

The Crux Of It All

This chapter will be the shortest and bluntest in The Small Book. It will come swiftly and directly to the point. Unless you stop drinking or using drugs, the rest of The Small Book will be of little help. You see, persistent use of intoxicants impairs your ability to think in the abstract, and even though you are intelligent and seem to understand much of what you read, you will fail to gain self-awareness of your own addictive thinking. Remember now, addiction is a philosophy, not your self-drugging behaviour. As long as you continue to drink or use, you are practising the *philosophy* you want to change. Because drinking and using feel good, it is very difficult to even criticize, let alone change, the irrational philosophy that produces such gratification. As you will see in the chapter “Voices,” there is a *lot* of mental activity taking place each time you drink or use. In order to *hear* your mental voices that lead you to drink, you must stop drinking and at least *intend* to stay stopped.

You are in control of your drinking or drugging every day. You have been in control all along. You may like to think you can handle it and stop any time you want, but deep down you cling to the idea that addicted or “alcoholic” people can’t control their behaviour. It gives the perfect “out”: Who can blame anyone who is “out of control”?

When the pain and losses caused by your habit exceed the pleasure you get from it, you will be ready to quit. If you want to stop drinking, you can quit right now and you know it. If you don’t stop right now, then you obviously believe you haven’t yet had enough to drink. When you have suffered enough, you will finally quit. There is nothing to stop you from doing so.

Quitting alcohol or drugs is simply a matter of making a decision and then sticking to it by stubbornly refusing to indulge. There may be some initial discomfort, but that is just a physical craving and it will fade within seventy-two hours. After that, physically speaking, you are in the clear. You will never again have a *physical* craving for alcohol, unless, of course, you resume drinking.

For most of us, quitting drinking, or heroin, or crack cocaine is no worse than a mild or moderate case of flu. It’s no biggie. About one in four or five of us, though, may experience DTs (delirium tremens), with mental confusion, agitation, great restlessness__ not just the usual “shakes”__and even weird visions. Those persons are generally over forty, or have been drunk for a very long time. About one fourth of the persons who have DTs die, so if you suspect, based on your experiences, that you will become ill this way by going cold turkey, then get to a medical doctor any way you can and explain your desire to withdraw from alcohol.

If you believe that you must “taper off,” though it is statistically doubtful that you will be better off in doing so, then *do it*, for one day only, consuming only *one* beer (twelve ounces) during the entire day. If you drink more than that, you are merely sustaining your addiction, and then you will “forget” that you are trying to save your life by quitting. If your problem is with other drugs that have withdrawal syndromes, such as valium or barbiturates, go to a drug clinic for professional supervision.

So, pick a time__like NOW, or tomorrow morning__and KNOCK IT OFF!

I’m sure that none of the above comes as news to you.

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