

SUBSTANCE ADDICTION RECOVERY AFTERCARE



When I got clean and sober over a decade ago my sponsor to-be saw that I was shaking badly, and sweating (in an AC room). The first thing he did was give me a chocolate candy bar, and a hot cup of coffee. It calmed my nervous disposition, and allowed me to listen. Had he not done this, I would not have been receptive to what he told me of his experience with alcoholism because I could only focus on my poor health. Here's what the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, Chapter 9, "The Family Afterward" says about after care health:

"But this does not mean that we disregard human health measures. God has abundantly supplied this world with fine doctors, psychologists, and practitioners of various kinds. Do not hesitate to take your health problems to such persons. Most of them give freely of themselves, that their fellows may enjoy sound minds and bodies. Try to remember that though God has wrought miracles among us, we should never belittle a good doctor or psychiatrist. Their services are often indispensable in treating a newcomer and in following his case afterward. One of the many doctors who had the opportunity of reading this book in manuscript form told us that the use of sweets was often helpful, of course depending upon a doctor's advice. He thought all alcoholics should constantly have chocolate available for its quick energy value at times of fatigue. He added that occasionally in the night a vague craving arose which would be satisfied by candy. Many of us have noticed a tendency to eat sweets and have found this practice beneficial." (Alcoholics Anonymous, pp. 133 and 134)

"Here is a case in point: One of our friends is a heavy smoker and coffee drinker. There was no doubt he over-indulged. Seeing this, and meaning to be helpful, his wife commenced to admonish him about it. He admitted he was overdoing these things, but frankly said that he was not ready to stop. His wife is one of those persons who really feels there is something rather sinful about these commodities, so she nagged, and her intolerance finally threw him into a fit of anger. He got drunk. Of course our friend was wrong—dead wrong. He had to painfully admit that and mend his spiritual fences. Though he is now a most effective member of Alcoholics Anonymous, he still smokes and drinks coffee, but neither his wife nor anyone else stands in judgment. She sees she was wrong to make a burning issue out of such a matter when his more serious ailments were being rapidly cured. We have three little mottoes which are apropos. Here they are: First Things First Live and Let Live Easy Does It." (Alcoholics Anonymous pp. 135)

As my time that I was clean and sober increased. I kept sweets, chocolate, and coffee always available for those times I needed them. I also smoked cigars. With the help of 12 step programs like AA, and CA I gave up smoking, and I curbed eating candy almost completely. I still use caffeine daily (coffee), but I don't always drink it at meetings in the evening. I work my Spiritual program daily. This is because there will be a day that my Spiritual fitness will be the only thing that keeps me from that first drink. I know this because at one time I had over 16

years sober before slipping back into the abyss of a three year binge that nearly killed me. I now have over a decade sober. My Spiritual condition comes first, because my Higher Power comes first. What does the Big Book tells us about that:

“Once more: The alcoholic at certain times has no effective mental defense against the first drink. Except in a few rare cases, neither he nor any other human being can provide such a defense. His defense must come from a Higher Power.” (Alcoholics Anonymous pp. 43)

The bottom line that my sponsor suggested to me was this: *“Keep an open mind Phil, but not so open that your brains fall out. Easy does it, and don’t try to quit everything at once,... Let go, and let God.”* (Joe L. 2007) These are only some of the tools I have in my toolbox of sobriety, and you’re welcome to all of them.

Phil K. (March, 2019)