



I CAN'T GET NO . . .

As a law student addicted to alcohol, I didn't have much of a life. But after I sought help to end my days of drinking, I finally found hope—and satisfaction.

BY ANONYMOUS

MY DECISION TO GO TO LAW SCHOOL WAS THE CULMINATION OF A LIFE MARKED PRIMARILY BY LOOKING FOR SATISFACTION IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES.

I felt disillusioned with life from an early age, so most of my energy was spent seeking satisfaction from different sources. When I was young, I found gratification in scholastic achievement. Later, I sought it in friend-

ship and community. Later still, in competition. Eventually, I settled on seeking fulfillment in romantic companionship and—as a complement to that—alcohol.

Booze and shallow relationships never really delivered what they promised, and I was probably more miserable and lonely than ever before. And unsurprisingly, a life of partying and flirtation was not particularly stable.

So after a few years—unemployed, grossly insolvent, and still disgruntled—I resolved to go to law school. I’d make a clean break with my old way of life, move across the country, and try my luck at finding satisfaction in a successful career, social respectability, and maybe even a family. I tried sobering up once or twice, though I always managed to find an excuse to start again. *I’ll get back on the wagon on Monday.*

To be clear, deciding to attend law school was not a bad choice, and I’m glad I did. But like everything else I’d tried, it did not deliver what I was hoping it would—or what I needed. I was doing pretty well for myself but continued to be discontented, and—aside from a few stints of sobriety—I kept carousing. I had gone from being a

coming out and saying it, they offered a diagnosis to my problem that would surprise no one (except me): my problem was myself.

Because these people seemed to understand the nature of my problem, I was inclined to trust the solution they offered. I wasn’t thrilled about the way I drank, and I definitely wasn’t thrilled about the way I felt, so I made a decision to put my drinking on hold while I learned more. I checked out a few different meetings with an open mind, heard a lot more that interested me, and began to take suggestions. As I did so, I started to find a little bit of the satisfaction I had been seeking.

I could give examples of how my life has improved;

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college student with a drinking problem and unhealthy relationships to a law student with a drinking problem and unhealthy relationships. I wasn’t happy.

So just before my third year, a friend suggested that I try a 12-step program. I mentioned this to another friend, who suggested the same thing (and offered to drive). So off I went, more curious than anything.

What I expected to find was a room full of old, bottomed-out alcoholics. What I found was a room half-full of bottomed-out alcoholics with some methamphetamine addicts thrown in for flavor. As I listened to them share their experiences, I heard many things that piqued my interest.

For someone who had always had a hard time relating to others, these people and their experiences were surprisingly relevant. They drank like I drank and felt like I felt—but they didn’t drink or feel that way anymore. They related experiences that were all too familiar: about trying repeatedly to quit drinking and yet always finding an excuse to start again, about how their drinking seemed to get worse and worse, about feeling lonely and disappointed from a young age, about blaming everything and everyone for not being happy, about having an intense selfish and self-centered streak. In other words, without

how my thinking has changed; how I’ve become happier, more successful, and more thankful; or how I found God (or more accurately, how God found me). All of that is true, but that’s beside the point. My goal is not to sell a particular 12-step fellowship or convince anyone that teetotaling is better than hard living.

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On one level, this is so easy it seems insulting. On a more practical level, though, this is surprisingly difficult. Humility is hard. There’s a swirl of emotions (pride, anger, fear, helplessness) that are conjured up when I think about admitting that maybe I don’t have everything all figured out and that I might need help. But sometimes I really don’t have it all figured out, and sometimes I really do need help.

So, if you’re anything like me, and you need help but don’t want to ask, or something’s wrong but you’re not really sure what, I encourage you to ask for help. Things can be different. **TBJ**