

**The following was written by a DUI Court participant. It was also featured in the January 2014 issue of Savannah Intergroup. It speaks volumes to the power of sobriety. The last sentence is one that any alcoholic can strive for:**

To admit that I am powerless over alcohol and my life had become unmanageable is an understatement. It took many years of destructive drinking for me to come to this realization. I have had more "rock bottoms" than I can count. The Big Book tells us that we "hit rock bottom when we stop digging". If I had not put the shovel down and continued to drink; someone would be using that shovel to dig my grave!

For many years, I was the "life of the party". There were times when I had so many invitations to social events that I could not attend them all. Of course, I wouldn't even consider going if alcohol wasn't involved. After years of heavy drinking, the fun-loving party girl was gone. She had become a mean, vicious and quite often a violent drunk! I almost always arrived already plastered and many times my behavior was very inappropriate. Since no one ever knew what I would do or say, the invitations came to a screeching halt.

My drinking had not only humiliated my friends and family, it had hurt them physically and emotionally. I began to lose many things: relationships, my career and material possessions. But, the important thing I lost was my self (s). Alcohol had taken away my self-worth and self-esteem. They had been replaced with self-pity and self-loathing. I really hated the person I had become in the last few years of my drinking.

When I first came into the rooms, I heard people say that the only way they could stay sober was to 'work' the Steps with their sponsor. I had no idea what they were talking about. Weren't the Steps those words that hung on the wall? Wasn't it just something that someone read at the beginning of every meeting? So, I thought, how does one 'work' the Steps?

The first person I met at the first meeting that I attended became my first sponsor. When I asked her about Step One, she told me to write two paragraphs: one describing powerlessness and one about manageability. I was to call her when I finished. I looked up both words in the dictionary, copied Webster's definitions and phoned in my homework assignment. She told me that I was ready to move to Step Two. Really? This was too easy! I thought by doing what she had asked, would feel different or some sort of relief. I didn't really know how I was supposed to feel. All I knew was that I still wanted to drink. Needless to say, I did not stay sober. I still thought I could 'control' my drinking.

This way of thinking began to get me into trouble. Within less than 3 years, I had gotten 2 DUIs and spent 16 days in jail for battery. Alcohol caused me to visit institutions as well. Detox centers, a mental hospital, many trips to the emergency room and 2 separate stays at inpatient rehab centers. Looking back on these times, I realize that I did not get into trouble every time I drank; every time I got into

trouble, it was because of my drinking.

The last time that I worked Step One, I was in rehab. One of the staff members (Linda S.) had given me an exercise to chart my lifeline with alcohol. I was to list a date, what I drank/the occasion, what happened, consequences and my feelings after. I spent a lot of time putting the pen to paper. Once it was complete, I had no doubt of my powerlessness over alcohol and just how unmanageable my life had become!

Today, I have been sober 9 months. I have a wonderful relationship with my Higher Power who is loving, forgiving and continues to bless my life daily. I absolutely love my new life, the AA program and my AA family! I know that if I want to continue life on this earth, I cannot take the first drink. I no longer struggle with the thought of not drinking tomorrow or the next day. I just won't drink today.

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