

Pete's Story

Hi, my name is Pete and I'm an alcoholic...

I ended up in my first AA meeting, not because I wanted to be there, but because my mum rang the AA helpline. Whilst she was doing this, I was passed out drunk on her sofa, in the next room. I ended up at my first meeting, not because I wanted to be there, but because I wanted my mum to get off my back and let me keep drinking in peace. So, I went to my first AA meeting and looked for all the reasons why I thought I didn't belong there. I sort of knew that I drank too much, but I still believed it was something that I could control, would eventually lose interest in or I would maybe grow out of.

I was so wrong!

The People at that first meeting were welcoming and friendly and told me to look for the similarities and not the differences; so, me, knowing better, I looked for all the differences. The biggest difference that I could see was that I was quite a lot younger than the other people in that meeting. In my head, the stereotype of an alcoholic was an older person, who slept on a park bench, held up his trousers with string and drank from a bottle in a brown paper bag. Being only 26 at the time, I thought I was too young to be an alcoholic, therefore I didn't need what was on offer in AA, I wasn't that bad, I thought, and I certainly wasn't powerless over alcohol. I've since learned that anyone can be an alcoholic, young or old, rich or poor, male or female, working class or aristocrat. It's an illness that doesn't discriminate, it doesn't care.

I went to a handful of meetings to appease my mum. I didn't drink for a while, but I eventually left the meetings and, inevitably, picked up that dreaded first drink. I was off again and this time the consequences were worse than before. I couldn't stop. Some of the things that I never thought would happen to me, because of drinking, started to happen. In AA we call these the 'yets'. They are the things that just haven't happened to you, yet, because of your drinking. I got into trouble with the police; I pranged a car I was driving whilst drunk; I upset a load of friends after drinking at a New Years Eve party. To this day, I don't remember anything at all about being at that party, after the first two drinks. Once I take that first drink all bets are off and I'm completely vulnerable to any and all consequences hereafter. I also know that if I were to drink again there a plenty more 'yets' still waiting for me and they'll only get worse.

Eventually the drinking brought me to my knees and I was given the gift of desperation. I could see that my drinking wasn't going to get better on it's own and I thank God today that I was given that moment of clarity. I admitted defeat one Friday morning, the 3rd of February, 2006 and I've not needed to take a drink ever since. I had been drinking for several days and was starting to withdraw from alcohol. I pleaded with my father to get me a drink, as I no longer had the strength to lie or manipulate or steal, as I always had done before to get booze. When he finally agreed to get me a drink, and it was only one drink he got me, I was finally able to see how much of a hold the addiction had over me. One drink was too many and a thousand was never enough.

I went in to a treatment centre and the centre brought me back to Alcoholics Anonymous. This time I was here for myself and admitted that I needed a power greater than myself to be in my life if I wanted to live sober and for much longer. I have never looked back and since then I've embraced my new life with AA and it's 12 step program. This is how I'm sober today. It's certainly not always been easy, but it's always been easier than the existence that passed for my life before.

My life needed to change and I needed to change. The AA fellowship and it's suggested program have helped me to do that, one day at a time. It's good news and it works if I work it! For that I am so so grateful today. Today I have a good relationship with my parents and friends. I'm able to work and keep my own flat in Nottingham, a town in which I've never taken a drink. I go to regular AA meetings and have a sponsor to help me work my program. I'm able to give back to the newcomer that which was so freely given to me.