

BARRIERS TO RECOVERY

The following is a checklist of symptoms leading to relapse, any of which may be barriers to recovery. If the symptoms are caught early enough and recognized, the alcoholic will usually try to change his thinking, to get back on "his program" again. A weekly inventory of symptoms might prevent some relapses.

1. **EXHAUSTION:** Allowing yourself to become overly tired or in poor health. Some alcoholics are prone to work addictions-perhaps they are in a hurry to make up for lost time. Good health and enough rest are important. If you feel good you are more apt to think well. Feel poor and your thinking is apt to deteriorate. Feel bad enough and you might begin thinking a drink couldn't make it any worse.
2. **DISHONESTY:** This begins with a pattern of unnecessary little lies and deceits with fellow workers, friends and family. Then come important lies to yourself. This is called rationalizing -- making excuses for not doing what you do not want to do or for doing what you know you should not do.
3. **Impatience:** Things are not happening fast enough or others are not doing what they should or what you want them to.
4. **ARGUMENTATIVENESS:** Arguing small and ridiculous points of view indicates a need to always be right. "Why don't you be reasonable and agree with me?" Looking for an excuse to drink.
5. **DEPRESSION:** Unreasonable and unaccountable despair may occur in cycles and should be dealt with, talked about.
6. **FRUSTRATION:** At people and also because things may not be going your way. Remember--everything is not going to be just the way you want it.
7. **SELF-PITY:** "Why do these things happen to me?" "Why must I be an alcoholic?" Nobody appreciates all I am doing -- (for them?).
8. **COCKINESS:** Got it made--no longer fear alcoholism--going into drinking situations to prove to others you have no problems. Do this often enough and it will wear down your defenses.
9. **COMPLACENCY:** "Drinking was the farthest thing from my mind". Not drinking was no longer a conscious thought either. It is dangerous to let up on disciplines because everything is going well. Always to have a little fear is a good thing. More relapses occur when things are going well than otherwise.
10. **EXPECTING TOO MUCH FROM OTHERS:** "I've changed, why hasn't everyone else?" It's a plus if they do-but it is still your problem if they don't. They may not trust you yet, may still be looking for further proof. You cannot expect others to change their life styles just because you have.
11. **LETTING UP ON DISCIPLINES:** Prayer, meditation, daily inventory, A.A. attendance. This can stem from complacency or boredom. You cannot afford to be bored with your program. The cost of relapse is always too great.
12. **USE OF MOOD-ALTERING CHEMICALS:** You may feel the need to ease things with a pill, and your doctor may go along with you. You may never have had a problem with chemicals other than alcohol before, but you can easily lose sobriety starting this way - about the most subtle way to have a relapse. Remember you will be cheating! The reverse of this is true for drug dependent persons who start to drink.
13. **WANTING TOO MUCH:** Do not set goals you cannot reach with normal effort. Do not expect too much. It's always great when good things you were not expecting happen. You will get what you are entitled to as long as you do your best, but maybe not as soon as you think you should. "Happiness is not having what you want, but wanting what you have.
14. **FORGETTING GRATITUDE:** You may be looking negatively on your life, concentrating on problems that are still not totally corrected. Nobody wants to be a Pollyanna-but it's good to remember where you started from-and how much better life is now.
15. **"IT CAN'T HAPPEN TO ME."** This is dangerous thinking. Almost anything can happen to you and is more likely to if you get careless or complacent. Remember you have a progressive disease, and you will be in worse shape if you relapse.
16. **OMNIPOTENCE:** This is a feeling that results from a combination of many of the above. You have all the answers for yourself and others. No one can tell you anything. You ignore suggestions or advice from others. Relapse is probably imminent unless drastic changes take place.