

# My Life Was in a Tailspin and I Couldn't Stop, Until...

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Hi, my name is Rich and I am an alcoholic.

My drinking days started in high school and continued into college. Those times seemed fun but even then, I didn't know my limits and would typically drink until I blacked out. This seemed normal at the time because all my friends were doing the same.

After college, the drinking continued but instead of beer, I was now drinking the hard stuff. My kids came along and I couldn't even attend a function without a few nips from the bottle. Alcohol was no longer something I just did at parties; it had become a coping mechanism.

I hid my drinking from my family—or at least thought I did. I can't tell you how many of my kids' events I missed because I was too drunk to attend or enjoy it. I can't tell you how many times I embarrassed myself in front of my family and others.

I didn't realize how bad off I was, and I didn't really care—I just needed alcohol to get through the day. I used to drink in the morning, when I worked the night shift, just to put myself to sleep. My drinking had become the most important thing to me, and it was the only way I could cope. My life was in a tailspin and I couldn't stop.

This continued on for several years. One day, my wife and I dropped our youngest son at college for his freshman year. We were now empty nesters. But the following weekend, my wife of thirty years shocked me by saying she had a date that night. In that moment, my whole world fell apart.

Everything that I had worked so hard for was now a real mess—I was a devastated mess. I turned to the only coping mechanism I knew: drinking. I called in sick and drank for what seemed like days.

Fortunately, one of my closest friends saw how incapacitated I was and stepped in to help. We talked about getting into treatment and he put me in touch with one of our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) counselors who was able to get me into The Beacon House the next day. I was there for 29 days and have been sober since September 2017.

I lost nearly everything, and my marriage ended in divorce. But I have done a lot of work since, and this is the happiest I have been in more than ten years. I didn't realize how unhappy I was in my marriage, and I was using alcohol as a tool to just get by.

We only have one shot at this life. I spent the first half of my life drinking and I've decided to live the second half alcohol-free. Life now is very different, but awesome!

I have made it my mission and purpose to assist others who are having the same problem I had years ago. I feel the need to pay forward the help I received. Being sober has changed my life in so many ways, but for the first time in many years, I am truly happy. Thanks to the support of my friends in getting into treatment and the work I've done towards my recovery, my relationship

with my kids is great now. I've made choices in my recovery that have made my life beautiful and successful. For that, I am so grateful.

*-Rich*