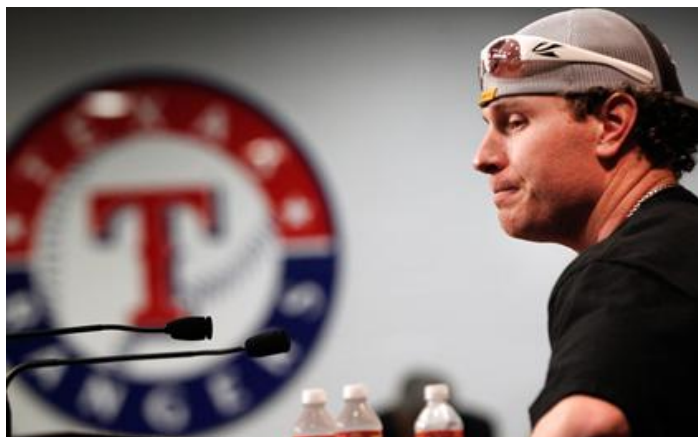


Live Together, Die Alone

Written by {ga=edtherevelator}

Saturday, February 04 2012 7:00 PM - Last Updated Saturday, February 04 2012 8:25 AM



Live together, die alone.

This, phrase, above all others, is blaring in my head, as I read about Texas Rangers Outfielder Josh Hamilton's relapse this week. The phrase has probably been said many times throughout history, but I know it best from the TV show LOST, and the bright-red t-shirt that I own and wear often paying homage to the show, with "LIVE TOGETHER, DIE ALONE" plastered on the front, including the day I learned that Hamilton had relapsed in his struggle to overcome drug and alcohol addictions.

The phrase is simple, and fairly self-explanatory. But to me, this phrase also seems to sum up what must be the life manta of many recovering addicts. You live together, you support each other, you are supported by families, loved ones and real friends, you will survive together and not succumb to your demons, demons that would overcome you alone.

By now, most sports fans have heard of Hamilton, the slugging, star outfielder that went from can't-miss #1 pick by the Tampa Bay Devil Rays in 1999, to being banned from baseball due to drug and alcohol abuse. He sobered up, was given a chance with the Cincinnati Reds, made the most of it, and was traded to the Rangers and has become an all-star, MVP in 2010, and an example of how it's never too late to give yourself a chance when it comes to fighting addictions. Hamilton has relapsed before, most notably in 2009 when several viral photos of him at a bar surfaced a few months after the incident. Hamilton was apologetic, regretted that it happened, and vowed to get back on track.

He held a press conference today, apologizing for a relapse that happened on Monday, not giving anyone else but him a chance to break the story. I've already seen some hateful tweets

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or comments, beating down a man who made a mistake, and is trying to own up to it.

I'm not trying to be holier than thou. Issues with addiction hit home to me, as I have seen close friends and even beloved family members struggle with its claws. Every day is a constant struggle for these people, and the unnamed others fighting addictions throughout our world. You never truly "beat it." I've seen this first-hand. You are constantly fighting to win a battle over the demons in your head torturing you. And it is an exhausting battle, and sometimes, you lose. Sometimes you relapse. Some don't make it back out. But the ones that do, the lucky ones, usually try to dust themselves off, put their lives back together, and continue the struggle. But they can't do it alone. They live together, often through Alcoholics Anonymous or another like-minded program. I've often criticized AA in my personal life, and I still have some reservations about their beliefs, but I have seen their programs, their camaraderie, save my close family member, and I cannot dismiss that. As for Hamilton, it seems the Rangers have set up his own personal support system in place – including the oft-publicized policy of using ginger ale and water for postseason celebrations, instead of beer and champagne. Hamilton has a support system in place, and is already using it.

Live together, die alone.

Hamilton made a mistake, and he knows it. There's no reason to continue to crucify the man for being in a bar, or even having a drink. He knows what he has to do, and appears to be on his way to improving himself.

Hamilton, like my family member, and the number of other people in recovery, are the lucky ones. They are still alive. No, Hamilton hasn't "won" yet, and never will. But Hamilton will always have a fan in me, as long as he continues to fight the good fight against addictions. His addictions haven't beaten him yet, and the fact that he has made it this far and overcome this much deserve to be celebrated. Let's not hate on the guy for not being perfect.