

13 STEPS

to ALCOHOLISM

Alcoholism is a disease which grows progressively harder to stop once a person starts on the road to drinking. All of us are potential alcoholics, and it is important that we are aware of the steps that lead to alcoholism. The following steps, prepared by alcoholics themselves, are a strong indication of whether or not you will have a drinking problem.

1. YOU HAVE BEGUN TO DRINK

You have begun to drink socially and once in a while take too much and end up with a severe hangover. For many of us, this is our first and last step to a drinking problem. We learn to drink in moderation.

2. YOU START HAVING "BLACKOUTS"

You are now drinking with some regularity to the point whereby you suffer a loss of memory, a whole part of your day or evening has been blocked out forever. You can remember nothing of what went on after a certain point in the drinking.

3. YOU FIND LIQUOR MEANS MORE TO YOU THAN TO OTHERS

You begin to gulp down your drinks and sneaking drinks when no one is looking. At this point you can control your drinks if you want to control them.

-----Danger Line-----

4. YOU CONSISTENTLY DRINK MORE THAN YOU MEAN TO

When you drink you often drink more than you planned, often winding up drunk without knowing how it happened. You are now beginning to "lose control" of your drinking conduct.

5. YOU START EXCUSING YOURSELF FOR DRINKING

You begin to tell yourself that you can really handle liquor in spite of appearances to the contrary, and you always have a reason for drinking too much. You now are beginning to feel guilty about your drinking and make up excuses and alibis to cover it up.

6. YOU START TAKING "EYE-OPENERS"

You feel that in order to get going in the morning you must start the day with a drink. You tell yourself you NEED it, and so you ease your conscience by having one. It also helps to lift your ego.

7. YOU BEGIN TO DRINK ALONE

This is the period where you begin to drink alone at any time of the day, and you prefer not to share the pleasure alcohol gives you with anyone else. Drinking has now become a flight from reality into fantasy.

8. YOU GET "ANTI-SOCIAL" WHEN YOU DRINK

This is a violent step whereby you begin to pick fights with strangers, break things, and become hostile and dangerous. The opposite reaction for some is to turn inward, becoming extremely self-conscious and introverted whereby you may even begin to fear people.

-----Danger Line-----

9. YOU START GOING ON BENDERS

This is the acute stage of compulsive drinking which has begun over a period of two or three years. A bender is a period of time in which the alcoholic drinks blindly with only one goal in mind: to get drunk. It is a stage in which the alcoholic feels compelled to drink, and has allowed fantasy to become reality.

10. YOU KNOW DEEP REMORSE--AND DEEP RESENTMENT

Nothing seems to go right in this stage; you find fault with everyone, and everything. Those little things in your life which do not go right cause you to become furious. With this comes deep remorse over the fact that you are now a drunkard and a failure.

11. YOU FEEL DEEP, NAMELESS ANXIETY

Here you begin to feel that you are deserving of punishment. You walk in terror that something is going to happen to you, becoming shaky and nervous. Often this is physically manifested through "the shakes." But it is less a physical reaction than an expression of fear.

12. YOU REALIZE DRINKING HAS YOU LICKED

For the first time you realistically admit to yourself that you can't handle liquor. Different incidents have happened in your life--regaining consciousness in the emergency ward of the local hospital, being arrested for drunk driving--trigger the reaction that you are an alcoholic and you begin to accept it.

13. YOU GET HELP OR YOU GO UNDER

The ultimate choice is before you: either get help or give up. You've lost your self-respect, your job, friends, perhaps family, and you can either come to the realization that you can't touch alcohol ever again or continue with the alcohol until it entirely consumes you and you die from it. THE POINT IS TO SEEK THAT HELP NOW, WHILE THERE IS STILL TIME.