

**Ask Dr. Steve...
How Can I Stay
Clean and Sober?**


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Although the author and publisher have made every effort to ensure the accuracy and completeness of information contained in this book, we assume no responsibility for errors, inaccuracies, omissions, or any inconsistency herein. Any slights of people, places, or organizations are unintentional.

For years I have been the collector of a wide variety of quotations. Too often, however, I carelessly neglected to note sources. In preparing this book I have spent countless hours attempting, unsuccessfully, to locate the origins of some of the quotations cited. If you know the sources please contact me at the numbers listed in this book. My apologies to the authors, and to the readers for the absence of credit.

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About the Author

Dr. Frisch is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Chicago, Illinois and Northfield, Illinois. He is a graduate of the Adler School of Professional Psychology where he received his doctorate in clinical psychology. He received his masters degree from National-Louis University where he specialized in addictions counseling. His undergraduate degree was awarded to him by the University of Cincinnati, where he graduated with honors.

Dr. Frisch received post-doctoral training in two specialties at the Adler School of Professional Psychology. He completed a certificate training program in clinical hypnosis at the Center For The Advanced Study Of Clinical Hypnosis. He also completed a certificate training program in Marriage and Family Counseling. He is licensed by the state of Illinois as a clinical psychologist. He was certified in Illinois by IAODAPCA as a certified drug and alcohol counselor in 1988.

Dr. Frisch's first book, *The Comparative Effectiveness of Group Therapy Versus Individual Therapy As Measured By Self-Concept, Interpersonal Orientation, and Degree of Emotional Adjustment* was an empirical investigation of the treatment modalities he utilizes in his private practice. This book was based on a study he conducted to demonstrate the effectiveness of his treatment protocols.

His treatment philosophy has grown out of his diverse clinical background in which he has worked with a variety of different clinical populations. From these diverse experiences, Dr. Frisch has assimilated a variety of assessment and treatment interventions into his integrated treatment philosophy.

Dr. Frisch has worked on the staff of both inpatient and outpatient chemical dependency programs. This experience provided the foundation for his work with the issues that arise from the impact of chemical dependency

on the individual, the family, and the workplace.

As a result of his work in the field of chemical dependency, Dr. Frisch founded the Adult Children Institute. This treatment clinic specialized in working with adults who were raised in families emotionally organized around the influences of drugs and alcohol, sexual and physical abuse, and emotional neglect.

The Adult Children Institute developed treatment interventions that enabled the program's participants to develop effective ways to heal from the aftereffects of trauma experienced in their earlier development. These aftereffects included substance abuse, depression, anxiety, low self esteem, shame, and relationship issues such as fear of emotional intimacy and commitment.

Dr. Frisch co-developed and was the coordinator of a mental health program for homeless adults who required treatment for substance abuse and emotional disorders. He developed an individualized assessment and treatment protocol that provided the impetus and support for each individual to rebuild their lives within their local communities.

The Pathfinders programs represent the integration of Dr. Frisch's ongoing research and work in the area of human growth and potential development. Program participants develop the necessary awareness and skills to create an empowered life that maximizes their full potential for both their interpersonal and professional lives.

Whether by individual consultation, group experiences, workshops, or seminars, Dr. Frisch engages his audiences with a mixture of common sense and sound psychological principles of change that awakens and inspires his audiences to the possibility of what their lives can potentially become. He consults with individuals, couples, groups, and organizations that are seeking to implement the principles of development, change, and growth in their lives.

A Message From Dr. Steve...

Hi. My name is Dr. Steve. I am a clinical psychologist in private practice in Chicago, Illinois and Northfield, Illinois. *Ask Dr. Steve... How Can I Stay Clean and Sober* is the fifth of fourteen books in my series about chemical dependency and alcohol and other drugs prevention. In this series you'll learn how to:

- Stop abusing alcohol and other drugs
- Stay abstinent from alcohol and other drugs
- [Re]construct a Recovery-based lifestyle
- Cope with a loved one who abuses or is dependent on alcohol and other drugs
- Recover from the effects of living with the problem drinking and drugging of a friend or family member
- Repair those relationships damaged by chemical dependency
- Heal those emotional and spiritual wounds caused by chemical dependency
- Enrich your spiritual development
- Raise your children to be alcohol and other drugs free

The books in this series are continually updated with new exercises, new information, and specific answers to your questions at my website, www.AliveAndWellNews.com. This service is available to you free of charge. Simply go to my website, www.AliveAndWellNews.com. Find the link, Dr. Steve's Workbooks, and click it on. There you'll find additional continually updated exercises designed to help you stay clean and sober, enrich your Recovery, and deepen your emotional and spiritual

development. Be sure to explore the other links at www.AliveAndWellNews.com for more information about chemical dependency, Recovery, personal improvement, relationship enrichment, communication skills, relationship skills, parenting skills, and emotional and spiritual development.

For information about the other books in this series go to www.AliveAndWellNews.com. Find the link, Book Release Info, and click it on. There you will find information about the following books.

- *Ask Dr. Steve ... How Can I Tell If I Have a Problem With Alcohol and Other Drugs?*
- *Ask Dr. Steve... What Do I Need To Know About Chemical Dependency?*
- *Ask Dr. Steve... How Can I Stop Abusing Alcohol and Other Drugs?*
- *Ask Dr. Steve... How Can I Stay Clean and Sober?*
- *Ask Dr. Steve... How Can I Cope With a Loved One Who Abuses Alcohol and Other Drugs?*
- *Ask Dr. Steve... How Can I Heal Those Relationships Harmed By Chemical Dependency?*
- *Ask Dr. Steve... How Can I Build a Great Relationship With My Children?*
- *Ask Dr. Steve... How Can I Raise My Children To Not Use Alcohol and Other Drugs?*
- *Ask Dr. Steve... What Should I Do If My Teen Is Using Alcohol and Other Drugs?*

G.B.U.

Steve

*D*edication

Sophia:
You're a miracle, a gift,
a treasure, a blessing,
the essence of love and joy
all rolled into one.

I love you!

Countdown to Relapse

10 Alcoholics, all in a line. One got to thinking—
Then there were Nine.

9 Alcoholics, one said, "Wait! A near beer can't
hurt!"—Then there were eight.

8 Alcoholics, lookin' up to heaven. One cut out
meetings—Then there were seven.

7 Alcoholics, doing service for kicks. One started
grumbling—Then there were six.

6 Alcoholics, glad to be alive. 'Til one smoked pot—
Then there were five.

5 Alcoholics, greeters at the door. One played the Big
Shot—Then there were four.

4 Alcoholics, for fun and for free. One's case was "dif-
ferent"—Then there were three.

3 Alcoholics, knowing what to do. One rewrote the
Big Book—Then there were two.

2 Alcoholics, having some fun. One started lying—
Then there was one.

1 Alcoholic, talking to HP. "If only one is sober—
I'm glad that it's me!"

- Author Unknown

Introduction



*If you do not change direction,
you may end up where you are heading.*

-Lao Tse

Hi. My name is Dr. Steve. I am a clinical psychologist in private practice in Chicago, Illinois. Once a client of mine makes the decision to stop consuming alcohol and other drugs, there's only one question that they have on their mind—how can I stay clean and sober? The methods used to stay clean and sober that I'll discuss with you in *Ask Dr. Steve... How Can I Stay Clean and Sober* are the methods that I've taught my clients over the last three decades. These methods are traditional tried and true methods for maintaining abstinence used successfully by millions of people just like you. By reading this book, you'll learn how you can stay clean and sober by learning how to:

- [Re]construct and preserve a Recovery-based lifestyle in order to minimize or prevent altogether the activation of the process of relapse
- Master the application of Recovery-based coping mechanisms used to minimize or prevent altogether the activation of the process of relapse
- Minimize the onset of stressors that have the potential to activate the process of relapse
- Develop a relapse prevention plan in which you use Recovery-based coping mechanisms to minimize the onset of potential stressors, eliminate the presence of those stressors that have been activated, and alleviate the emotional, physical, and/or spiritual pain stimulated by the presence of an activated stressor.

Ask Dr. Steve... How Can I Stay Clean and Sober is a resource for relapse prevention that you'll consult time and time again over the first three years of your continuous abstinence. To most fully benefit from this book, read

it in tiny little chunks. Keep in mind that the point of reading this book should not be to learn the material in this book but to *learn how to live* the material that's in this book.

More than just a resource book, *Ask Dr. Steve... How Can I Stay Clean and Sober* is an interactive workbook loaded with checklists, techniques, daily exercises, and questions that stimulate self-examination—all with the singular goal of helping you stay clean and sober. Though you can do the work in this book by yourself, you'll find it most helpful to use this book with members of your Recovery-based support system. My clients not only use this book as part of their individual and experiential group therapy that they do with me but they use it to complement the work that they do with their sponsor and other members of their Recovery-based support system.

Ask Dr. Steve... How Can I Stay Clean and Sober is divided into 4 parts. Part 1 is a discussion of the answer to these four questions:

- 1) What is a Recovery-based lifestyle?
- 2) What role does a Recovery-based lifestyle play in staying clean and sober?
- 3) What are the four building blocks that make up a Recovery-based lifestyle?
- 4) How can I [re]construct a Recovery-based lifestyle?

In chapter 1, we'll examine what a Recovery-based lifestyle is and the thirteen elements that make up a Recovery-based lifestyle.

Chapters 2 through 8 focus on the four building blocks of a Recovery-based lifestyle and how to construct a Recovery-based lifestyle. Those four building blocks are:

Pathfinder's Checklist

Building blocks of a Recovery-based lifestyle

- 1) Physical well-being
- 2) Psychological well-being
- 3) Social well-being
- 4) Spiritual well-being

In chapter 2, we'll examine the first building block of a Recovery-based lifestyle—physical well-being. In this chapter, I'll discuss with you the importance of maintaining your physical well-being and the steps by which to do so. We'll examine in detail five elements that you must actively manage. Those five elements are:

Pathfinder's Checklist

Five elements of the physical well-being building block of a Recovery-based lifestyle.

- 1) Abstinence from ALL alcohol and other drugs
- 2) Abstinence from ALL compulsive behaviors
- 3) Self-care
- 4) Stress Management
- 5) Prevention and/or elimination of the onset of Post Acute Withdrawal (PAW) symptoms

The focus of chapters 3 through 6 is the second building block of a Recovery-based lifestyle—psychological well-being. We'll examine in detail four elements of this building block. Those four elements are:

Pathfinder's Checklist

Four elements of the psychological well-being building block of a Recovery-based lifestyle.

- 1) Recovery-based belief system
- 2) Recovery-based thinking
- 3) Recovery-based behavior
- 4) Recovery-based emotional well-being

We'll examine the first element of your psychological well-being, Recovery-based belief system in chapter 3. The second element of your psychological well-being, Recovery-based thinking, will be discussed in chapter 4. The third element of your psychological well-being, Recovery-based behavior, will be discussed in chapter 5. The fourth element of your psychological well-being, Recovery-based emotional well-being, will be discussed in chapter 6.

In chapter 7, we'll examine the third building block of a Recovery-based lifestyle—social well-being. In this chapter, I'll discuss with you the four elements of this building block:

Pathfinder's Checklist

Four elements of the social well-being building block of a Recovery-based lifestyle.

- 1) Recovery-based environments
- 2) Recovery-based support system
- 3) Recovery-based relationships
- 4) Recovery-based daily routines and rituals

Chapter 8 is a discussion of the fourth building block of your Recovery-based lifestyle—spiritual well-being. There are three elements of your spiritual well-being that we'll examine in this chapter. Those elements are:

Pathfinder's Checklist

Three elements of the spiritual well-being building block of a Recovery-based lifestyle.

- 1) [Re]connection with your Higher Power
- 2) An active daily spiritual practice
- 3) Active working of a Twelve Step program

Part 2 of *Ask Dr. Steve... How Can I Stay Clean and Sober* is an examination of two types of coping mechanisms. Coping mechanisms are the tools that you use to cope with those personal stressors that have the potential to activate the process of relapse. Coping with your personal stressors in a way that minimizes their onset or eliminates their presence once they've been activated is critical to staying clean and sober. Those stressors that remain active pose a danger to your abstinence because they perpetuate emotional, physical, and spiritual duress, which eventually activates the process of relapse.

The first type of coping mechanism that we'll examine is Recovery-based coping mechanisms. Recovery-based coping mechanisms are those tools you'll use to minimize the onset or eliminate the presence of those stressors that have been activated. The second type of coping mechanism that we'll examine is self-sabotaging coping mechanisms. Self-sabotaging coping mechanisms tend to stimulate stressors and perpetuate their presence

in your life. The perpetual presence of emotional, physical, and/or spiritual pain is what activates the process of relapse. In chapter 9, we'll examine eleven specific Recovery-based coping mechanisms that you'll need to begin to apply to the daily circumstances of your life. In chapter 10, we'll examine eleven specific self-sabotaging coping mechanisms that you'll need to let go of.

Part 3 of *Ask Dr. Steve... How Can I Stay Clean and Sober* is a discussion of those stressors that may activate the process of relapse. I'll use the same categories in part three to discuss stressors as I did in part one to discuss the building blocks of a Recovery-based lifestyle—physical, psychological, social, and spiritual.

In chapter 11, I'll discuss with you six stressors that may have an adverse affect on your physical well-being. Those six stressors are:

Pathfinder's Checklist

Stressors that may adversely affect your physical well-being.

- 1) Consumption of ANY alcohol and other drugs
- 2) Participation in ANY compulsive behavior
- 3) Negligence of pre-existing and co-existing physical and emotional disorders
- 4) Negligence of self-care of your physical-being
- 5) Exposure to circumstances, events, and/or people that have an adverse affect on your physical well-being
- 6) Negligent management of PAW symptoms

In chapters 12 through 15 we'll examine four psychological stressors that may have an adverse affect on

your psychological well-being. Those four stressors are:

Pathfinder's Checklist

Stressors that may adversely affect your psychological well-being.

- 1) Beliefs that may activate the process of relapse
- 2) Styles of thinking that may activate the process of relapse
- 3) Behaviors that may activate the process of relapse
- 4) Awakening feelings that may activate the process of relapse

In chapter 12, I'll discuss with you aspects of your belief system that may activate the process of relapse. In chapter 13, I'll discuss with you styles of thinking that may adversely affect your Recovery. In chapter 14, I'll discuss with you specific examples of self-sabotaging behaviors that may activate the process of relapse. In chapter 15, I'll discuss with you awakening feelings that pose a threat to your abstinence if you don't work them through.

In chapter 16, we'll examine five stressors that may have an adverse affect on your social well-being. Those five stressors are:

Pathfinder's Checklist

Stressors that may adversely affect your social well-being.

- 1) Neglecting the upkeep of your living space
- 2) Unmanageable circumstances of your life
- 3) Unstructured day-to-day living routine

- 4) Toxic relationships
- 5) Isolation

Chapter 17 is the final chapter of part three. This chapter is an examination of three stressors that may have an adverse affect on your spiritual well-being. Those three stressors are:

Pathfinder's Checklist

Stressors that may adversely affect your spiritual well-being.

- 1) Powerlessness
- 2) Hopelessness
- 3) Pride

Part 4 of *Ask Dr. Steve... How Can I Stay Clean and Sober* discusses the process of relapse and how to develop a relapse prevention plan. The purpose of a relapse prevention plan is to:

- 1) Remain abstinent from ALL alcohol and other drugs.
- 2) Protect and preserve your Recovery-based lifestyle.
- 3) Cope with abstinence-related stressors.
- 4) Minimize the onset of those stressors activated by the act of living life.
- 5) Eliminate those stressors that have been activated.
- 6) Alleviate the pain that has been stimulated by an activated stressor.

In chapter 18 we'll examine in detail what the process of relapse is. I'll first list for you the signs and symptoms that indicate that the process of relapse may be activated.

I'll discuss with you what impact Recovery-based coping mechanisms have on a stressor and what impact self-sabotaging coping mechanisms have on a stressor. After that discussion I'll describe for you what the signs of the process of relapse are once the process has been activated.

In chapter 19 we'll examine how to make a relapse prevention plan. I'll first discuss with you the three stages of relapse prevention planning. We'll end our discussion with an exercise in which both you and I make a relapse prevention plan.

In chapter 20, I'll discuss with you the specific steps that you should take if you do relapse. This chapter is important for you to read. Not because you're doomed to relapse but because you need to know what to do if you do relapse.

In chapter 21, I'll discuss with you how to give yourself the best chance to stay clean and sober. I'll discuss with you the very same recommendations that I make in my office everyday to people just like you.

Don't rush yourself through this book. Take it slow and take it easy. You can't possibly do more than what you can do in the next hour. Certainly, don't rush yourself through the early stages of your sobriety. If you find just one new idea from reading this book that enables you to stay clean and sober one more day, then you can consider that a job well done. If you find one new way to cope with a particularly challenging person or circumstance in your life from reading this book then you'll have wisely spent your time. If, in having read this book, you find a kinder way to think about yourself, a more compassionate way to relate to the people in your life, or if you rekindle a love affair with your Higher Power, well

then, my friend, you'll have hit a grand slam! I wish you well!