

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH ALCOHOL?

Written by Loree Taylor Jordan

How do you know if you have a problem with alcohol? The simple answer is if you think you have a problem with alcohol, you probably do. For the average college student who is majoring in partying, you may think you are having a good time. Sure, you missed a test last week because you couldn't get up. And you managed to fool that cop that pulled you over when you were swerving while driving. For a moment, you thought you might lose your license or your spot on the football team, but everything turned out ok.

This time, anyway.

Alcoholism is like a time bomb that is going to go off exactly when it's supposed to. The question is not if, it's when.

When you think of an alcoholic, you probably think of a homeless man sitting on a park bench with a bottle tucked in a paper bag. You think of celebrities that are publicly humiliated with multiple drunk driving arrests and a blatant inability to get their lives together. You're not that bad, are you?

On the other hand, in the back of your mind, you may be saying to yourself that there is something different about the way you drink compared to other people.

That little voice is your first hint.

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) has identified four symptoms of alcoholism:

- Craving: a strong need or urge to drink
- Loss of control: An inability to stop drinking once you start
- Physical symptoms: If you suddenly try to stop drinking, you experience dramatic symptoms such as shaking, nausea or extreme anxiety
- Tolerance: More and more alcohol is needed to get the same result

Problems with alcohol run rampant on college campuses. Close to half of America's 54 million college students admit to binge drinking or abusing drugs at least once a month. For most students, alcohol remains their substance of choice.

If you think you have a problem with alcohol, you are not alone. The NIAAA's task force reports the following statistics:

- 1,700 college students between the ages of 18 and 24 die each year from alcohol-related injuries
- Over 599,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are injured under the influence of alcohol
- More than 696,000 students are assaulted by other students who are under the influence of alcohol
- More than 97,000 students are victims of date rape or sexual assault at the hands of peers that are under the influence of alcohol.

Not only is alcohol frequently responsible for accidents and acts of violence, alcohol dependence often results in severe clinical depression. The National Mental Health Association reports that one in three depressed people suffer some form of substance abuse or dependence.

Alcoholism is known as the only disease that tries to make you think you don't have it. The urge to drink in spite of negative consequences is a signpost that you may have a problem with alcohol. Some other questions you can ask yourself are:

- Have you been criticized by others because of your drinking?
- Have you ever worried that you drink too much, but sense that you may have lost the power of choice?
- Have you done things you are ashamed of under the influence of alcohol that you would not have done if you had not been drinking?
- Have you ever needed to have a drink in the morning to stop shaking?
- Have you ever tried to quit drinking and found out that you were compelled to continue?

These are some of the ways you can tell that you might have a problem with alcohol. Recognizing you have a problem is the first step toward seeking a solution.

For more information, visit Alcoholics Anonymous at <http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org/?Media=PlayFlash>

About Loree Taylor Jordan



A recovering food addict herself, Loree's mission is clear: to help others recognize, understand and heal from unhealthy addictions as she has in her own life. Loree, was personally sought out by famed self-help guru Tony Robbins to be a guest speaker at his international Life Mastery Program.

She is the author of several books and her new book is entitled *I Never Thought Addiction Could Happen to Me-The 3 Secret Addictions that are Shattering the Lives of College Students-and What to Do About It!*