

# **SEEDS OF SOBRIETY**

**Practical Daily Readings  
for Alcoholics and Addicts**

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**SEEDS OF SOBRIETY: PRACTICAL DAILY READINGS  
FOR ALCOHOLICS AND ADDICTS.**

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See what folks are saying about *Seeds of Sobriety*:

“For every alcoholic/addict uneasy with religious programs, *Seeds of Sobriety* is must reading.”

—Jim Christopher, Founder and Executive Director, SOS International (Secular Organizations for Sobriety/Save Our Selves), Hollywood, California

“*Seeds of Sobriety* is jam-packed with powerful tools for staying sober.”

—Barry Solof, M.D., Fellow, American Society of Addiction Medicine, Regional Chief of Addiction Medicine, Kaiser Permanente, Los Angeles, California

As desirable as any of these might be in themselves, you needn't work any  $x$ -step program, believe in a higher power, or achieve and maintain an attitude of serenity to stay sober. The main emphasis of *Seeds of Sobriety* is on the alcoholic's/addict's need to acknowledge their illness and prioritize their sobriety each day. *Seeds of Sobriety* also gives helpful hints on coping with different issues without drinking or using.

**LIZ PURCELL** is a freelance writer and long-time sober alcoholic. She is also a long-time member of Secular Organizations for Sobriety. Many of the views expressed here are her own and not necessarily those of SOS founder Jim Christopher or of SOS as a whole.

## **NOTE TO READERS**

This publication is not intended as medical advice. Its intention is solely informational and educational. Untreated alcohol or drug withdrawal can sometimes cause death. If you are going through bad withdrawal signs like hallucinations or convulsions, have any other serious medical problem, or are suicidal, you are urged to seek professional help at once. The author and publisher specifically disclaim all responsibility for any liability, loss or risk, personal or otherwise, which is incurred as a result, directly or indirectly, of the use and application of any of the contents of this book.

While the author has made every effort to provide accurate telephone numbers, fax numbers and addresses at the time of publication, neither the publisher nor the author assumes any responsibility for errors, or for changes that occur after publication.

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## INTRODUCTION

Hi! My name is Liz and I'm an alcoholic. I binge drank for ten years, from age thirteen to age twenty-three. Once I began drinking, I could seldom stop. I had blackouts, hangovers, the shakes, etc.

At age twenty-three, I found AA. After a few relapses, I stayed sober continuously in AA for many years.

I was not raised very religiously, and what religious training I did have in my childhood was not Christian. So while I liked many things about AA, and while it was helping me stay sober, I always had trouble with the prayers and the steps. I also always felt, no matter how friendly some AA members were, like I never fully belonged.

In 1992, I heard about SOS (Secular Organizations for Sobriety, also known as Save Our Selves) and started going to two meetings a week. I also read founder Jim Christopher's book *How to Stay Sober: Recovery without Religion*. His concept of prioritizing one's sobriety each day, and not drinking or using no matter what, really clicked for me. In 1995 I stopped going to AA altogether and have stayed sober since.

This book's main emphasis is on the sobriety priority. I wrote it especially for the alcoholic/addict who either is nonreligious or wants to keep their recovery from chemical dependence separate from religion. At the same time, it has, I feel, many practical tools to offer alcoholics/addicts in spiritually based programs, including twelve-step ones. I thus invite each reader of

this book to take from it what s/he can use and leave the rest.

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January 1

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## SOBRIETY PRIORITY

Like most good ideas, the sobriety priority's a simple concept. Looking back over my record, I've come to accept the fact that once I start drinking or using, I usually can't stop till I pass out, run out of booze or drugs, throw up, or get locked up. Thus, for me, abstinence is vital. It is, and must always stay, my top priority, above all else.

I might want to improve other parts of my life too. Staying sober gives me a chance, though no promise, of being able to do so. But no matter what I'm currently thinking, feeling or experiencing, drinking or using would just make things worse.

I'm committed to staying sober for the rest of my life. I keep that commitment one day at a time. Each day I remind myself I'm an alcoholic. Each day I make a resolution not to drink or use no matter what.

\* \* \*

Suggestion: Each day when you first get up, write in a notebook, or tell yourself as you look in a mirror, the following (see below):

*My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am an \_\_\_\_\_.  
I do not drink or use no matter what. I prioritize my  
sobriety above all else.*

January 2

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## TRUST

Sometimes when we're betrayed, we lose trust not just in others, but also in our own judgment of character. Often the problem goes back to not having trusted our judgment enough in the first place. We act surprised when the final betrayal occurs, yet if we look back, we often see there were earlier signs of the other's falseness we ignored at the time.

In sobriety, we learn to pay attention not just to what someone says, but also to their body language, facial expression, and tone of voice while they're saying it. We should also demand some consistency between what someone says and what s/he does. Finally, while we all have our moods, we should be able to expect some consistency in another's behavior from one day to the next.

*My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am an \_\_\_\_\_.  
I do not drink or use no matter what. I prioritize my  
sobriety above all else.*

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PRIORITIES

For the recovering alcoholic/addict, sobriety must stay the top priority at all times. For as Jim Christopher says in *How to Stay Sober*: “Then and only then comes everything else: lover, family, friends, jobs, goals.”

It’s easy to forget our priorities as we get caught up in all the demands and distractions of daily life. Thus, whenever we sense we’re getting off track or are feeling overwhelmed, we might ask ourselves, “What’s *really* important?”

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*My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am an \_\_\_\_\_.  
I do not drink or use no matter what. I prioritize my  
sobriety above all else.*

January 4

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## VULNERABILITY

We alcoholics/addicts are sensitive people. Thus, we might fear to tell someone when she's hurt us. For to do so would make us seem vulnerable and thus apt to get hurt more. Yet ironically, sometimes we must risk showing we're hurt to make the hurting stop.

For one thing, it's possible the other person is truly unaware she's hurt us. On the other hand, if she already knows what she said or did was wrong, our silence may be seen as consent. In either case, our not speaking up ensures the bad behavior will go on.

In not expressing our anger or hurt, we might tell ourselves it's 'cuz we don't want to hurt the other's feelings. But sometimes what we are in fact protecting is ourselves—from learning if we tell her how we feel, she'll get mad and leave us or not care.

*My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am an \_\_\_\_\_.  
I do not drink or use no matter what. I prioritize my  
sobriety above all else.*

The sober alcoholic/addict who says, “If \_\_\_\_\_, I’ll drink or use again” is just looking for an advance reason to do so. In fact, she might create, either purposely or unconsciously, the very event she allegedly fears would make her slip. For instance, if she thinks getting fired would drive her to drink or use, she might often goof off at work.

But even if one feared disaster doesn’t happen, sooner or later, one as bad or worse will. Thus, when an alcoholic/addict plays “If \_\_\_\_\_, I’ll drink/use” games, it’s not a question of *if* she’ll drink/use again, but when.

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*My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am an \_\_\_\_\_.  
I do not drink or use no matter what. I prioritize my  
sobriety above all else.*