

*Can an alcoholic ever drink 'normally' again?*

So far as can be determined, no one who has become an alcoholic has ever ceased to be an alcoholic. The mere fact of abstaining from alcohol for months or even years has never qualified an alcoholic to drink "normally" or socially. Once the individual has crossed the borderline from heavy drinking to irresponsible alcoholic drinking, there seems to be no retreat. Few alcoholics deliberately try to drink themselves into trouble, but trouble seems to be the inevitable consequence of an alcoholic's drinking. After quitting for a period, the alcoholic may feel it is safe to try a few beers or a few glasses of light wine. This can mislead the person into drinking only with meals. But it is not too long before the alcoholic is back in the old pattern of too-heavy drinking — in spite of all efforts to set limits for only moderate, social drinking. The answer, based on A.A. experience, is that if you are an alcoholic, you will never be able to control your drinking for any length of time. That leaves two paths open: to let your drinking become worse and worse with all the damaging results that follow, or to quit completely and to develop a new pattern of sober, constructive living.