

What is 'the 24-hour program'?

"The 24-hour program" is a phrase used to describe a basic A.A. approach to the problem of staying sober. A.A.s never swear off alcohol for life, never take pledges committing themselves not to take a drink "tomorrow." By the time they turned to A.A. for help, they had discovered that, no matter how sincere they may have been in promising themselves to abstain from alcohol "in the future," somehow they forgot the pledge and got drunk. The compulsion to drink proved more powerful than the best intentions not to drink. The A.A. member recognizes that the biggest problem is to stay sober now! The current 24 hours is the only period the A.A. can do anything about as far as drinking is concerned. Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow never comes. "But today," the A.A. says, "today, I will not take a drink. I may be tempted to take a drink tomorrow — and perhaps I will. But tomorrow is something to worry about when it comes. My big problem is not to take a drink during this 24 hours. Along with the 24-hour program, A.A. emphasizes the importance of three slogans that have probably been heard many times by the newcomer before joining A.A. These slogans are: "Easy Does It," "Live and Let Live," and "First Things First." By making these slogans a basic part of the attitude toward problems of daily living, the average A.A. is usually helped substantially in the attempt to live successfully without alcohol.