

# Giving up alcohol for a day - or forever.

## September 2009

The mechanism of becoming a slave to alcohol is really simple.

In my youth I often felt really inferior. Drink made me feel better; much better.

So I drank more.

After a while I began to feel less better.

But drink takes the edge off.

So I drank more.

Then drink started to eat into my life.

My life suffered.

My friends and family and workmates and all relationships suffered.

I suffered.

But I didn't see this clearly at the time.

The more drink-sodden your life gets, the more you need to drink.

In the end you drink to ease the symptoms of drinking.

Caroline Knapp in her wonderful book '[Drinking: A Love Story](#)' says "there's a line you mustn't cross.

But if you have a drink problem, you can't see the line."

And maybe, for some of us, that line is marked in us even before our first drink.

Most of us alcoholics, with some help, can give up alcohol for a day at a time.

As the days go by, your life changes.

Physically you feel better as the drink stops eating into your life.

But mentally the crutch you could rely on for so many years to make you feel better is gone.

Your way of blotting out unpleasant reality and your own failures has gone.

If you feel inferior to people you meet, your easy way to change that feeling has gone.

Your fear of talking to people because you have nothing worthwhile to say to them returns as does your fear of the telephone ringing as someone wishes to speak to you – it used to be so easy with just the right amount of alcohol on board.

The real you again experiences the pain of being mediocre and second rate.

That is why I loved the alcohol when it made me feel good about myself.

Something in my brain didn't work properly and my self-esteem was very low, probably from the early years of my life.

In my teenage years the alcohol got rid of that feeling and I could enjoy mixing with people.

I thought alcohol was a gift from God and would work for me forever, but as the years went by it failed me badly as it did every other alcoholic.

Then help is needed from alcoholics in the Doctors and Dentists Group and Alcoholics Anonymous.

Without alcohol those feelings are back and I have to live with them.

It's not easy – sometimes it's very hard indeed, but it's better than being a slave to a drug.

And however bad I feel about myself, every day I know that in remaining alcohol-free I am doing something that many people think is wonderful.

I can cope but the people dearest to me who put up with the drunkard for years now have to put up with a partial recluse with often little to say.

I am truly sorry for them but I know that things are better for them than if I took to the bottle again.

**Nobody said life was fair and nothing is so bad for an alcoholic and his family  
and friends that his drinking can't make it worse – much worse.**