

You Make a Start

You have just made what is possibly the most important decision of your life. You've taken Step One and said to yourself, "Yes, I'm powerless over alcohol. My life is unmanageable. I can't stop drinking and I want some help." In order to stop drinking, and stay stopped, there are a few simple principles that you will need to apply to your life: AA's program of recovery as outlined in the Twelve Steps. They can work as effectively for you as they have worked for countless others. Here are some additional suggestions, based in our experiences, which can be helpful to you on your path to recovery.

Live One Day at a Time

AA is a "One day at a time" way of living. We try to break life into small pieces that we can handle. We stay sober one day at a time, or when necessary, one hour at a time. We do our jobs one task at a time. We solve our problems one problem at a time; we clean up our past one mess at a time.

Go to Meetings

All over the East Tennessee area there are AA meetings: 365 days a year, morning, noon and night. The schedule for these meetings may be found in our meeting directory, available at most groups or from our office, or on the website: www.etiaa.org Take in as many meetings as you can. The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.

Get a Sponsor

A few members may tell you that they stay sober without the aid of a sponsor, and having one is indeed not a requirement. However, our AA experience tells us that you will have a much better chance with a sponsor than without one. In fact, you will probably find that communicating with your sponsor is a vital part of your participation in the AA program.

Your sponsor will listen to you and make suggestions based on his or her experience. They will not serve as a financial advisor, marriage counselor or psychologist, however. Sponsors are but experienced guides to the AA program of recovery: The Twelve Steps. Some AA groups will help you find a temporary sponsor, if you are not certain about your group's practices regarding sponsorship, simply ask the chairperson after a meeting.

Have a Home Group and Get Involved

For most of us, one particular AA group has become a unique haven for our sobriety, a place where we have many friends, where we can feel particularly safe in sharing exactly what's going on with us today. This special place is known throughout the AA fellowship as the Home Group, often referred to as "The Heartbeat of AA." There are no dues or fees for AA membership. We are self-supporting through our own contributions.

Family Matters

It is said that the average practicing alcoholic affects many other people. Many of these are family members, and there are ways that you can share your recovery with them. They may choose to find personal Support through Al-Anon Family Groups.

When You Travel

You will find that AA is in almost every city in and town in the United States and Canada, as well as most urban areas throughout the world. Directories of meetings in the US, Canada and the rest of the world are available you East Tennessee Central Office. Links to AA World Headquarters and other Intergroups everywhere can be found at www.aa.org.

Your New Beginning

You've made a new beginning. If you are like most of us, there may be times that you feel terribly frightened and lonely. If you are willing to use the tools that AA offers, you will never have to be alone again. You are among people who have been where you have been, felt what you've felt, thought what you've thought. Use those phone numbers and email addresses you've been given and join us on a path of recovery from our common problem- alcoholism. We can do together what we can't do by ourselves.