

Taking Suggestions

Different people get sober at different paces. Some walk in to their first meeting and seem to “get it” immediately, others have slip after slip before they get it, and some never get it. Some people refer to this mysterious event as a “moment of grace.”

I don't think it's all that mysterious. **“Getting it” is simply a matter of taking enough suggestions to overwhelm your disease.** Alcoholism tells you that you know what's best for you, that you should do things your way, that your ideas or plans will save you. All of these are lies of your alcoholic ego. If you are going to get sober, you must find relief from these illusions by turning over your will. The way we do this is by taking suggestions.

There is no way to predict how many, or which, suggestions you'll need to take to overpower your will; some of us are sicker than others. However, if you take the **primary suggestions** below, and continue to practice them, your odds of staying sober are very very good.

If you keep slipping, or even if you don't feel comfortable, ask yourself if you are following the primary suggestions below. If you aren't, quit making excuses and try them. If you are, but still don't feel okay, keep adding more suggestions from the list until you do.

Remember: “We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not.... Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.... Half measures availed us nothing.”

PRIMARY SUGGESTIONS

1. **Pray in the morning for help staying sober, give thanks at night for your sobriety.** You can't stay sober under the steam of your own ego alone. Ask for help and express gratitude every day.
2. **Go to a meeting every day.** Too busy to get sober? Whatever you think is more important than getting to a meeting, be prepared to lose it.
3. **Call your sponsor daily. If they don't answer, keep calling other alcoholics until someone does.** Stay close to the program and reach out to others – isolation puts you in danger.
4. **DO. THE. STEPS.** You simply cannot get sober until you finish the steps. What the hell are you waiting for?
5. **Get a service position.** You can't remain selfish and stay sober. Start doing things for other alcoholics on a regular basis.
6. **No romance until after the 9th step.** You can't really be with another person until you've started making amends. Hurry!
7. **Get Honest!** Nothing will send you out harder than keeping awful secrets. Did you slip and not tell anyone? Are you sleeping with your best friend's partner? Are you stealing from the till? Whatever it is, understand that people in AA are not there to judge you. Unburden yourself and move forward.

MEETINGS

- Go to 90 meetings in 90 days.
- Go to a meeting today.
- Sit up front.
- Share at meetings.
- If applicable, share your daycount.
- Get there early, stay late.
- Introduce yourself to someone you don't know.
- Give a newcomer your number.
- Get someone else's number.

SERVICE

- Help set up or clean up at a meeting.
- Greet people before the meeting.
- If you've done the steps, get a sponsee.
- Share your story at a speaker meeting.

STEPS

- If you don't have one, get a sponsor...
 - who has a sponsor;
 - who has worked all the steps;
 - whose sobriety you respect;
 - whose suggestions you are willing to follow; and
 - who is available to talk or meet regularly.
- Make a date with your sponsor to talk about your stepwork.
- Read about the step you're on in the Big Book.
- Read about the step you're on in the 12 & 12.
- Go to a step meeting.
- Ask someone about how they did a step.
- Make some amends you've been putting off
- Do a 10th step inventory.
- Meditate.

FELLOWSHIP

- Get food or coffee after today's meeting.
- Invite a newcomer to come out for fellowship.
- Bring a sober buddy to events that will expose you to drinking or other unsober behavior.
- Call someone who has what you want.
- Call someone with less time and ask how they're doing.
- Ask someone why they relapsed.

PRAYER

- Try praying on your knees for extra focus and humility.
- Make a gratitude list; share it with someone else.
- Pray to have the right course revealed to you.
- Pray for the right words to come.
- Pray to see how you can be of service.
- Pray for relief from your obsessive thoughts.
- Pray for the happiness of those you resent.
- Add the 3rd step prayer in the morning.
- Add the 7th step prayer in the morning.

RANDOM SELF-CARE

- Eat when you are hungry.
- Go to sleep when you are tired.
- Whenever you get tense, angry, stressed out, or overwhelmed, just pause and breathe.
- Don't get overextended – do less.
- Start exercising – but don't overdo it!
- Start making your bed.
- Schedule a checkup with your doctor and/or dentist.
- Floss!

AVOID...

- People, places, and things associated with drinking or using.
- Major changes in the first year.
- Bars, parties with booze.
- Extended visits with family.
- Isolation.
- Long periods of unstructured time.
- Gossiping – and others who gossip.
- Giving unsolicited advice.