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QUICK TIPS

Urges & cravings, socialising and yes means maybe



DRINK LESS LIVE LARGE!

Quick tips

Urges & cravings

Urges and cravings can come without warning. They range from a few minutes to 30 minutes and then pass. Each time you push through, the easier it gets until one day they are far and few between. There are my favourite tips.

Urge surfing

Acknowledge the urge. Pull it out into the open and ask what thought lies behind it (ie I need alcohol to give me energy to cook?) Are you tired, stressed, hungry? how do you feel? Let the urge settle. Sit with it. Know you are stronger than it. Journal these thoughts and when the urge passes, challenge/reframe the thought and plan how you might overcome it next time.

Play it forward

Pause. Recall from experience what will occur if you have one glass now. Will it lead to the whole bottle? Will the family notice? Will you fall asleep on the couch? Will you wake up feeling like crap? Is it all that you think it will be? Visualise it. Distract yourself for 30 minutes.

HALT

Are you hungry, angry, lonely, tired?

This is your choice!

Remind yourself that you are an adult and you have chosen to refrain from alcohol to be healthier and happier. This goal comes from a place of compassion and free-will. Not deprivation! This tip is so important. It ensures our autonomy is heard and stops our rebellious side from acting out.

Quick tips

Socialising

The first few social gatherings alcohol free can be daunting. The key to success is to plan ahead. Here are some tips:

Visualise:

Mentally play out each part of the event from getting ready, walking in, being asked a drink, your response - all of it. Play out the easy bits and the awkward bits. Rehearse!

Your reason for not drinking:

Have your reason pre-prepared and handy. Make it short, sharp and not open to discussion! "I'm driving", "I'm getting up early", "I am on a health kick", or "I'm taking a break".

Conversation:

Have a few starters, stories and jokes if need be. This is a good idea because you may be nervous and thinking everyone is watching you (they're not!) and having something witty to say helps relax you, distract you and get you into the mood for the gathering.

Bring your beverage:

Bring your own beverage of choice.

Exit plan:

Have your reason for leaving early ready to use if in case you are feeling anxious, tired, overwhelmed and ready to go.

Again, remember this is your choice! Self compassion and health are your goals here.

Quick tips

Yes means maybe

Be firm in your decision about refraining from alcohol for the day, the event, the gathering, the after-work drive home, cooking dinner, so on ...

If you are not firm, if you are a 'maybe', this will inevitably be 'yes'.

If you walk into a gathering unsure if you will drink or not or if you think you will have just one, odds are that you will have one or maybe 5. The same applies if you go home after a stressful day at work still contemplating if you will be alcohol-free or not. This uncertainty switches on your need to rely on willpower alone and more often than not you will not be able to hold off the pull to dull your uncomfortable feelings and stress with a drink. Willpower runs out easily when you are tired and stressed or emotionally triggered.

On the other hand, if you are resolute and firm in your decision to be alcohol free for an event or the night, reminding yourself this is your choice to be healthy, you are creating greater alignment between your conscious choice and sub-conscious beliefs and minimising the dissonance between the two. Less willpower is needed in these moments, setting you up for greater chances of succeeding the event alcohol free.

Plan ahead, visualise the event, play the moment forward, remember why you are here and how you want to wake up in the morning and how you want to feel in 1-year.

Remember if you do drink, go easy on yourself and learn from the experience.

