

THE UNHAPPIEST PERSON in the world is the alcoholic who has an insistent yearning to enjoy life as he once knew it, but cannot picture life without alcohol. He has a heart-breaking obsession that by some miracle of control he will be able to continue to drink with no ill effect.

SOBRIETY is the most important thing in my life, without exception. I may believe my job, or my home life, or one of many other things, comes first. But if I do not get sober and stay sober, chances are I won't have a job, a family, sanity or even life. If I am convinced that everything in life depends on my sobriety, I have just so much more chance of getting sober and staying sober. If I put other things first, I am only hurting my chances.

Here are some tips that help me and other members of Alcoholics Anonymous stay sober and ENJOY LIFE.

1. We cultivate continued acceptance of the fact that our choice is between unhappy, drunken drinking and doing without just one small drink.

2. We cultivate gratitude that we have had the good fortune of finding out what was wrong with us before it was too late.

3. We expect, as being natural and inevitable, that for a period of time (and it may be a long one) we may recurrently experience:

a. a conscious, nagging craving for a drink;

b. a sudden, compelling impulse to take a drink;

c. a craving, not for a drink as such, but for the soothing glow and warmth a drink or two once gave us.

4. We remember that the times when we don't want a drink are the times in which to build up the strength not to take one when we do want it.

5. We develop and rehearse a daily plan of thinking and acting by which we live that day without taking a drink, regardless of what may upset us or how hard the old urge for a drink may hit us.

6. We don't for a split second allow ourselves to think, "Isn't it a pity or a mean injustice that I can't take a drink like so-called normal people?"

7. We don't allow ourselves to either think or talk about any real or imagined pleasure we once got out of drinking.

8. We don't permit ourselves to think a drink or two would make some bad situation better, or at least easier to live with. We substitute the thought, "One drink will make it worse - one drink will mean a drunk."

9. We minimize our situation. We think, as we see here or there a blind or otherwise sorely handicapped person, how joyful such a person would be if his problem could be solved by just not taking one little drink today. We think gratefully of how lucky we are to have such a simple solution to our problem.

10. We cultivate the enjoyment of sobriety:

a. How good it is to be free of

the consequences of a drunk just ended or a coming drunk we have never before been able to prevent.

b. How good it is to be free of what people have been thinking and whispering about us, and of their mingled pity and contempt.

c. How good it is to be free of fear.

11. We catalog and re-catalog the positive enjoyments of sobriety:

a. the simple ability to eat and sleep normally, and wake up glad we are alive, glad we were sober yesterday and glad we have the privilege of staying sober today;

b. the ability to face life as it is.

12. We cultivate a helpful association of ideas:

a. We associate a drink as being the single cause of all the misery, shame, and mortification we have ever known;

b. We associate a drink as being the only thing that can destroy our new-found happiness and take from us our self-respect.

13. We cultivate gratitude:

a. that so much can be ours for so small a price;

b. that we don't **have** to drink;

c. that AA exists and we found out about it in time;

d. that we are only a victim of a disease called alcoholism; that we