



Overcoming Fear of the Unknown

Often substance use/abuse left unchecked can often become such a big part of someone's life that the thought of not using anymore may then induce anxiety, stress or fear. For example, when faced with the prospect of getting away from the substance use lifestyle, a lot of questions about the future can come up:

Have you ever thought any of the following thoughts? Check which ones have come across your mind and then share with the group:

Have you ever thought about or asked yourself:

- What do sober people do for fun?
- Doesn't life get really boring without the excitement of finding and using substances?
- How will I do things that I have associated with getting high or intoxicated first (like sex, watching movies, etc.) without getting high anymore?
- If I can't use any more what will I do when I am getting stressed out?
- What will I look forward to every day if using is not an option?
- My social life revolved around drugs and/or alcohol, so if I stop how will I meet people?
- What is going to happen with all of my friends who get high, will they get bored of me and stop talking to me?
- I feel so much more confident and relaxed when I am under the influence, how am I going to face situations sober?
- I use substances to deal with mental health issues or symptoms (such as anxiety, depression, insomnia, etc.) so how am I going to deal with that going forward?
- If I go too long without using something the cravings can get really strong so how will I handle that?
- When I go too long without getting high or using I think way too much so how will I learn to escape my own mind?
- When I go too long without using I just don't feel right, will I ever feel like myself again?

Are there any other thoughts or questions similar to these that have come up for anyone here? Discuss:



Finding the Answers:

It is important to acknowledge that the thoughts and questions that have been discussed are valid questions. No one ever said getting away from substance use/abuse is easy it is normal to expect to have to overcome some challenges, anxieties or fears. To have unanswered questions about the future is normal. So let's start looking for some answers:

FIRST – Use the Group:

Go back through the list on page 1, one by one, and see if there is anyone in the group who overcame that concern successfully at one point in their experience. For example

— What do sober people do for fun?

GROUP MEMBER ANSWER (For example) – “I was clean for 6 months a few years back and I really got into my guitar playing. Eventually I started doing gigs at some of the local coffee shops and I really enjoyed performing for the crowd. It became something I looked forward too instead of getting high”

Now go back as a group and see who has experienced some success with the issues on the list on page 1. Take note of any ideas that may work for you in your change process.

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SECOND – Self Examination:

Go through the list again and look at the areas you checked and this time brainstorm some of your own ideas. Be creative and don't let excuses like “I don't have enough money” or “I can't do this” hold you back because if you set your mind to it, you'll be surprised what you can accomplish with patience and perseverance.

Discuss your own ideas with the group to deal with some of the items you checked on page 1

FINALLY: Using your group's suggestions and your own ideas, what can you start working on?

“There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve: the fear of failure.”
– Paulo Coelho