

## STEP 1 : *We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable*

Yeah....O.K....but what does that really mean? It means I can't use like other people. An addict / alcoholic is one whose body reacts differently than other people to mind-mood altering substances. You might say we have an **allergic** reaction to drugs.

But how, I asked, can I possibly be allergic to something I use in such large qualities?

If I'm allergic to diary products, and eat them, I immediately get sick to my stomach.

If I'm allergic to strawberries, and eat them – right away, I break out in hives.

If I'm allergic to ragweed or pollen, and am around them --- even for a brief period -- my eyes begin to tear, I sneeze, sniffle and itch – instantly.

When I use drugs or alcohol, I don't have any of these reactions. They don't make me sneeze, sniffle, tear-up, break-out or vomit -- so how can I be allergic to them?

Well, let's see what the dictionary says about what an "allergy" really is.

It says "*an Allergy is the body's abnormal reaction to any food, beverage or substance.*"

The intestinal problems from diary products, the hives from strawberries, the sneezing, sniffing, tearing and itching from pollen --- are all the body's abnormal reactions to those substances. *Normal* people do not react that way because they are not allergic to them. The body of the person with an allergy reacts abnormally and those are the physical manifestation of those allergies.

Well, what then, is my body's "abnormal reaction" to drugs and alcohol?

When most people have a few drinks, tokes, hits, pills, etc. they get that slightly tipsy, slightly out of control, mildly nauseous sensation, and that's enough for them. You ask them if they want more, and they'll tell you, "no thanks, I'm about to get sick" or "no thanks, I'm right where I want to be." *That's the normal reaction to the ingestion of mind-mood-altering chemicals.*

Well, I never was "where I wanted to be." I always used with the expectation of "arriving" at a certain point if I took a little more – and never ever got there. With us, it's always about more and more and more. Once we start, all we want is more. *That's our abnormal reaction to the ingestion of the drug --- **MORE!*** When we put those chemicals into our system, it triggers an *allergic*, or *abnormal* physical manifestation called the "phenomenon of craving" by Dr. William D. Silkworth in "*The Doctor's Opinion*".

Once we start, we have little or no control over how much we use. Our body just craves more and more and more.

Normal users get all they want at a certain point when they indulge. We, other the other hand, can't get enough. We immediately begin searching for more.

That's the addict's *physical* reaction. But there's another element at play here, the *mental* aspect of our disease. It's what separates this from all allergies. It's the only allergy that tells itself it doesn't have an allergy!

I've never known someone who is allergic to peanuts risk death by eating a bag of "Planters". Have you?

I've never know someone who is allergic to strawberries go on a three day strawberry eating binge and almost die. Have you?

Then why, after all the pain and suffering we've experienced because of our drug and alcohol use --- after all the evidence to the contrary, do we tell ourselves "this time I can handle it"?

Because of the *mental* obsession.

The dictionary defines *obsession* as *an idea or thought which overcomes all thoughts to the contrary*.

And thinking "this time it'll be different", "this time I can handle it", "this time I'll stop after a few", "this time I'll know when enough is enough" -- are the obsessive thoughts which overcomes all others.

So, if we have a body which ensures that we cannot use "safely" and a mind which says we can, then surely, surely the ultimate conclusion is that we have become powerless over these substances and using them has made our lives unmanageable.

The only question I need to ask myself concerning Step One is this: *Have I conceded to my innermost self that I am powerless over this problem?*

To facilitate the answering of *that* question, consider these:

- Have I been able to quit entirely on my own resources?
- Do I have any control over the amount I take after I've started?

That being the case, then Step One is merely the identification of the Problem. That I was Powerless. That I cannot, left to my own resources, solve this problem. Therefore, I must enlist the aide of a Power *greater than myself* if I am to recover.

Which brings us to Step Two.