

Fifteen points for an
alcoholic to consider
when confronted with
the urge to take a drink

from a 1940s pamphlet

The unhappiest person in the world is the chronic alcoholic who has an insistent yearning to enjoy life as he once knew it, but cannot picture life without alcohol. He has A HEARTBREAKING OBSESSSION that by some miracle of control he will be able to do so.

Sobriety THE MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION, is the most important thing in your life without exception. You may believe your job or your home life, or one of many other things come first. But consider, if you do not get sober and stay sober, chances are you won't have a job, a family, sanity or even life. If you are convinced that everything in your life depends upon sobriety, you have just so much more chance of getting sober and staying sober. If you put other things first you are only hurting your chances.

1. Cultivate continued acceptance of the fact that your choice is between unhappy drunken drinking and doing without just one small drink.
2. Cultivate enthusiastic gratitude you have had the good fortune of finding out what was wrong with you before it was too late.
3. Expect as being natural and inevitable, that for a period of time (and it may be a long one) you will recurringly experience:

The conscious nagging craving for a drink.

The sudden, all but compelling impulse just to take a drink.

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

4. Remember that the times you don't want a drink are the times in which to build up the strength not to take one when you do want it.
5. Develop and rehearse a daily plan of thinking and acting by which you will live that day, without taking a drink, regardless of what may upset you or how hard the old urge may hit you.

6. Don't for a split second allow yourself to think: "isn't it a pity, a mean injustice that I can't take a drink like so called normal people."
7. Don't allow yourself to either think or talk about any real or imagined pleasure you once did get from drinking.
8. Don't permit yourself to think that a drink or two would make a bad situation better, or at least easier to live with. Substitute the thought: one drink will make it worse; one drink will mean a drunk.
9. Minimise your situation. Think as you see here or there a blind or severely handicapped person, how joyful such a person would be if his problem could be solved by not taking one little drink today. Think gratefully of how lucky you are to have so simple and small a problem.
10. Cultivate and woo enjoyment of sobriety.
 - How good it is to be free of shame, mortification and self- condemnation.
 - How good it is to be free of the consequences of a drunk just ended, or a coming drunk you have never before been able to prevent.
 - How good it is to be free of what people have been thinking and whispering about you, and of their mingled pity and contempt.
 - How good it is to be free of fear of yourself.
11. Catalogue and recatalogue the positive enjoyments of sobriety, such as:
 - The simple ability to eat and sleep normally, to wake up glad you are alive, glad you were sober yesterday, and glad you have the privilege of staying sober today.
 - The ability to face whatever life may dish out, with peace of mind, self respect, and a full possession of all your faculties.
12. Cultivate a helpful association of ideas:
 - Associate a drink as being the single cause of all the misery, shame and mortification, you have ever known.
 - Associate a drink as being the only thing that can destroy your new found happiness, and take from you your self respect and peace of mind.

13. Cultivate gratitude:

Gratitude that so much can be yours for so small a price. Gratitude that you can trade just one drink for all the happiness that sobriety gives you.

Gratitude that AA exists and you found out about it in time. Gratitude that you are only a victim of a disease called alcoholism, that you are not a degenerate moral weakling, or the self elected victim of a vice, or a person of doubtful sanity.

Gratitude that since others have done it so can you. In time you will not want or miss the drink you are doing without.

14. Seek out ways to help other alcoholics – and remember the first way to help others is to stay sober yourself.

15. And don't forget that when the heart is heavy and resistance is low and the mind is troubled and confused; there is much comfort in a true and understanding AA friend standing by.