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Disease Model for Alcoholism

Created by Labor of Love LLC.

Physical Craving

Alcoholics make up around 12% of the population. The body of the alcoholic is physically different than normal drinkers. The liver and the pancreas of the alcoholic process alcohol at one-third to one-tenth the rate of normal drinkers. Now as alcohol enters the body, it breaks down into various components, one of which is acetate. We know now that acetate triggers a craving for more acetate. In a normal drinker the acetate moves through the system quickly and exits. But that does not happen in an alcoholic, in alcoholics, the acetate of the first drink is barely processed out, so by staying in their body, it triggers a craving for more acetate. Then the alcoholic takes a second drink, now adding to most of the acetate in the first drink, and that makes them want to drink twice as much as the normal drinker and so on and so on!



Alcoholic gets stopped

What usually happens is an alcoholic is stopped by some form of intervention, either directly or indirectly. Here are different forms of those:

- Legal problems
- Marital problems
- Employment problems
- Physical problems
- Family problems
- Family intervenes directly

The alcoholic then promises to quit for good or for a specific amount of time.



Without Alcohol

As the alcoholic eliminates alcohol from their system, they begin to experience a host of feelings. The time-line that this occurs is different with everyone. Here are some of those feelings:

- | | |
|----------------|----------|
| ➤ Shame | Anger |
| ➤ Anxiety | Guilt |
| ➤ Irritability | Bored |
| ➤ Lonely | Restless |
| ➤ Discontented | Fear |



Mental Obsession

The alcoholic can only sit with those feelings for so long, before a thought process happens where they start to tell lies to themselves. They truly believe these self-deceptive thoughts. Here are some of those:

- I'll just have one after dinner.
- I haven't had a drink in a long time, maybe it will be different.
- I deserve a drink.
- No one will know.
- I can control it.
- I'm not an alcoholic.



Creates Lies to Justify Drinking

No one will know.
Just one won't hurt me.
I'm not an alcoholic.
I deserve it.
I can control it.
I'll just drink beer.

Takes a drink



Physical Craving

Get Stopped

Consequences

Commits to Stop Drinking

With out Alcohol – Experiences Feelings

Anxiety
Anger
Lonely
Restless
Shame

Fear
Bored
Irritable
Guilt
Discontented

DWI
Jail
Marital Problems
Dropped out of School

Detox
Rehab
Lost Job
\$ Problems