

About Emotional Sobriety

- When an alcoholic stops drinking, it's cause for rejoicing. Unfortunately, sobriety is not guaranteed to last. It takes continued wakefulness and commitment to ongoing spiritual and mental health.

"We feel that elimination of our drinking is but a beginning" BIG BOOK OF AA

Simple Put Basics

- Don't Drink
- Practice the Steps
- Trust the Process

It May Happen

That someone may have stopped drinking alcohol or taking drugs but has not undergone mental or emotional changes. In other words, apart from stopping substance abuse he/she remains the same.

Or someone may have become abstinent and began a process of recovery, but has lapsed into unrealistic and chaotic thinking.

I Am Approaching Emotional Sobriety When....

.....I am practicing letting go of resentments, jealousy, and envy.

..... strong euphoric or sad emotions don't cause me to drink.

.....I am able to make decisions without being unduly influenced by my emotions.

.....I am certain enough of my own values and beliefs that I'm not "thrown off" by social pressure.

... I'm becoming able to enjoy life as a sober person.

.....the "need to be right" no longer influences my relationships.

or when.....

.....my emotions are in sync with my intellect and both are in sync with my Higher Power.

.....I am not controlled by the opinions of others.

..... I can move freely between the emotional states of child, adult and parent.

.....I am growing more honest, the absence of the attempt to deceive.

.....I derive genuine, healthy pleasure from helping others without thought of reward, money, prestige or station.

.....I am able to “stay present” and endure both hardship and pleasure.

A new life has been given us, or, if you prefer, 'a design for living' that really works. BIG BOOK OF AA

Awakening

- “Suddenly I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been dependence – almost absolute dependence – on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I had fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression.” Bill W.

The Next Frontier – Emotional Sobriety

AA Grapevine, January, 1958 by Bill W.

Triggers Which Threaten Emotional Sobriety

- Some call these signs of a “dry drunk syndrome”.
- **Feelings of superiority** – When a recovering alcoholic fails to achieve sober realism, he or she exaggerates his sense of self-importance.
- **Intolerance** – An alcoholic is prone to make inappropriate evaluations and tend to become exceedingly judgmental in his or her actions and interaction with other people. When this triggers poorly managed anger, it can complicate the recovery process. *“It is plain that a life which includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness.” BIG BOOK*
- **Impulsive Neediness** - The need for instant gratification of one’s personal desires becomes an overriding concern.

Other Triggers

- **Ignoring Potential Consequences**– Failure to control the need for instant gratification will trigger impulsive acts and feelings. This impulsiveness will ultimately force a person to ignore the implications of his or her actions and decisions.
- **Vacillation** – A person who tends to become impulsive will also be indecisive. He or she vacillates when faced with several courses of action and ends up not taking action at all.
- **Spiritual Bypass** – (John Welwood) “Using spiritual ideas and practices to sidestep personal, emotional ‘un-finished business,’ to shore up a shaky sense of self, or to belittle basic needs, feelings and developmental tasks, all in the name of enlightenment.

Some Helps to Avoid Relapse

- Recognize, in yourself, the alcohol relapse triggers outlined above.
- If you have a therapist/counselor/sponsor, or attend a group, talk about it.
- If you can't talk face-to-face with someone, get online and chat about it.
- Return again and again to the Path, trusting in forgiveness.

“We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.” BIG BOOK OF AA

- “Do not let any prejudice you may have against spiritual terms deter you from honestly asking yourself what they mean to you” BIG BOOK of AA

Time for Rejoicing

Fewer and fewer approval-seeking behaviors.

“As God’s people, we stand on our own feet, we don’t crawl before anyone.” BIG BOOK OF AA

Fewer expectations of people or events.

Ability to apologize

“Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear.” BIG BOOK

Willingness to forgive.

Willingness to be forgiven.

“No one is too discredited or has sunk too low to be welcomed cordially – if he means business.” BIG BOOK

Some Books

***12 Smart Things to Do When the Booze and Drugs are Gone*, 2008, Allen Berger,
Hazelden**

***Emotional Sobriety: from Relationship Trauma* by Tian Dayton - – 2007, Forward by
Wm Cope Moyers**

***Recovering Spirituality: Achieving Emotional Sobriety in Your Spiritual Practice*,
by Ingrid Mathieu, 2011, Hazelden**

***Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier*, from AA Grapevine, 2006**