

# *IN SIGHT* for Oregon Lawyers and Judges

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

## IT COULDN'T HAPPEN TO ME

Eighteen months ago, I had my last drink, I pray. Prior to that time, I would have rather jumped off a bridge than have to admit to myself, let alone to the readers of this article, that I was an alcoholic. The stigma that I perceived to be attached to this disease was sufficient to sink me deeper into denial. Additionally, I was sure that I could not have a drinking problem – I was not the type of person I imagined an alcoholic to be: a daily drinker, a street derelict, washed out, and weak-willed.

In my recovery, I have learned that it does not matter what I did for a living, how smart I thought I was, how often I drank, or how much. The bottom line was what drinking did to me.

I had always associated drinking with fun. It allowed me to relax, celebrate, escape temporarily from stress, and create a high spot in an otherwise dull day. Because I drank periodically, I thought I was a social drinker. However, almost every time I took a drink, I wanted more. One drink was not enough. So, when I did take a drink, I would often get inebriated to some degree. Once I picked up the first drink, I could not guarantee the outcome. “Stopping for one” was a figment of my best intentions.

During the last four years of my drinking, I used alcohol more frequently to cope with the ups and downs of life. My hangovers became worse. Fear, guilt, and remorse, which used to visit me on “the day after,” became more frequent companions. Motivation and productivity at work

lessened. More and more, I isolated myself from people. My wall was up. I did not know that I was suffering from the disease of alcoholism. As is often the case, I was the last to know.

It was difficult for me to take what appeared at the time to be a humiliating step: to admit that I was powerless over alcohol. However, by taking that first step, by honestly facing myself, I began a new life, a much better life. I surrendered to win. Freedom, peace of mind, and a newfound happiness are just a few of the promises of sobriety that are coming into being in my life, one day at a time.

If you think you might have a problem with drinking and/or drugs, there is a solution if you want it. There are many of us who used to be where you are now and who stand ready to help.

*This article is reprinted with permission from the New York State Lawyer Assistance Program.*

Call the Oregon Attorney Assistance Program at 503-226-1057 or 1-800-321-6227 and ask to speak to an attorney counselor. It's free. It's confidential. Help is available to you.

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