



the crabbing effect

Written by bubba



Why are you friends with the people you're friends with? Because you're similar, you know each other, you like to hang around with them because you have things in common. Now, what happens when you reach a point of introspection and realize that much of what you have in common isn't in your best interest any longer? Example: *Could a swinger couple still maintain platonic relationships with their swinger friends if they made the decision that sharing partners was eroding the intimacy between them and therefore, they were quitting the lifestyle?* Doubtful. But more importantly, how would their swinger friends feel? Judged? Reflective? Defensive and annoyed? How would their swinger friends treat them? Reject their decision? Try to talk them out of the decision to change lifestyles?

Hey what the fuck, I'll use my own shortcomings for an example. It is my web site after all. I periodically think about the role of alcohol in my life. I've got an alcoholic father, I drink more than most people. Though I haven't lately inventoried my catalog of 'Things I wish I hadn't done while drinking' I believe it to be a volume worthy of evaluation. Have I ever stopped? Yep, college - right after spending some time in jail. Strike that - I quit right after getting *arrested* thinking, quite craftily, that throwing myself in counseling for alcohol would be a way to circumvent a stiff sentence...so it was actually *before jail*...and an incorrect assumption by the way. And good thing it was wrong. I was being a manipulative fuck by doing that.



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But, turns out, I accidentally learned a whole hell of a lot about myself - good, bad and otherwise. It was during that time I decided to actually continue to not drink for awhile. How was it? Well, it was fine. An omission of behavior certainly isn't that hard as far as gross motor functions go. What did make it hard? All my jackass friends feeling it was their duty to pull me off the wagon and put a stop to all my ridiculous pie-in-the-sky ideas...you know, sobriety, growing up, trying to do things that are healthy and helpful. It was the peer pressure that made not drinking hard, those fuckers. Eventually I started drinking again for reasons I can't remember. It wasn't a big peer-induced breakdown or anything. If memory serves, I think I was only quitting for a prescribed period of time and that time was up. At any rate, I carried away from that experience two key things:

- 1) An increased sense of self understanding and confidence and near immunity to peer pressure.
- 2) The understanding that when you make a change in your life that is at odds with the way you have been relating to people close to you, those people can become defensive, even against your plan to make positive changes in your own life.

Why is that? Friends should want friends to feel good, be strong, be capable and ever-growing...shouldn't they? Shouldn't we? In theory, yes. In reality, however, we are entirely too self-absorbed to activate that kind of good will. We're too uncomfortable that your opinion of yourself might really represent your opinion of us...because everything is about us. *You think you drink too much? Well then you must think I drink too much because we drink the same amount...* Or, maybe we already know some things about ourselves. Maybe we're irritated that we don't have the strength we perceive you of having: the ability to make changes.

