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Before and After

By Larry N.

Before

My story is fairly typical. I am the second of two sons of a loving mother and father. Born and raised in a small town in east Alabama. I come from a family of lawyers. My grandfather, father and uncle were all attorneys. My dad never pressured me or even discussed with me about going to law school, but I could tell he was very pleased when I made that decision.

My childhood was, as they say in the medical profession, unremarkable. My family was, to all

appearances, the American prototype: middle class, married parents, two kids, dog, wood-paneled station wagon and everything else that attended the post-war American “dream.”

There were a couple of exceptions to the “typical” description. One was obvious to all who knew my family; the other, a quiet (at the time, anyway) family secret.

The more obvious of the two atypical aspects of my family life was that my brother was “the star.” A lot of families have this dynamic. One of the children will

be exceptional and garner all the attention in some facet or aspect of family life—the star quarterback, the beauty queen, the musical prodigy, even the “bad boy” delinquent. In my family it was my brother. He was an academic prodigy. This manifested itself early in his education and my parents knew from the start that the Ivy League was where his post-high school years would be spent. He did, in fact, end up at one of the most exclusive colleges in the northeast.

Don’t get me wrong. I love my brother dearly and we were and still are extremely close, but growing up and all through school it was always, “If you are as smart as Albert, you’ll be OK.” “Albert would have made an A on that test.” As a lot of younger brothers can attest, it can be incredibly frustrating and harmful to your self-esteem to be continually and mistakenly referred to by your brother’s name. I was called Albert so often I just started answering.

Though my parents loved me, during my early childhood I was just sort of “there.” My dad was busy working his way to success as a young attorney and my mom was going through all the small-town motions—bridge club, garden club, PTA, etc. I was certainly never abused or neglected; I was just in the shadows.

The family secret (even to me until I was much older) was that my mother was an alcoholic. In her later years, it became tragically obvious and she ended up dying from the disease, but as a youngster, I had no idea. My parents were social drinkers, but I never saw them intoxicated. Alcohol is a progressive disease and in

my younger years, the disease had not yet assumed full control of my mom.

As I grew up, always in the shadow of my older brother, I never found my identity. Only two years behind him in school I was always in his wake, always being compared. Because the quality of the schools in my hometown were subpar, my parents knew that a more rigorous academic environment would be required if my brother was going to get into Princeton or Yale. So off he went to a very prestigious boarding school. Again, he excelled. And, when the time came, I followed up the east coast to be a “preppie.” It was the same Play, Act II—always measured by the standards, academic and personality-wise, as my brother.

Quite honestly, although we are very emotionally close, my brother and I have very different personalities, but I was always “prejudged” as being like him. I look back on my high school experience and think how different it would have been if I had gone to another high school. Nonetheless, I had an enjoyable prep school experience and had a small group of close friends, but again, I was “middle of the pack.” Unremarkable. Not outstanding in any area, but not the “last one picked on the playground,” either.

Not having Ivy League stats myself, and being tired of being so far from my beloved South, I opted for a big, Southern, SEC “party school.” My high school was all-male (though not military) and I was ready to see some skirts and pretty faces. Any big SEC school will meet (and exceed) those ex-

pectations, and my alma mater was no exception. Pretty girls were *everywhere*, and in abundant profusion.

So was alcohol.

When I arrived on campus I was *lost*. My graduating class in high school had 60 people. My freshman class in college had 6,000. I had chosen a school with which I had no affiliation and knew no one. I suppose I wanted the adventure, but shortly after I arrived I was anxious and scared. As odd as it sounds to people who know me now, I was very quiet, shy and unsure of myself. Having gone to an all-boys high school I was even more nervous around the fairer sex. “Shy” is a vast understatement when it comes to describing my presence around the ladies.

Unknown to me, however, one of my mother’s old college friends had a son at my university and I was surprised by being “rushed” by one of the oldest and largest frats on campus. I had no idea about fraternity life and it was a fortunate coincidence that the fraternity I pledged was one of the old-line “status” frats. I was thrown in the deep end of the social pool.

It will come as no surprise to anyone reading this that an integral part of fraternity life is alcohol. Like any Southern male, I had had beer a few times in high school, but I was certainly no regular drinker, but in college, draft beer and kegs were everywhere! And it went down so easily. And there was no shortage—ever. And, of course, the football games; where blazers, ties and a fifth of Jim Beam were *de rigeur*. The best part of the alcohol-infused fraternity scene, though, was that I was



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now uninhibited! I found to my surprise that I was funny and socially adept. No one at this huge school had ever heard of my brother or knew anything about me or my family and no one had any preconceived notions of what I was supposed to be like and I blossomed. Alcohol had solved all of the problems and inhibitions. No more shyness. No more restraint. I had found the answer and it was fun and oh so liberating.

I drank a lot in college, but, hey, so did everybody else. Passing out on the fraternity house couch or falling down the stairs at a band party was not an aberration; it happened to everyone and the stories were just fodder for laughter at the breakfast table. And at that age, the hangovers were just morning prob-

lems. My body was young and bounced back easily. By lunchtime, all was well and more plans were being made for the next escapade. I really didn't notice that I was drinking every night and that not everyone else was. Some of my buddies actually laid off during the week and reserved their partying for the weekends. Not yours truly; I had found the magic elixir. And in a college town, there is always someone to go drinking with you.

Later in my college years, though, I began to notice that alcohol was causing me problems. As we say now in AA, I didn't have a problem every time I drank, but every time I had a problem alcohol was involved. And I had my first "blackout" my senior year. I had a date to a fraternity party, got ham-

pered and just left her there, drove home and passed out. I remembered none of it. I tried to apologize and asked her out again to show her a good time, but she would have none of me. Who could blame her? This was the first of many "consequences." Remember that word, as it is important to my story and every other problem-drinker's story.

Somehow, I slid through my studies with relative ease. I had gone to an academically challenging high school and the big "State U" was a piece of cake most of the time. A high "B" average was pretty easily obtained, so my studies were not causing me serious worry.

And, somehow, a lovely, kind, and sweet girl came into my life and we would later marry. I certainly never deserved her. I presume she figured my drinking habits were still those of a young man and that I would "grow out of it" one day. I never did. We had a long and mostly happy marriage until she had had enough of my immaturity, philandering and continued drinking. After 20-something years of marriage it was over and I lost the love of my life.

After college, for a year before law school, I worked in Mobile. I found a new group of young people just out of college, so the partying continued. I had a job with little oversight, so hangovers were not a problem, but I remember distinctly reading a short article in the *Mobile Register* about early signs of alcoholism. My heart skipped a beat when I saw myself in many of the examples, but, hey, I had a job, I had a girlfriend. Others were partying, too. No consequences to stop me. On I went.

During

After a year of actual “work” I knew I needed to get back to the less rigorous world of academia. I knew my father, being a lawyer, would be happy to defray the expenses, so I applied and got accepted to a good law school. After college, and with the false self-confidence of an alcoholic, I presumed law school would just be another version of college and that I’d breeze through. Boy, was I wrong! For the first time since high school, I actually had to study. I thought I could party like college and still get by. Wrong again. I almost flunked out after the first year, but somehow righted the ship and made it through, albeit at the bottom of my class. I used to like to say that law school students like me made *Law Review* possible. Without the bottom-dwellers, no one could be on top.

It was during my second year of law school that I married the wonderful girl I had met in college. She had been my long-time sweetheart and had put up with my crap, but I suppose she figured I would start being responsible one day. I didn’t. She stayed with me through all the partying and shenanigans. Again, after the first year of law school when it got a little easier, there was never a shortage of friends to go out and party on the weekends. I pretty much stayed on the same track.

I think it appropriate to mention here that I didn’t drink *all the time*. To all appearances, I was pretty average—going to class, studying hard during the week and on weekends, keeping up with the rest of the “average” law students. I was partying



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An episode happened in law school which scared me, though—badly. This was before I got married and I had been out partying hard Saturday night. I usually studied on Sundays like all other law students, but I was too hungover this particular time to do much but moan and regret. I’m sure I had done something embarrassing the night before, I just didn’t know what.

By this time, I had discovered a secret that I now wish I had never learned, that a little “hair of the dog” would make you feel better. I was willing to do anything to get over this particular hangover and I had plenty of beer in the fridge, so I forced one down and, voila! I felt better. Like any good drunk, I figured if one beer made me feel this good, two would make me feel

even better. So I drank a second and a third and a fourth. You know the rest of the story. It was Sunday and I hadn’t quit.

Here is the worst part, though. I had a class at 8:00 a.m. every Monday. This was not a favorite professor and, actually, he wasn’t even very good, but attendance was his mandate. He demanded that you come to class or else your grade automatically was lowered. I could skip some classes, but not this one.

When I awoke Monday morning, I experienced something somewhat new. I was trembling, badly. I knew I had to get to this class and I knew I couldn’t do it in my present condition.

So, to feel better, I drank several beers—at 7:30 on a Monday morning—just to get through this one class. I made it, but a friend of mine seated next to me commented that I smelled like a brewery. I shrugged it off and just said I had

been out partying late the night before, but I don't think he bought it.

This episode didn't repeat itself until my drinking had progressed much later in life, but it scared the hell out of me. This should have been a real wake-up call. I'm pretty smart and I should have put on the brakes then and there. *I knew instinctively at that moment that I was an alcoholic.* By about Wednesday I felt better and conveniently put the episode behind me and the next weekend I was partying again. That's one of the insidious things about alcoholism—selective recollection. We are very adept at “forgetting” the bad things and remembering the good times we have had while drinking.

And, again, there were no real consequences. As stated earlier, consequences are, in my opinion, the reason most alcoholics finally seek help. There is a bottom. I just wasn't there yet, at least in my opinion.

The years succeeding law school were fairly benign as far as my drinking was concerned. I was almost exclusively a weekend drinker. And, still being a young man, I was able to quickly rebound pretty. Sure there were Saturday and Sunday hangovers, but I was back at work on Monday and raring to go during the week.

Alcoholism is a progressive disease, though. And the realities of aging begin to come into play. Your intake does not diminish; it increases, in fact. At the same time, your body is unable to metabolize at the same rate. You seek the euphoria and enjoyment that once attended your social drinking, but those days are gone. Your mind can function with the greater consumption, but your body revolts.

For the alcoholic, the solution is to continue to drown the problem. Forget it; numb the pain; make it go away. Your absurd line of reasoning is insane, but insanity is a component of problem drinking.

Gradually, the hangovers stretched from mornings to days, and then to several days. I began to be very shaky on Monday mornings when I was shaving. I didn't drink to stop it, but I would grab a beer the moment I got home from work.

My career went along pretty much as predicted. I did all the things a small-town lawyer is supposed to do: president of the Rotary Club, school board, local bar association president, Boy Scout Council, board of directors at the local country club, etc. I was asked to, and did, serve on numerous area charitable boards and associations. I had a beautiful wife and two wonderful sons—the paradigm of young professional success.

I was not truly involved and invested with my family, though. When not playing the role of the respectable, responsible young professional, I was off with my buddies on golf and fishing excursions. On one of these, I made the mistake so common to many—I had a one-night stand with some woman I met in a bar. Of course, we were both drunk and I skulked out of some anonymous condominium at 5:00 the next morning. The guilt was overwhelming. I even went and got tested for STDs. It was, of course, devastating to me. My wife never found out. And, as alcoholics will and can do, as time went by the memory fades, and the guilt subsides with it, but it was a harbinger of things to come.

It was also about 15 years into my young professional life that the first of several “binges” occurred. Experts define “binge drinking” as having more than five drinks at one sitting. They are rank amateurs. Any real alcoholic can tell what a binge or a bender is. In my case it was after a long weekend beach trip. When Sunday came I didn't stop. Nor did I stop on Monday. I called in sick, but my law partner let it slip and I had someone to look after my workload. I knew that if I missed work I had someone to cover for me. I pled illness to my lovely wife, too. Of course, she knew the real reason I was home from work. After a couple of days of suffering, I straggled back to work. You would think I would learn, but when I felt better, the episode receded in importance. By the next weekend, I was back on track. The weekend drinking track, that is.

Fast forward another 10 years. I had reached young-middle age. Same chapter, different verse. By this time, my wife had distanced herself from me and was into her own pursuits. I can't believe she hadn't already left me. I was, as I have heard a friend in AA say, “emotionally absent.” That is such an apt description of what happens to problem drinkers. Again, I was maintaining all the appearances. I still have friends say to this day that they had no idea I was drinking too much. How could they? I kept it well hidden. I think the term is “functioning alcoholic.”

The pattern continued. Heavy drinking on the weekends, followed by a couple of days of heavy-duty hangovers, gradual recovery until Friday and then back at it.

Let me digress at this time and mention what it is like to withdraw from a hard-partying three day weekend. You lie in bed on Sunday night, shivering followed by sweating. Your eyes wide open. Heart racing. Depressed, knowing that when the light peeks through the curtains on Monday morning you will have gotten no sleep and will have to face the day with shaking hands and probably the residue of alcohol still on your breath. Mouthwash becomes your friend. If you see any of this in yourself, you're past heavy drinking and are into alcoholism. Get help.

After 25 years of putting up with my BS, drinking every weekend, going out with the guys for party weekends three or four times a year, more women (some of whom my wife found out about and some she didn't), emotional absenteeism and a general disenchantment on my part (if that's not incredible irony), my wife and I split up. If you can believe this, it was *my* idea. I wanted more freedom, freedom to party, philander, forget responsibility and numb myself with alcohol. She was actually upset, if you can believe that. I would have loved to have gotten away from me. My ex-wife is a wonderful woman; it's hard for me to believe she actually married me, much less stayed with me. Alcohol and its related devastations cost me the best thing I had in my life. If I could only go back in time, I would, but, alas, I can't. She has moved on and I love her enough to want her to be happy. In a recent discussion with her, as I was making my amends, she commented that she only wonders why she put up with my crap for so long. No kidding.

I know this will come as no news flash, but after I was separated/divorced, the situation got infinitely worse. By this time my father had died and I was practicing solo. I had a paralegal and a legal assistant who were extremely capable, so I could still miss days at work with no real consequences. The three-day binges were happening once every couple of years, but I would struggle back to normalcy. I was living out of town by this time so I would walk to the convenience store for my beer. (I was a beer drinker, primarily). I would always get twice as much as I thought I might possibly drink so I wouldn't have to go out again to re-stock (another tell-tale sign if you're reading this and see yourself in it). Another newsflash: I would usually run out.

The nadir of one of these experiences was once during the winter-time late in the progression of my disease when I was on a bender. I drank myself to oblivion, woke up, started again, woke up, etc. I was passed out on the sofa in my apartment and awoke to check the time. It was 5:00, but I had absolutely no idea if that was a.m. or p.m. Damn, how far can one sink? Apparently lower, as you will see.

With the hard work of my legal staff, both of whom were near to quitting, I soldiered on. By late middle age, though, I took the final step in the progression of alcoholism . . . I started drinking at work. It was only a sip here and there, but the amount is not the issue. Before this, I had only *missed* work. Now, being a sole practitioner, I had to make it to the office. Many times, I could hardly

sign my name I was trembling so much. A quick shot of vodka followed by mouthwash would get me through to quitting time. Nobody could tell. Right.

The beginning of the end (or, as I prefer to look at it now that I am in recovery, the beginning) was on Good Friday of 2012. I had suffered through the day, nay, the week, but could now drink without restraint for a few days. To get home, though, I needed a bracer. So I stopped and got several vodka miniatures. I knocked back one of those and felt better. Then another, and another. Not being used to the strength of vodka, I was not prepared when the alcohol "kicked in." I was coherent enough to think to get off the main road and head for the back roads. They found me passed out in the parking lot of a convenience store. A friend had actually happened by and tried to get me out of my car and tried to talk the police out of arresting me. It did no good and I was taken to the county jail where I spent the mandatory 24 hours. It's a small county so everyone knew about my arrest, and you would think a sane person would think this madness had gone on long enough. Not me. After my 24-hour stint, I called a drinking buddy to get me at the jail and the first stop after I was released was at a convenience store for more beer to calm the nerves. You might think that this was the bottom, but I had a way to go. Being my first DUI (if you can believe that, after all the years of drinking and driving), I got deferred prosecution and went on about my business.

My drinking now was progressing on a geometric curve. For years, I had been a steady, but functioning,



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drinker. Now, however, things began quickly to ratchet up. I was drinking daily and at work. I was missing meetings and appointments.

One day when I came in to work, I was backing into my parking space at my office and hit the truck parked next to me. I had no idea I had hit anything. I stumbled into my office totally unaware, but someone had been walking across the street, saw the whole episode, observed that I was obviously intoxicated and called the police. I was sitting in my office trying to work when the police came and arrested me—DUI No. 2. This was three months after the first. I had to sit in the city jail, the jail of the city where I was the city attorney. After sitting there for several hours, I was released on the solemn promise that I wouldn't drive. I kept that promise, but walked from the police department to the liquor store and back to my office, right through the middle of town, in broad daylight, carrying a case of Budweiser.

Surely, you must think, this is as low as one can go, but I wasn't there yet.

I spent that night in my office, drinking my beer and sleeping on the floor. Nothing to eat other than some odd snacks I had lying around. To the (deserved) disdain of my paralegal and assistant, I made it through most of the next day and then drove home. I hadn't showered and I reeked of stale beer. I was almost home when I made a turn too sharply and side-swiped a car stopped at my street. I got out, said I would return, drove to my house (only a couple of hundred yards from the scene) and was starting to walk back to the damaged car when the police pulled up and arrested me. DUI No. 3. I was carted off to a different county jail. I was not allowed to make bond this time. I sat for two days waiting to be seen by the judge.

By this time, my friends and fellow members of the bar realized I was in serious trouble. My issues

had become very public. The judge in my home county (who had given me deferred prosecution in my first DUI) sent the sheriff down to get me. I can only imagine what I looked like. I was in a filthy seer-sucker suit with no tie or belt since those had been taken away from me at jail, and marched into my home county courtroom by two sheriff's deputies. I was (and still am) gratified that most of my fellow attorneys had been summoned to court to offer support and direction. The judge (who probably saved my life) basically told me I had two choices: I could either go to rehab where he had already found me a bed, or I could go to jail. Period. Needless to say, even for someone in my pitiable condition, this was a no-brainer. He ordered me taken right then to the rehab facility. No time to shower, no time to pack, no time to do anything. "Do not pass Go; do not collect \$200." I rode three hours in the back of an ambulance to the rehab facility in north Alabama.

I had made it. I had hit absolute bottom. I could not believe that this nightmare was happening to me—a well-respected small-town lawyer with a stable of elite clients. How could this be me? It was hell on earth, but it was the consequence I needed to make a much-needed change. Either I was serious about addressing my disease, or I was going to die. End of story.

Rehab

Rehab saved my life. I went in like most people afflicted with the disease of alcoholism and was first sent to detox. They had to get the abundance of toxins out of my sys-

tem. Once through that ordeal, I was on to a three-month program. Let me state here that I had self-reported my issues to the Alabama State Bar. I was assisted throughout my legal and personal issues with an attorney from my hometown who, though not an alcoholic, had had brushes with problems involving alcohol. His support and friendship cannot be overstated. Like a lot of folks in treatment, I started the program with resistance. Once sober, the tendency is to drop back and restate the ridiculous premise that you can do this yourself. Maybe some folks can. (I do know a couple of folks who realized they had a problem and just stopped.) I was not one of them. Since I was there for the duration (the bar would follow the recommendation of the facility and, naturally, the facility would recommend the maximum three-month stay), however, I grudgingly started on the course of treatment. I went to the group sessions, the afternoon speeches and the night time AA meetings. I can't say that I was the model patient for the first month I was there.

Then, my attitude shifted. I figured that since I *had* to be there, I might as well start trying to get something out of it. I mean, what the hell; if I can't leave, I might as well listen. ***If there was a single turning point in my recovery, this would be it. I stopped being resistant and started being receptive.*** These people (the counselors) were in the business and were all in recovery too, so just maybe they knew what they were talking about. For the third month of my stay I was actually anxious to learn the secrets/methods of recovery. Talk



Each morning, I got up, put on a fresh suit and starched shirt and tie, shined my shoes and came on in.

about a change! A tremendous metamorphosis occurred over the period of three months.

I was released from rehab with glowing recommendations and high hopes. It was Halloween, October 31, 2012.

I have not had a drink since.

After

The year after rehab was the most challenging of my life. I had been provided guidance and a “set of tools” to deal with recovery. It was now up to me to use them. I had to have faith in what I had been taught. Somehow, my steadfast paralegal had kept my office open, but my legal assistant, with my blessing, had seen the need to

find another job. And, I certainly understood. I had no idea if my practice could recover. I wasn't sure I could either, but my unbelievable paralegal, with the help of caring members of the local bar (one in particular, for whom I will never be able to adequately express my gratitude), kept things going, eking by on a few previously-billed fees and some basic document preparation. The doors remained open, though.

I did what I had been told. I suited up and I showed up. Each morning, I got up, put on a fresh suit and starched shirt and tie, shined my shoes and came on in. It was so quiet in my office you could hear echoes. I remember those first days, basically sitting here at my desk waiting for the phone to ring. I cashed in my life insurance and lived off my meager savings. I had addressed issues pertaining to my ex-wife. I sold property and mortgaged my office to fulfill my obligations to her. That was my number one priority. She had been a good wife and it was my fault the marriage had failed. I knew I couldn't recover unless I felt okay about her being taken care of.

There were also the pending DUI cases and the fact that I had put my bar license on temporary disability status. I was surprised to learn that you don't simply ask for your license to be reinstated even if you asked for temporary disability status. You have to go through an entire proceeding in front of a panel of attorneys. It was like a trial—really—but I was reinstated. And, with a full acceptance of my consequences, I faced the DUIs that were

out there waiting for me. It took well over a year to get those addressed. Once again, compassionate colleagues who do DUI defense work were there to assist me. After all was said and done (and after further depleting my savings to pay all the fines), I emerged. The judges involved gave due consideration that I had spent three months in rehab and, at the end of the day, I had only one DUI on my record with a number of lesser charges. I was ready to accept the consequences. I made no excuses and asked for no leniency.

In addition to contending with my domestic and legal problems, I had to confront the fact that most of my enviable roster of clients had had to seek legal counsel elsewhere and I was basically starting over. I represented several private and public entities and after about a year sober, I asked for audience before each board. Talk about a humbling experience, or, should I say “experiences”—standing before a group of board members whom you had represented for years, asking for forgiveness and humbly requesting to be considered for reinstatement. I wrote each attorney who had filled in for me so that he/she wouldn’t think I was trying to make an end run on them. These were great clients with nice fees and I knew they would want to keep what I had lost. A couple of these clients hired me back; most did not, but I understood. For those that didn’t, I wrote a letter of thanks for the opportunity to be considered and for the years they had allowed me to serve. I burned no bridges. And, I am gratified at the number of board members

from various authorities/entities who have approached me over the last few years to tell me how much they respected that effort and to acknowledge how difficult it had to be. Humility pays off.

I had never solicited business and I refuse to advertise, but I needed work. I went to various banks and other entities and simply stated that I was back in business and would welcome the work. Anytime someone sent me a case or a transaction, I made sure to thank them. I wanted them to know how much I appreciated it.

The days slowly dragged by, but I kept “suited up and showing up.”

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, business started creeping back in. Ours is a small community and I made sure to be seen at civic club meetings, the post office, open houses, etc. I wanted folks to see me. Question me. Ask how I was doing. Everyone in town knew of my travails (it was, after all, on the front page of the paper), so I was willing to answer whatever questions were asked.

I noticed, almost as an afterthought, that I was coming in to my office on Saturdays to catch up. Folks would ask why I didn’t take the weekends off. I replied that I was so happy to have the work, I was glad to come in! I remembered vividly the days when I had nothing to do.

After a couple of years, the business flow increased. I was working more than I ever had. And doing the things I enjoyed. It was a snowball effect. I was astounded and happy. My legal assistant returned at my request (she didn’t like her other job anyway), and

stepped up amazingly to fill the shoes of my paralegal who has since passed away (ironically of liver cancer, and she wasn’t a drinker). I was working harder and with a greater work load than ever, and loving it. I never failed to thank folks for their business or to promptly return phone calls. Things were so wonderfully hectic that I hired *another* employee. I was, and am, incredibly content in my law practice these days. And, it’s all due to the benefits of a disciplined program of recovery.

I never forget the dark days and the times when I thought I would never be able to practice law again, though. Keeping those recollections in my box of recovery tools helps keep me clean, and happy.

If you’re reading this and can relate to any of it, please note the following:

1. If you think you have a drinking problem, you do.
2. Don’t wait for consequences to force your hand to seek help. (Or if you do wait, be ready to man up/woman up, and face the consequences. I assure you they will be dire.)
3. Talk to someone who is in recovery. Anyone who has trod this path will be happy to help another from making the same mistakes and will assist you in getting help.

I haven’t had a drink in more than four years. I’m busy. I’m content. I’m sober.

I’m a lawyer.

It’s a wonderful life. (My apologies to Frank Capra) ▲