

# What is the First Thing?

To the newcomer who wonders what is the first thing he or she must do to achieve sobriety, we say that you have already done the first thing: you have admitted to yourself, and now to others, that you need help by the very act of coming to a meeting or seeking information about the C.A. program. You are also, at this very moment, doing the next thing to stay straight: you are not taking the next hit. Ours is a one-day-at-a-time program. We suggest that you should not dwell on wanting to stay sober for the rest of your life, or for a year, or even for a week. Once you have decided you want to quit, let tomorrow take care of itself. Just for today, you don't have to use. But sometimes it is too much for us to project even one whole day drug-free. That's okay. Just for the next ten minutes, you don't have to use. It's okay to want it, but you don't have to use it, just for ten minutes. After ten minutes, see where you are. You can repeat this simple process as often as necessary, using whatever span of time feels comfortable. Just for today, you don't have to use!

In the C.A. Fellowship, you are among recovering cocaine abusers who are living without drugs. Make use of us! Take phone numbers. Between meetings, you may not be able to avoid contact with drugs and druggies. Some of us had no sober friends at all when we first came in. You have sober friends now! When you begin to feel squirrely, don't wait. Give one of us a call; and don't be surprised if one of us calls you when we need help!

It may surprise you that we discourage the use of any mind-altering substances, including alcohol and marijuana. It is the common experience of addicts in this and other programs that any drug use leads to relapse or substitute addiction. If you're addicted to another substance, you'd better take care of it. If you're not, then you don't need it, so why mess with it? We urge you to heed this sound advice drawn from the bitter experience of other addicts. Is it likely you're different?

We thought we were happiest with our cocaine, but we were not. In C.A., we learn to live a new way of life. We say that it is a spiritual but not a religious program-our spiritual values are accessible to the atheist as well as to the devout theist.

We who are grateful recovering cocaine addicts ask you to listen closely to our stories. That is the main thing-listen! We know where you're coming from, because we've been there ourselves. Yet we are now living drug-free, and not only that, but living happily; many of us, happier than we have ever been before. Few of us would trade all our years of addiction for the last six months or year of living the C.A. program of sobriety.

No one says that it is easy to arrest addiction. We had to give up old ways of thinking and behaving. We had to be willing to change. But we are doing it, gratefully, one day at a time.