

Ways to Stop Drinking

There are two types of serious drinkers; drunks and alcoholics. The drunk is one who usually drinks as a means to escape and can stop drinking or drink moderately if given a good reason to do so. On the other hand, the alcoholic is one who cannot stop drinking by their own will-power no matter how great the necessity or the wish. As an old saying goes, "A drunk could quit if they would. An alcoholic would quit if they could." A very significant difference.

Ways to Stop Drinking

Covered Up

Death

(This will do it)

Locked up

Jail, Prison or
Mental Institution

(For a Period of Time)

Sobered Up

A vital
Spiritual Experience

(For as long as we apply
Spiritual Principles)

It would appear that a vital Spiritual Experience would be the best choice of the three known ways to "stop drinking". Unfortunately, most alcoholics will stop drinking only as the result of death.

The distinguished American psychologist, William James, in his book, "Varieties of Religious Experience," indicates a multitude of ways in which men have discovered God. Down through the ages, there have been numerous reports of people experiencing a life changing conversion or personality change in the way they think and the way they feel sufficient to bring about a Solution to their life threatening problem. The Salvation Army, with it's Christian Program, has been helping alcoholics find a way to a sober life since 1865. But probably the most effective, simple, clear-cut, time-tested and experience proven way to find the spiritual solution is through the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. This Program has proved to be very successful for those alcoholics who have been willing to go to any length for victory over alcohol and is very clearly described in the Basic Text for Alcoholics Anonymous, "ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS" or the "Big Book" as it is called within the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

For those who really want to find a way out, the First Step is to understand the Problem - Alcoholism. It is stated as "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol -- that our lives had become unmanageable". This Step contains two separate thoughts. In the "DOCTOR'S OPINION", we learn that the alcoholic is "powerless" over alcohol because of an allergy to alcohol that manifests itself as a "craving" for more alcohol once the alcoholic commences to drink. So once the alcoholic starts drinking, they invariably drink too much although it seems to them that they can never get enough. Very often, this excess drinking leads to problems that causes the alcoholic to decide that they have had enough. They have decided to quit forever, with or without solemn oaths. If the disease of alcoholism is not too far advanced, they will be successful in managing that decision to not pick up another drink.

Unfortunately, many are beyond the point of being able to successfully manage that decision. Within a very finite period of time,(days, weeks or at the most a few months) they feel the need to find the sense of ease and comfort that comes at once from taking a

few drinks. In spite of the repeated misery, degradation, humiliation and loss of so many things of real value, they cannot MANAGE the decision to stay away from the first drink They lack the power, will

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power, self will that is so necessary to resist the need for that drink.

Medical Science has found that there is sound reasoning in the “Doctor’s Opinion”. They have been able to determine that the “physical powerlessness or allergy” is the result of a dysfunctional liver and pancreas. These vital organs do not produce the enzymes, in sufficient quantity or quality, that are necessary to complete the chemical decomposition of ethanol (ETOH) through the body of an alcoholic.¹

ETHANOL

enzymes convert the ethanol into

ACETALDEHYDE

enzymes convert acetaldehyde into

DIACETIC ACID

enzymes convert diacetic acid into

AN ACETATE

more enzymes convert the acetate into

WATER & CARBON DIOXIDE & SUGAR

The water is expelled from the body through the urinary tract, the carbon dioxide through the respiratory system and the sugar is “burned up” through physical exercise.

If a person is not an alcoholic, they can normally successfully drink approximately one ounce of alcohol per hour and maintain the “glow” that they get from drinking. Not so with the alcoholic. The chemical decomposition of the ETOH through the alcoholic’s body follows the same process until it reaches the “acetate” compound and then the liver and pancreas fail to produce sufficient enzymes to complete the decomposition process. The “acetate” produces the “craving” that deprives the alcoholic of the ability to control the amount they drink. The “craving” exceeds the alcoholic’s will power to stop once they have commenced to drink.

The Program of Alcoholics Anonymous begins with a desire, a yearning, a longing to stop drinking for good and all. With that as the basic requirement for membership in this Fellowship of alcoholics, STEP ONE states the PROBLEM

1. “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol--that our lives had become unmanageable.”

So, if a person finds that they cannot control the amount of alcohol they drink once they start drinking, they are “POWERLESS” over alcohol. Being powerless over “people, places & things” is NOT the alcoholic’s problem. Alcohol is the “master” of an alcoholic. There is no such thing as “just a couple” of drinks. When an alcoholic starts drinking, they always drink too much but it is never enough.

¹ “ALCOHOLISM –*New Light on the Disease.*” John Wallace, PhD., Edgehill Publications

So, if the person is physically “POWERLESS” over alcohol once they have taken the first few drinks, then the solution is to not start drinking in the first place. But if the person is a CHRONIC alcoholic, they will find that all but impossible to do. Without some alcohol in their blood stream, they are restless, irritable & discontented. Their mind, and possibly the subconscious mind, vividly remembers the sense of ease and comfort that comes at once with taking a few drinks. Their mind cannot remember the misery and humiliation they suffered only a few days prior to needing that first couple of drinks. The result of which is that the CHRONIC alcoholic will begin drinking one more time. And as Dr. Silkworth reported, “This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is little hope of his recovery.”

Therein lies the source of the UNMANAGEABILITY stated in Step One. The inability of the CHRONIC alcoholic to manage his decision to never take another drink as long as they live. And they sincerely mean it. At the moment of that decision, they are adamant about never taking another drink - period!!! Where alcohol is concerned, they are absolutely through forever, fini, kaput, done, that’s it, no more!!!

But the CHRONIC alcoholic has an “ALCOHOLIC MIND” that will produce the “INSIDIOUS INSANITY” to take another drink in spite of the alcoholic’s determination to stay off the juice. The “INSIDIOUS INSANITY” is the product of an “ALCOHOLIC MIND”. Cold sober and having experienced nothing but tragedy by their drinking, they will walk into a liquor store or a bar and say something like this, “I had a few drinks and totaled my car, just got out of jail on a DWI, lost my driver’s license, learned my spouse has filed for divorce, my boss just fired me, all because of my drinking but I want another drink, please!” That is the “INSIDIOUS INSANITY” which makes the CHRONIC alcoholic’s life “UNMANAGEABLE”. If the alcoholic COULD MANAGE his decision to stay stopped, he would have no problem. His will power would be sufficient to stay away from the first drink thereby eliminating any further problems resulting from his drinking. His problem would be solved.

Quite by accident, Medical Science has found an explanation for this “alcoholic mind”. A Ph.D. doing research on brain tumors found expired alcoholics a good source of material for her studies. When one of them was found dead in the skid row areas of Houston, their bodies would be brought into the lab and their brains dissected and studied. After examining the brain of several victims, she came to the conclusion that they were heroin addicts. She came to that conclusion as the result of finding a significant amount of a highly addictive chemical named Tetrahydroisoquinolines (THIQ) deposited in the inner core of the brain of her specimens. Prior to this finding, THIQ had only been produced as the result of a chemical reducing process of heroin. Some Family Physicians informed her that the “addicts” she had been working with were not “addicts” but were, in fact, alcoholics, “winos”. They didn’t use nor could they afford heroin. A cheap bottle of wine was their daily “bill of fare”. So the question was raised, “How did the THIQ find its way into the brain of the CHRONIC alcoholic?”

Looking back at the process of the chemical decomposition of Ethanol through the body of an alcoholic, we notice that the first product is *Acetaldehyde*. It has been found that the *Acetaldehyde* combines with the *Neurotransmitters* in the brain fluids to produce the THIQ which is then deposited in the primitive part of the brain where the basic instincts of a human exist.²



² “ALCOHOLISM – *New Light on the Disease.*” John Wallace, PhD., Edgehill Publications

When THIQ is infused into animal brains, it produces what seems to be irreversible addictive drinking. Such animals, prior to being infused with THIQ would not drink even a highly diluted solution of alcohol. After being infused, they would drink alcoholic solutions and die just as many alcoholic humans do.

Once the THIQ has been deposited, there seems to be no known way to remove it from the brain of its victims. Every time the alcoholic drinks anything containing alcohol, more molecules of THIQ are produced and deposited to that very critical part of the brain. Therefore, the ALCOHOLIC MIND is a permanent condition. There is only one known Solution for this Problem and that piece of vital information came from the noted Psychiatrist, Dr. Carl Jung, considered by many to be the Father of Modern Psychiatry. The Solution, Dr. Jung said, was a “VITAL SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE”.

So the question becomes, “How can a hopeless alcoholic have this vital spiritual experience”? The first thing that must happen is for the alcoholic find a ray of hope and that is what very often can happen when an alcoholic who has had a vital spiritual experience shares his experience and knowledge of the problem - Alcoholism and then the Solution - God *as we understand Him*. This leads to the next Step:

2. “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

If the suffering alcoholic then shows a genuine interest, the recovered alcoholic outlines the precise course of action that leads to recovery.

Once the hope has been planted in the mind of the one who is suffering, he then is faced with a decision, “Are you willing to go to any length to achieve victory over this drinking problem?” If the answer is, “Yes”, then that decision is announced by praying a prayer of decision in the presence of an understanding person, such as a recovered alcoholic.

3. “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.”

The Prayer that is used to announce this decision will be found on page 63 of the Big Book along with the directions on HOW to take the Step of Decision (Step Three) and WHAT the results (Promise) will be.

From the moment of decision, the one who is wanting to recover is directed to launch out on a course of vigorous action in putting the Program to the test. That is done by carefully following the clear-cut directions outlined from page 64 through page 88. By precisely carrying out the action in these twenty-four (24) pages in the Big Book, the hopeless victim of alcoholism is PROMISED that they will have had a spiritual awakening or a spiritual experience and will therefore have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. Drinking will no longer be an option and life will be more exciting and fulfilling than any of us could have dreamed possible.

Amazingly enough, the twenty-four pages tell us WHEN to take a Step, HOW to take a Step, state WHAT the results will be (PROMISES) and provide one or more PRAYERS for each and every Step of recovery. This is a spiritual Program of action in which we invite God *as we understand Him* to do all the things for us that we could never do for ourselves.

On coming to Alcoholics Anonymous, our only desire was to learn how to stop drinking and put an end to

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the miserable way we had been existing; just living for the next drink. In a dedicated pursuit of that goal, we are given a magical bonus; a design for living that will produce a quality of life that as Fred reported:

“Quite as important was the fact that spiritual principles would solve all my problems. I have since been brought into a way of living infinitely more satisfying and, I hope, more useful than the life I lived before. My old manner of life was by no means a bad one, but I would not exchange the best moments for the worst I have now. I would not go back to it even if I could.” (Big Book, Page 42 - 43)

Could it be this way for you? The only way to find out is to take a risk and do what the authors of the Big Book did. All you have to lose is the misery that brought you to Alcoholics Anonymous.

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