

## **Alcoholics Anonymous Testimony**

I didn't think I was an alcoholic, let alone someone who needed Alcoholics Anonymous. It was true my drinking had gotten out of hand. I was ok if I didn't drink at all, but there was no telling where I would end up if I did take a drink. I also noticed a lot of my friends didn't drink like me. They could stop drinking when they wanted to. I found it almost impossible to stop drinking alcohol once I started.

I was often embarrassed or ashamed of the state I was in or the things I did or said while drinking and I felt incredibly lonely and cut off from those around me, even when I was in the middle of a crowd. At the end I knew I had a problem with alcohol, but I couldn't imagine life without it.

Finally, I wanted to stop after a particularly bad night out when I woke up and realised that my life could carry on like that for years, with all the loneliness, shame, and embarrassment, not to mention the way I was hurting those around me. What an utterly horrifying thought.

I went to my first AA meeting a few days later and was surprised when I got there: there were people of all ages and all different backgrounds – no sign of the homeless street drinkers that I had imagined AA would be full of. People were smiling and they welcomed me warmly. There were people there who had lost everything because of drink and those that hadn't. There were daily drinkers and binge drinkers. But what they had in common was that they wanted to stop drinking.

They talked about being powerless over alcohol, something I had known but had never heard described like that. My inability to stop easily once I had a drink, or know what would happen when I drank, were evidence of my powerlessness. They taught me that the way I was living was insane: I kept thinking that one drink wouldn't hurt or that some day soon I would stop for good. Yet I still kept doing the same things over and over again, which is utter madness. Finally, I was shown that nothing earthly that I put my trust in could help me. I had proven that living life my way wasn't working. They suggested that I find a Higher Power, or God. It didn't have to be God as I thought it was at the time, it just couldn't be me running my life any longer.

I wanted what those people had; they weren't wasting their lives living in a fog. They seemed happy for the most part and able to deal with life's problems without falling apart. So I did what they suggested. In only a short time certain things got better for me – I no longer worried about what I had been up to the night before; I was no longer ashamed or felt sad about how I was treating those around me; a lot of my relationships got better. As I continued to work through the steps I began to change, I stopped feeling lonely. I began helping others who wanted to stop drinking and that gave me a new purpose and a sense of joy. I began building trust with those around me. I finally was able to deal with life without having to drink to numb out.

That was 32 years ago and I still have not had to drink. I am trusted in my family and respected in my community and at work. I've been through some tough times, and I have had some amazing times. I have seen hundreds of people get sober and stay sober – which is an utter delight. But at the heart of it all I have an inner peace and a relationship with God that carries me through and guides me in all things and there is nothing more precious than that.