

Acceptance — of your alcoholism. Think of the things you used to do that were related to alcohol and the need to drink. Were they normal? Does anyone but an alcoholic do these things? Know that you are an alcoholic like someone with diabetes or allergies knows his or her reality. Don't be ashamed, be aware.

Fear — use it if you get it. Don't live in fear, but use it. The same goes for horror, shame, regret, or any other negative thoughts or feelings that may come when you think about your drinking days. Don't stifle or deny these states of mind. Use them as tools to reinforce yourself, not stumbling blocks.

Watch for tools — everything can be a tool to help maintain sobriety. Train your mind to see and hear tools. Don't doublethink yourself. If it works for you, use it. If you feel it may work for you, try it. You are fighting for your life, nothing less. You are the owner of your life. You are responsible for the caretaking of your life and you have decided to find better ways to live. Other people have gone before you and put together their own "tool kits." Ask them to share.

Do it now — procrastination is an anti-tool, feeding the negative and working against self-esteem.

Credit yourself — for your attainment and maintenance of sobriety. Others may have helped, but you did it.

Enjoy life — you can be dead any time. Drinking is slow suicide. Life is a banquet. Depth, complexity, the full fabric of life is yours to experience. The blinders and mufflers are off. Think of yourself as a child occasionally. Experience wonder and intensity.

It's right — when you are sober, you feel "in your spine" that it is right. Believe your guts on this when the feeling comes.

Care about yourself — things you do for yourself tell you at a gut level that you care about yourself. You have the option to make things bad or good for yourself.

Alcohol is not a tool — everything you were able to do under alcohol's influence came from between your ears. Don't think you are less creative, a lousy dancer, etc.

Remind yourself — even when you think you have "got it," remind yourself, Never again. Keep it fresh.

Imagery — for example, be mad at alcohol. Hate it for what it has done to you and those you care about. Being free of a horrible nightmare, knowing you are sober, is far better than the relief of waking from a bad dream. You were running on empty; as your drinking progressed, you were getting closer to the end of your life.

Make concepts real — if you are having a bad day, start it over, anytime, any number of times.

Visualize — for example, drunk living is wimp living.

Expect good things — they happen when we expect them. Mind-set in a positive light gets us to perceive positive, helpful things rather than negative, destructive things.

Interrupt negative thoughts — identify them as "drinking thinking" or some such. Change them, turn them around, obliterate them.

Look at drunks — especially when they are trying to pass as sober. Listen to what they are saying. Is that a wonderful life?

Action — no matter how small it seems.

Very best wishes to those who choose sobriety and life. If you really want to get and stay sober, there are people who will help you. You will be truly surprised at the lengths to which people will go to help you when you are for real.

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The image shows the letters "SOS" in a very large, bold, black serif font. Each letter has a subtle drop shadow effect, making them appear to float slightly above the white background. The letters are centered horizontally in the upper right portion of the page.

YOUR SOBRIETY TOOL KIT

A publication of the
Secular Organizations for Sobriety
(Save Our Selves)

Welcome to SOS

Welcome to SOS. Secular Organizations for Sobriety (or Save Our Selves) is dedicated to providing a path to sobriety, an alternative to those paths depending upon supernatural or religious beliefs. We respect diversity, welcome healthy skepticism, and encourage rational thinking as well as the expression of feelings.

This brochure has been designed to provide you with tools you will find useful in maintaining your Sobriety Priority. We welcome you to attend one of our meetings, call us, or visit our Web site to gain more information.

Your Sobriety Tool Kit

Tool: A means by which something is done or obtained.

Did you ever try to fix or adjust something without the proper tool? These are some tools of sobriety. There are many more. Look into the population of alcoholics and the field of alcoholism and you will find a tool for whatever needs fixing or adjusting. If you don't find just the right tool, fashion one yourself.

No matter what — there is no valid reason on earth to drink again.

Here's sobriety — there's everything else — separate and prioritize sobriety.

Seriousness — this is nothing less than life or death.

Determination — there is no turning back, especially if it gets rough. You've gotten another chance at life. How many really have that chance? Sobriety doesn't fix everything, but it makes it possible.

Information — retrain your brain; stimulate it with things related to alcoholism: books, audiotapes, videotapes, movies, pamphlets, brochures, meetings, plays, television and radio, newspapers and magazine articles, etc.

People — human contact is powerful. Try to meet people, at least one, and be sure to meet other alcoholics. Interaction fights the old patterns of isolation.

Honesty — this is the time to get things into the open. Get rid of the shadows and dark-nesses of the past. Put light on the dark things and they lose their power. Things can be dealt with reasonably when they're seen as they truly are.

Listening — especially to people with long-term sobriety.

Take notes — anytime; but especially in early sobriety when memory can be tricky.

Meetings — be with people who want better lives and are taking actions to get what they want. Meetings are a good place to establish or reestablish social skills in a supportive environment. There is a lot to learn and feel in a meet-

ing. You are not alone. You have not done the worst or been the most; there are always those who have "bettered" you. Think about what you hear and see, but better yet is to feel what you hear and see at meetings.

Folk wisdom and slogans — don't underestimate them.

Commitments — if you make them, keep them. You show yourself and others a lot by doing so.

Personal "program" — develop your own recovery process from what you hear and see. It has to be what works for you, not anybody else.

Sharing — surprisingly therapeutic when done honestly. Free yourself from holding things in.

Phones — get plenty of phone numbers of other alcoholics and use them.

Willingness — allow yourself to change. You have nothing to lose.

Openness — Don't reject ideas without at least considering them.

Approachability — isolation can be deadly.

Ask questions — no matter how foolish you think they seem. Never be afraid to ask other alcoholics about things.

Nutrition — improve it any way you can.

Exercise — however little, even just moving around.

Help other alcoholics — you really can keep it by giving it away.

Joy — it's great to be alive and sober.

Perceptions — it's all real, not diluted or distorted. A keen, rich mind versus a drugged, limited mind.

Easily obtainable goals — success breeds more success. Reach for the moon later.

Call-up — remember, visualize, and image behaviors and incidents from your drinking days that are repellent and associated with alcohol. Replace "alcohol good" with "alcohol bad." This is especially useful when you feel seduced by alcohol or cocksure about sobriety.

Live in the present — visits to the past are okay, but don't freeze your life there.

Abstinence — the only sure way to stay sober. Any statements to the contrary is hypothesis or commentary. Don't drink, no matter what.

Avoid "slippery" places, people, and things — reinforce "alcohol bad" by avoiding the places, people, and things you associate with "alcohol good." If you can't avoid, you must be aware that they are dangerous to your sobriety and proceed with caution.

Safeguard your sobriety — don't be concerned with what others think of how you do it. Don't be embarrassed if what you do to stay sober is "un-adult," "uncool," "weak," or "stupid" in the opinion of others. You are rebuilding and recreating yourself. You want to own your own life, not be a slave to alcohol. It's your life and your sobriety. Try to avoid things like homicide and robbery as tools to keep you sober, but be as flexible as you can in using whatever it takes to safeguard your sobriety. Be aware.