

Slips and Twinkles.

This Time the Twinkle is Gone

How often we see a family man show up at the doors of A.A. with his marriage in jeopardy and the possibility that he may cause his family to be broken into fragments? Experienced members in the program can identify with him as many of us have arrived here under a similar set of circumstances and found the answers to all our problems. If we were lucky, we would have restored the trust that was lost during many years of drinking. I also find it just as important to address the issue of the family members who suffered through those years of fears and tears and the collateral damage they have endured. Know that it takes what it takes and that, inside, he may still cling to the hope that he will be able to, somehow, restore his tolerance for alcohol and drink like a gentleman again. We know that denial is a common symptom of alcoholism and that only by willingness, experience and education, can we overcome it. Sometimes, after we are sober for a while, we decide to try the old game again and we have a slip (relapse) and we come back into the meetings and declare that we must start over again. This is a common occurrence, and the only thing we can do, and we set a new sobriety date. When this happens, something else often goes unnoticed.

Let's look at the one who comes in and sobers up and when he gets his 30-day token, his wife and kids come to the meeting and join in the celebration with a twinkle in their eyes. "Thank God that he finally found the answer" they say. This is repeated when he takes his 60- and 90-day tokens, and they have that same twinkle in their eyes. Life is really going well. They have their dad/husband back again. Then, somewhere down the line, He may have to take a business trip to New York and when the plane reaches its cruising altitude the thought comes to him that one drink wouldn't hurt so he orders up. Three days later he wakes up in Miami, having missed his NY business meeting, and has no idea how he got to Florida. He comes back home with his tail between his legs and begs for one more chance.

They have very little choice but to go along, so he gets sober again, and when he takes his 30-day token, they are there to support him again but this time the twinkle is gone from their eyes. He takes his 60- and 90-day tokens, but no twinkle. He begins to wonder if he will ever regain their trust. That twinkle may never come back, because he has lost more than his sobriety date. He has, without realizing, lost his credibility and has damaged their trust in him, and that may never return to the degree he had the first time he got sober, after all, they say, "We've been here before". There is nothing more important than trust in your family. If a person can learn the importance of this message and put the trust of wife and children before that first drink, he may have the chance, through willingness, experience and education, to be the person they will always Love and Respect. Without trust, we have very little. THINK, THINK, THINK before you DRINK, DRINK, DRINK.