



EMPLOYEE TRAINING NEWSLETTER



Alcoholism



One Man's Testimony of Survival

I was brought up in an alcoholic household. My mother was a nightclub singer and hostess. Her love was a drink on the rocks.

At the age of 16, my dad died from a lingering liver disease which ate away his physique and dignity. He had been a world-class athlete and my hero who happened to die in his prime. I was shattered and angry. I drank over this for many years, hating the world for being so cruel. My anger was fueled with alcohol. In high school, I managed to get good grades. Sometimes I would drink before, during, or after school. I was a **functional drunk** and a periodic drinker at that.

I left home at 18, quit college, got a job and got married. My drinking was escalating but I still managed to function and work daily. When I was promoted to manager, the perks of the job would often include wining and dining guests. This was tantamount to a kid in a candy store. I felt like I had a key-to-the-city! Drinking was becoming an almost daily ritual. My disease was truly progressing but my **denial** was firmly in place.

By the third year of marriage, we had two children. My wife, would often become the target of my anger and unhappiness. I found myself creating situations in order to justify my drinking. I could turn anything into an argument for the sake of conflict. She complained that I was always coming home late at night, smelling from booze. She wondered where all the money had gone. My uncontrollable anger was **scaring the family**. The pressures of trying to raise a family were taking a toll on both of us. The wife demanded that I get treatment for alcoholism but I refused.

She finally threatened divorce which prompted me to stop drinking for the sake of our marriage. I went to a few AA meetings just to appease her but I would become sober on my own willpower. (Too stubborn to ask for help) For almost a year, I was sober... on pure willpower. This, I learned later in life, was my indoctrination to being a **"dry drunk"**.

During that year my marriage had improved. I really felt that I could better manage my drinking this time around. I would prove it to her. I would switch from vodka to beer and **just "cut back"**. Farewell to sobriety. Six months into my relapse, it was farewell to the marriage. Divorce proceedings had started. In a last ditch effort to reconcile, my wife and I agreed to make a geographic move. She agreed to move the family and start over. I promised I would stop drinking. I quit my job of eight years and we moved. On our second day, she left me a note saying that she had taken the kids back. She later admitted that it was a ploy to get me a thousand miles away from her.

I was **mentally, physically, and spiritually bankrupt**. I remember walking along the Highway and wanting to hurl my body in front of traffic. By the grace of God, I went to a phone booth and found an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting instead. The fellowship helped me get thru those dark moments and I soon returned back to my hometown after having sold the wedding ring to provide gas money. Without a job or home, I moved in with mom. A few months later, I had unbelievable fate. I ran into a girlfriend who I hadn't seen in over ten years. We started seeing each other again. I was still drinking, but I thought I could handle this relationship and drinking differently. Soon thereafter, my ex-wife decided to move with her boyfriend and left the kids with us. My new wife now had an "instant family" with all the pressures of motherhood transferred to her. Along with these demands, she was experiencing my temper bouts fueled with alcohol. She was beginning to experience a household wrought by alcoholism. When I was in a rage, I would become verbally abusive and start destroying the house. Everyone was afraid of me when I was raging.

My last drunk was in the summer of 1980. I meandered over to a nearby liquor store. The clerk would not allow me to write a check for a bottle of beer so I became belligerent. The police were called three times to remove me from the store. The third time they arrested me. My last drunk was not particularly earth-shattering but it represented a culmination of everything that had transpired before in my life. My attitude, anger, and other assorted character defects were constantly re-surfacing. I was **truly sick and tired of being sick and tired**. I wanted change.

I desperately wanted to make a better life for my new family. I made a decision to surrender to the disease of alcoholism that summer. I was willing to go to any lengths to get sobriety and did what AA advised me to do -- shut up and listen. I could easily identify with others in the program and liked the fact that they were not pressuring me to quit. They convinced me that all I could handle was **one day at a time**. I soon learned that I had to accept a power greater than myself to restore me to sanity. I was ready to accept the program. Everyone in AA kept telling me that things would get better. I spent the first few years in AA burying myself in service work. This proved to be invaluable for me because it insured my going to meetings on a regular basis. I would make coffee, get literature, and became secretary of the group. I had new friends and a new way of living. I felt for the first time that I actually "fit in" and "**belonged**" in this group. I was truly "hooked" on AA! I was truly making progress.

I continue to make progress today with over 17 years of sobriety--all a day at a time. I still find that getting involved in the program is the best way to keep sober. This medium is not only helping me keep sober on a daily basis but also helping me do some valuable **twelve step** work by giving back what was given to me.

We now have three children. Presently, one of our biggest challenges is helping our kids become aware of this "family disease". My son is also a recovering alcoholic/addict and has two years of sobriety thanks to this program. My teenage daughter is still struggling with drug abuse and is our newest challenge. The task is far from over.

This disease of alcoholism is too cunning, baffling, and powerful to let me ever take a rest or sit on my laurels for too long. The daily battle of this disease is still very much alive in our household. It never stops but there is always **hope**.

Gary

*Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.
The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.*

FOR LOCAL AA MEETINGS

Alcoholic Anonymous: 770-534-3777 or 770-532-7222 www.aageorgia.org
Al-Anon (families & friends of alcoholics): 404-687-0466 www.al-anon.org

**For 24/7 Emergency Assistance Call the Georgia Crisis and Access Line
1-800-715-4225**

Ten Warning Signs of Alcoholism

1. Do you ever drink after telling yourself you won't?
2. Does your drinking worry your family?
3. Do you drink alone when you feel angry or sad?
4. Have you ever felt you should cut down on your drinking?
5. Do you get headaches or have hang-overs after drinking?
6. Does your drinking ever make you late for work?
7. Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
8. Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking?
9. Do you ever forget what you did while you were drinking?
10. Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover?

If you answered Yes to any one of these questions, it is a definite sign that you're drinking patterns are harmful and possibly considered alcohol dependent or alcoholic.

Please read this newsletter and sign and date below...

Name

Date

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Alcoholismo



Un Testimonio de Supervivencia

Crecí en una casa donde había alcoholismo. Mi madre era cantante de club nocturno y anfitriona. Su amor era on the rocks.

A mis 16 años, mi padre murió de una persistente enfermedad del hígado que se comió su físico y dignidad. El había sido un profesional de tenis a nivel mundial. Aquí estaba un atleta de talla mundial y mi héroe que murió en la flor de la vida. Estaba quebrantado y enojado. Yo bebí a raíz de esto durante muchos años, odiando al mundo por ser tan cruel. El alcohol era el combustible de mi enojo. En la secundaria, yo logré conseguir buenas notas. A veces yo bebía antes, durante, o después de la escuela. Era un **borracho funcional** y un bebedor regular.

Yo me fui de casa a los 18 años, dejé la universidad, conseguí un trabajo y me casé. Mi hábito de beber se agravaba pero yo todavía logré funcionar y trabajar diariamente. Cuando yo fui promovido a director, los incentivos del puesto a menudo incluían llevar a un huésped a comer y a beber. Esto era equivalente a un niño en una confitería. ¡Yo sentía que tenía la llave de la ciudad! El beber se llegó a convertir en un ritual casi diario. Mi enfermedad verdaderamente progresaba pero mi negación al hecho era firme.

En el tercer año de mi matrimonio, nosotros tuvimos dos hijos. Mi mujer, a menudo se convertía en una víctima de mi ira y desdicha. Yo me encontré creando situaciones para justificar mi hábito de beber. Yo convertí algo en un argumento solo para crear conflicto. Ella se quejaba de que yo siempre volvía a casa tarde en la noche, oliendo a alcohol. Ella se preguntaba a donde se iba todo el dinero. Mi ira irrefrenable **espantaba a mi familia**. Las presiones de criar a una familia nos estaban consumiendo. Mi mujer me demandó que consiguiera tratamiento para el alcoholismo pero yo me negué.

Ella por último amenazó con divorciarse de mí lo cual me incitó a dejar de beber para salvar el matrimonio. Fui a unas pocas reuniones de AA para apaciguarla pero yo iba a estar sobrio en mi propia fuerza de voluntad. (Demasiado terco para pedir ayuda) Yo estuve sobrio por casi un año... en pura fuerza de voluntad. Esto, yo aprendí luego en vida, fui mi adoctrinamiento ser un "borracho seco".

Durante ese año mi matrimonio había mejorado. Sentía realmente que podría manejar mejor mi beber esta vez. Yo se lo demostraría a ella. Yo cambiaba de vodka a cerveza y solamente "disminuía la cantidad". Adiós a la sobriedad. Seis meses en mi recaída, fue el adiós de mi matrimonio. Los trámites de divorcio habían comenzado. En un último esfuerzo de reconciliación, mi mujer y yo concordamos en movernos. Ella estuvo de acuerdo en mover a la familia y comenzar de nuevo. Prometí que dejaría de beber. Dejé mi trabajo de ocho años y nos movimos. En nuestro segundo día, ella me dejó una nota que decía que ella se había llevado los niños de vuelta. Ella admitió luego que fue una táctica para conseguir dejarme millas lejos de ella.

Yo estaba **mental, física, y espiritualmente en banca rota**. Recuerdo andar por la Carretera queriendo lanzar mi cuerpo en frente del tráfico. Por la gracia de Dios, yo fui a una cabina telefónica y encontré un número para una reunión de Alcohólicos Anónimos. La confraternidad me ayudó a atravesar esos momentos oscuros y pronto volví atrás a mi pueblo de origen después de haber vendido el anillo de matrimonio para proporcionarme dinero para el gas. Sin trabajo o una casa, yo me moví con mamá. Unos pocos meses más tarde, tuve un encuentro del destino. Me encontré a una amiga que yo no había visto en más de diez años. Empezamos a vernos otra vez. Yo todavía bebía, pero pensé que podría manejar esta relación y la bebida de forma distinta. Después, mi ex mujer decidió moverse con su novio y dejó a los niños con nosotros. Mi nueva mujer ahora tenía una "familia instantánea" con todas las presiones de la maternidad transferidas a ella. Junto con estas demandas, ella estaba experimentando mi temperamento abastecidos por el combustible del alcohol. Ella comenzaba a experimentar una casa forjada por el alcoholismo. Cuando yo estaba en enojo, yo era verbalmente abusivo y comenzaba a destruir la casa. Todos tenían miedo de mí cuando yo estaba enojado.

Mi último episodio de borracho fue en el verano de 1980. Yo fui a una tienda de vinos y licores cercana. El empleado no me permitió escribir un cheque para una botella de cerveza y yo me puse muy enojado. La policía fue llamada tres veces para removerme de la tienda. La tercera vez ellos me arrestaron. Mi última borrachera no fue especialmente quebrantadora pero representó la culminación de todo lo que había pasado antes en mi vida. Mi actitud, la ira, y otros defectos de mi carácter estaban constantemente saliendo a la superficie. Estaba sinceramente **enfermo y cansado de estar enfermo y cansado**. Deseaba un cambio.

Quise desesperadamente crear una mejor vida para mi nueva familia. Tomé una decisión de rendirme a la enfermedad del alcoholismo ese verano. Estuve dispuesto a ir a cualquier longitud para conseguir la sobriedad e hice lo que AA me aconsejó hacer -- callarme y escuchar. Podía identificarme fácilmente con otros en el programa y me gustaba el hecho que ellos no me presionaban para dejar de tomar. Ellos me convencieron de que todo lo podría manejar **un día a la vez**. Yo pronto aprendí que tenía que aceptar a un poder más alto que yo mismo para que restaurara mi cordura. Estaba listo para aceptar el programa. Todos en AA siempre me decían que las cosas mejorarían.

Pasé los primeros años en AA enterrándome a mi mismo sirviendo y trabajando. Esto resultó inapreciable para mí porque aseguró el tener que ir a las reuniones con regularidad. Yo hacía café, conseguía literatura, y me convertí en el secretario del grupo. Tenía nuevos amigos y una nueva manera de vivir. Sentía por primera vez que yo realmente "pertenece" y "era parte" en este grupo. ¡Estaba "enganchado" sinceramente en AA! Estaba realmente progresando.

Continúo progresando hoy con más de 17 años de la sobriedad -- todo un día a la vez. Yo todavía pienso que envolverme en el programa es la mejor manera de mantenerme sobrio. Este medio no sólo me ayuda a mantenerme sobrio diariamente pero también me ayuda a hacer algo valioso un trabajo de 12 pasos para devolver lo que se me an dado a mí.

Nosotros ahora tenemos a tres niños. Actualmente, uno de nuestros desafíos más grandes es ayudar a nuestros niños a estar anuentes a esta "enfermedad familiar". Mi hijo también está en recuperación del alcoholismo/adicción y tiene dos años de sobriedad gracias a este programa. Mi hija adolescente todavía lucha contra el abuso de drogas y es nuestro más nuevo desafío. La tarea todavía no esta cerca de terminar. Esta enfermedad del alcoholismo es demasiado astuta, desconcertante, y poderosa para permitirme tomar jamás un descanso o sentarme en mis laureles por demasiado tiempo. La batalla diaria de esta enfermedad está todavía viva en nuestra casa. Nunca termina pero siempre hay **esperanza**. Gary

Los Alcohólicos Anónimos son una confraternidad de hombres y mujeres que comparten su experiencia, fuerza y esperanza del uno al otro que ellos pueden resolver su problema común y ayudar otros a recuperarse del alcoholismo. El único requisito de membresía es el deseo de parar de tomar.

PARA REUNIONES LOCALES DE AA

Alcohólicos Anónimos: 770-534-3777 o 770-532-7222 www.aageorgia.org
Al-Anon (las familias & amigos de alcohólicos): 404-687-0466 www.al-anon.org

**Para llamadas 24/7 para Asistencia de Emergencia la Línea de Crisis de Georgia
1-800-715-4225**

Por favor lea éste boletín firme y ponga la fecha abajo...

Nombre _____

Fecha _____

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Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce

DRUGS DON'T WORK NEWSLETTER

Abril 2008

http://www.alcoholism-information.com/Ten_Warning_Signs_of_Alcoholism.html; <http://alcoholism.about.com/library/blstory14.htm>;

http://www.aageorgia.org/schedule_16e.htm

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SUPERVISOR TRAINING NEWSLETTER

Attention Supervisors:

The Drug-Free Workplace is a component of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and facilitated by the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce and your employer.

Why is the program important to Chamber business and industry?

- 70% of drug users are employed.
- Substance abusers are 1/3 less productive.
- Substance abusers are 2.5 times more likely to be absent 8 or more days a year.
- Substance abusers increase employee turnover. It costs an average of \$7,000 to replace a salaried worker.
- We need to erase drugs use from our workplace and eventually, our community.

You are a part of the solution! You will receive a supervisor newsletter every other month. Each will focus on a different objective of training and your role in implementing a drug-free workplace. In relation to a drug-free workplace program, supervisors' responsibilities should include monitoring employees' performance, staying alert to and documenting performance problems, and enforcing the policy. Supervisors should not, however be expected to diagnose alcohol- and drug-related problems or provide counseling to employees who may have them. Please refer to your company's Drug-Free Workplace Policy when needed.

Supervisors' Responsibilities

It is your responsibility, as a supervisor, to:

- Maintain a safe, secure and productive environment for employees
- Evaluate and discuss performance with employees
- Treat all employees fairly
- Act in a manner that does not demean or label people

It is NOT your responsibility, as a supervisor, to:

- Diagnose drug and alcohol problems
- Have all the answers
- Provide counseling or therapy
- Be a police officer

Legally sensitive areas:

- Safeguard employees' confidentiality
- Ensure the policy is clearly communicated
- Establish procedures to thoroughly investigate alleged violations
- Provide due process and ample opportunity for response to allegations
- If testing is included, ensure quality control and confirmation of positive tests
- Conform to union contracts, if applicable

Identifying Performance Problems and Potential Crisis Situations

It is important that you're familiar with the Drug-Free Workplace Policy when attempting to deal with highly-charged situations that may involve alcohol and drugs. If possible, when dealing with an employee regarding suspected use of alcohol and/or other drugs, a supervisor should call in another supervisor or manager who can act as a reliable witness.

One of a supervisor's first responsibilities when dealing with drugs and alcohol in the workplace is to distinguish between a crisis situation and a performance problem.

It is important to note that crisis situations are less common than performance problems.

Crisis situations can consist of:

- Dangerous behavior
- Threatening behavior
- Obvious impairment
- Possession of alcohol and other drugs
- Illegal activity

To investigate a potential drug or alcohol crisis situation, the supervisor should ask himself/herself the following questions:

- What exactly do you see?
- Does there appear to be illegal activity, policy violations or unusual behavior taking place?
- Is a group of people involved or a single employee?
- Are you the direct supervisor to anyone involved in the incident?
- Are reliable witnesses available?
- Is any physical danger involved in taking action or not taking action?
- Is the situation serious enough to require calling security or law enforcement?
- Is there a specific policy that applies to the situation?
- Does the situation require expert consultation from Human Resources, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), if applicable, or security?
- Is this a situation that calls for reasonable-suspicion testing?
- Have you documented what you see and what you have done in response?

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Name

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