

About that title

Even the words "stay sober"—let alone live sober—offended many of us when we first heard such advice. Although we had done a lot of drinking, many of us never felt drunk, and were sure we almost never appeared or sounded drunk. Many of us never staggered, fell, or got thick tongues; many others were never disorderly, never missed a day at work, never had automobile accidents, and certainly were never hospitalized nor jailed for drunkenness.

We knew lots of people who drank more than we did, and people who could not handle their drinks at all. We were not like that. So the suggestion that maybe we should "stay sober" was almost insulting. Besides, it seemed unnecessarily drastic. How could we live that way? Surely, there was nothing wrong with a cocktail or two at a business lunch or before dinner. Wasn't everyone entitled to relax with a few drinks, or have a couple of beers before going to bed?

However, after we learned some of the facts about the illness called alcoholism, our opinions shifted. Our eyes have been opened to the fact that apparently millions of people have the disease of alcoholism. Medical science does not explain its "cause," but medical experts on alcoholism assure us that any drinking at all leads to trouble for the alcoholic, or problem, drinker. Our experience overwhelmingly confirms this.

So not drinking at all—that is, staying sober—becomes the basis of recovery from alcoholism. And let it be emphasized: Living sober turns out to be not at all grim, boring, and uncomfortable, as we had feared, but rather something we begin to enjoy and find much more exciting than our drinking days. We'll show you how.