving clubs or parties. Failing this, someone -- if not Ms. Lohan herself -- needs to keep her from driving after she's been drinking. That way, she can at least survive to try to do better down the road.

- *Ms. Lohan needs to learn that she is a lifetime alcoholic-addict.* She inherited the alcoholism-addict gene from her father, right? The alternative position is: Who knows that is true?

Another young Hollywood star who was branded an addict was Drew Barrymore. Remember when she appeared on the cover of People magazine at age 13 as America's youngest addict? Ms. Barrymore had many substance abusing relatives, including her parents, and so experts concluded she would be addicted her entire life.

But, almost 20 years later, in 2007, Ms. Barrymore was on the cover of People again -- this time as the world's most beautiful person! No one thinks of her as an addict any longer. Young people often ultimately outgrow youthful problems, sometimes quite serious ones, including drinking and drug addiction.

- *Ms. Lohan needs to remain locked in treatment for a long time, with no day passes.* Critics note that Ms. Lohan was permitted out of her treatment program to go to her gym. Other addicts, such as Daniel Baldwin, tut-tut that this is too permissive. Mr. Baldwin should know -- he's been in treatment nine times. In his 40s when last treated, he now claims to be off cocaine for good.

On the other hand, maybe it is no wonder Ms. Lohan and so many others relapse after being restricted in residential programs for months. The minute the doors of the center shut behind them, they are out on the street facing the same old playmates and playgrounds.

An alternative approach would be to treat Ms. Lohan as an outpatient. This offers her the opportunity to expose herself to the world under supervision. She could then practice how to deal with her freedom while maintaining her sobriety. For example, she could be guided towards new friends and ways of spending her free time. Of course neither the hospital nor the outpatient setting can work miracles right away -- it took Drew Barrymore years to reform her life.

- *Ms. Lohan should avoid show business.* The problem obviously is her involvement in movies, coupled with all of Tinsel Town's temptations. If she just stays away from Hollywood and the glitterati, she'll be fine.

But Ms. Barrymore didn't need to leave Hollywood to change. The alternative view is that Ms. Lohan is a talented person who can achieve success in movies and music, and that work is therapeutic. Not all her films are great. But she has done good work with the likes of legendary director Robert Altman and co-stars Kevin Kline, Meryl Streep and Lily Tomlin. More opportunities like these could help her to learn professionalism, discipline and self-respect.

Ms. Lohan needs to grow up, realize her talents and find ways to fill her time that aren't self-destructive. Coming to see herself as an adult, accepting responsibility, and developing pride in her skills are difficult but time-tested therapeutic techniques. These are things Ms. Lohan won't learn in standard treatment programs.

***Mr. Peele is a psychologist and therapist who has written nine books on addiction. His new book is "Addiction-Proof Your Child."*** <http://www.addictionproofyourchild.com>