

A low-angle shot of a blue convertible car with two women leaning out of the top. The woman on the left has dark hair and is wearing a black top and patterned skirt. The woman on the right has blonde hair and is wearing a blue and white checkered dress. Both are wearing sunglasses and have their arms raised in the air. The background is filled with lush green trees under bright sunlight.

C I N C H

SOBERISH

A 30-day challenge to
help you improve your
relationship with
alcohol.

Drink Less | Live More.

Who is Soberish not for?



Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that Cinch Soberish is an inclusive society, this course may not be suitable for individuals who are currently struggling with severe alcohol addiction or dependence. We are not trained professionals to give advice to people struggling with alcohol addiction and dependency.

If you find that you are unable to control your alcohol consumption despite negative consequences and have experienced withdrawal symptoms when attempting to cut back, it may be advisable to seek professional medical assistance or addiction treatment.

Additionally, this course may not be appropriate for individuals who are not open to exploring alternative approaches to their relationship with alcohol or who are not ready to commit to making changes in their drinking habits.

It's important to assess your readiness and willingness to engage in the course before enrolling to ensure that it aligns with your goals and needs.

- Drinkline is the national alcohol helpline. If you're worried about your own or someone else's drinking, you can call this free helpline in complete confidence. Call 0300 123 1110 (weekdays 9am to 8pm, weekends 11am to 4pm).
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a free self-help group. Its "12 step" programme involves getting sober with the help of regular support groups.
- Al-Anon Family Groups offer support and understanding to the families and friends of problem drinkers, whether they're still drinking or not. Alateen is part of Al-Anon and can be attended by 12 to 17-year-olds who are affected by another person's drinking, usually a parent.
- We Are With You is a UK-wide treatment agency that helps individuals, families and communities manage the effects of drug and alcohol misuse.
- Adfam is a national charity working with families affected by drugs and alcohol. Adfam operates an online message board and local support groups.
- The National Association for Children of Alcoholics (Nacoa) provides a free, confidential telephone and email helpline for children of alcohol-dependent parents and others concerned about their welfare. Call 0800 358 3456 for the Nacoa helpline.
- SMART Recovery groups help people decide whether they have a problem, build up their motivation to change, and offer a set of proven tools and techniques to support recovery.



SOBERISH

CHAPTER 1

Welcome to the Cinch "Soberish" Challenge

Welcome to the Cinch 'Soberish' 30 Day Challenge that is going to help improve your relationship with booze and help you make more informed choices. No more sleepless nights, 'anxiety' palpitations, hangovers and scales that stay stuck.

This is a fun-loving community where you will be shown that the world of being 'soberish' is anything but boring! This 30-day challenge is designed to be a catalyst for positive change. A fun one! Whether you just want to drink less, or abstain altogether, this program will give you the tools to make you more mindful and enjoy a hangover-free life.



Drawing from the success of our Cinch Fast 30 Intermittent Fasting program, which has empowered thousands to shed weight and elevate their well-being, we now bring our experience to help you transform your connection with alcohol. We chose the name "Cinch Soberish" instead of "Alcohol Free" because we understand the psychology behind restriction. Research suggests that when something is forbidden, it often becomes more desirable, a phenomenon known as the Forbidden Fruit Theory. From our own experience imposing strict rules on anything, whether it is food or drink related, can trigger feelings of deprivation and increase the likelihood of cravings and bingeing. By adopting the term "Soberish," we aim to create a more flexible and empowering approach to alcohol consumption, encouraging people to make mindful choices without FOMO (Fear of Missing Out).

In this community of like-minded people who are all doing their best to live a 'healthy, happy life', eat well, expensive gym memberships, meditating, cold-water swimming, intermittent fasting, taking supplements, in the pursuit of health and wellbeing. The elephant in the room is the seemingly harmless, fun filled cocktail or wine we all mindlessly continue to drink without a second thought. This isn't shaming or judgement, it's a programme to educate and empower you to make your own choice.

Your path to improved well-being and a more positive relationship with alcohol starts here. Ready to embrace a positive change? Let's get this party started!

First things, first. WTF is Soberish?

‘Soberish’

[Sober-ish] noun

A "soberish" person is someone who chooses to consume alcohol in moderation or intermittently, rather than abstaining completely. Unlike a fully sober person, who avoids alcohol entirely, a soberish person may enjoy an occasional drink if the notion takes them, whilst living their best, balanced life.

Why choose to be Soberish?

Opting for a ‘Soberish’ lifestyle puts you back in control of your alcohol intake. By knowing that you have the free will to drink, or not to drink, puts you firmly in the driving seat. This isn’t about deprivation, or abstinence its about educating and empower to make an informed choice about if and when you choose consume alcohol. It's all about embracing balance and being in control of your choices.

How it works.

Cinch Soberish works because it's designed to improve your relationship with alcohol in a supportive and non-judgmental environment. By providing practical tools, education, resources, and guidance, people can make informed decisions about their alcohol consumption and develop healthier habits. The program encourages mindfulness, self-reflection, and accountability, helping to gain a better understanding of their triggers and motivations around drinking. Through a combination of education, community support, and personalised strategies, Cinch Soberish equips people with the knowledge and confidence to navigate social situations, manage cravings, and ultimately, create a more balanced and fulfilling lifestyle.

Why it works.

This course works as it is a uniquely personal journey, it helps you reflect on your own relationship with alcohol, why you drink, what your triggers are, and helps give you the tools to live a more soberish life. Through our own observations, we've noticed that enforcing rigid rules, whether concerning food or drink, can cause feelings of deprivation and elevate the temptation to indulge excessively (binge or crave). By embracing the term "Soberish," our goal is to create a more adaptable, sustainable and empowering perspective on alcohol consumption, educating you on making more positive decisions around your alcohol intake without FOMO (Fear of

10 Commandments of being 'Soberish'

1. Thou shalt not use alcohol as a crutch for dealing with stress, boredom, or awkward social situations. Instead, find healthier coping mechanisms like dancing like nobody's watching or belting out your favorite tunes in the shower.
2. Thou shalt not feel guilty for sipping fizzy water at the weekend or at the party while everyone else is knocking back shots. Embrace your bubbly beverage and Cheers with the best of them!
3. Thou shalt not judge thy friend who chooses to skip the night out in favour of a cosy evening in with herbal tea and a good book. Respect their choice and maybe invite them to your next tea party!
4. Thou shalt not succumb to peer pressure to drink more than thou desire. Stand firm in thy decision to drink at thy own pace and remind thyself that missing out is overrated.
5. Thou shalt not define thy worth by the number of drinks thou consumes. Remember, true self-worth comes from within, not from the bottom of a glass.
6. Thou shalt not underestimate the power of a good mocktail. I commit to getting creative with fruity concoction and a fancy glass. Umbrella & cherry optional.
7. Thou shalt not forget to hydrate thyself like a plant in the desert. I commit to keeping a water bottle handy at all times and sip often to stay refreshed and fabulous.
8. Thou shalt not let thy fear of missing out dictate thy social life. I will embrace new experiences and find joy in the moments, whether they involve alcohol or not. Just because everyone else is getting drunk, doesn't mean I have to.
9. Thou shalt not judge others for their drinking choices. Just as thou art on thy own journey to being "soberish," so too are they. I commit to showing kindness and understanding, and thou shalt receive the same in return.
10. Thou shalt be brave and say "No" to alcohol when peer pressure is strong and thou truly dost not want to partake. Stand tall in thy decision and remember that thou art in control of thy own choices and destiny.



Why we have created this Challenge?

We understand the effect that alcohol can have on both mental and physical health, and its ripple effect on your life.

A balanced relationship with it can work well. But when the balance is tipped, it can be very damaging.

Change is possible. But it's hard to do that alone. We understand the power of finding your tribe to help you make positive, lasting change.

We want you to live your best life; without the need for booze.

The two aren't intrinsically linked; that what this next 30 days will show you.

Are we Tee-Totallers?

Quite simply, No.

And neither do you have to be.

If you don't want to.

For us its about two things; informed choice and balance.

Today, we do have a really positive relationship with alcohol and want you to have that too.

This is not about judgement or shaming people. We have been there, worn the sick coloured tee-shirt, woke up in random places with no memory of what happened or how we got there. Got the headaches, sore stomachs and made fools of ourselves, for decades. But we pulled back. And we changed our habits, and we want to help others do the same. We know there is a different way.

Whatever your motivation, we will be your new 'soberish' friends.

We aim to make this fun, informative, and a Cinch!

About Us....

We have been friends since our early 20s. The early noughties. By then we were both already seasoned drinkers. We had a big group of friends and quite simply, we were party girls. We even met at a party! We decided after too many vodkas that we were 'kindered spirits' who needed MORE fun in their lives. Angela had just come out of a long-term relationship and this sparked a 3am conversation about how we NEEDED a holiday. So, the next day, Nicola was straight on the ball and booked us a cheap holiday to Gran Canaria. A week later, having only met a handful of times, off we went to a dingy one bedroom apartment to Playa del Inglés for a week of fun and getting drunk every night. We ate, we drank, we got very merry. Hungover. Repeat. We bonded. When we got home, our friendship was solidified.

When we got home, along with our bigger friendship circle of boys and girls, we were out in Belfast every weekend, both nights, dancing until dawn, downing the Vodkas like our lives depended on it, matching the boys drink-for-drink.

This progressed to more week-long boozy holidays to Ibiza and Aiya Napa.

Drunk every night. Getting up to all sorts of mischief. But, that was OK. That was the culture.

Wasn't it? Hmm.....questionable.

It was the 90s and early noughties.

Those were the decades enjoying a second wave of feminism. Girl Power and all that. We wanted to match the likes of the 90's poster girls falling out of clubs, and being plastered on the front pages of the glossy magazines. We wanted to prove that we could do whatever men could do, sometimes do it even better. Weekened binges from Thursday to Sunday are just what everyone does surely?

It was grand!

Wasn't it?

It was also Ireland - 'alcohol is in our DNA'? Our culture. It would be rude not to?' all 'funny' phrases that we took pride in saying.

In the cold light of day, knowing what we know now, it turns out, it's not great.

In fact, it's bloody terrifying.

Nicola's Vs Alcohol

I started drinking when I was barely a teenager, maybe 14 or 15 years-old. It was something to experiment with, something that made me feel adventurous and mature. Suddenly, I was no longer the timid or quiet one, I shed my insecurities and became who I thought was a more fun and interesting version of me. My friends and I would split a bottle of Diamond White (a disgusting, syrupy, potent cider) before hitting a club with our fake ID. I remember coming back home and puking all night and the next day, feeling like I had been hit by a double decker bus, having the fear of God about what we had done the night before. But my friends and I just made jokes about it, made jokes about our wild behaviour and all the crazy things we did, things we would never have done if we had been sober. And that's how my relationship with alcohol began. I pretty much kept up the same routine for about 15 years, waiting for the weekend to go out with my friends, drinking too much, grabbing a curry chip on the way home, talking to randoms, throwing up, waking up the next morning with a sense of dread and shame about what we had said or done. For some reason, I never questioned this, never once did I or my friends think, let's go out tonight and not drink. I would never even have dared suggest it, with the risk of being classed a bore and not getting invited for the next night out. It was just what my friends and I did. No one ever suggested that this behaviour was not only risky but was also dangerous. I would say I was a typical / normal teenager and then I became a typical / normal adult. The only thing changing was my choice of alcohol, I quickly matured from drinking cider to Vodka and blackcurrant and then matured to wine. All of them having the same effect, but just making me feel a bit more sophisticated when buying the

hangover. It took me a long time to work out my relationship with alcohol was negatively affecting my life.

I made every excuse and completely normalised my weekly drinking. Everyone was doing it and I was no exception.

When I turned 30, I made a bold move and relocated to France. Suddenly, I found myself immersed in constant sunshine and a new Ex-Pat lifestyle that revolved around leisurely, rose-infused lunches. It was a stark contrast from the rainy weekends and binge drinking back in Belfast. Instead of hitting the clubs, I was indulging in long boozy lunches four to five times a week. But hey, I was making new friends and feeling like I was much more interesting and fun after my fourth glass of wine. The allure of the French lifestyle and the social aspect of drinking made it easy to fall into this pattern, despite the toll it was taking on my well-being. During this time, I had a major life event - my wedding. It was a wonderful weekend celebration in France, with all my faithful party friends flying over from Belfast. From the moment they touched down, the Champagne was flowing. The festivities reached their peak with my unforgettable hen night the evening before the wedding. It was legendary - filled with laughter, dancing, and, of course, plenty of drinks. However, the excessive indulgence led to the most epic hangover of my life. I woke up the next morning feeling absolutely dreadful, with the room spinning and unable to keep anything down. I'll never forget the feeling of utter dread as I heard my excited guests arriving for the wedding while I lay incapacitated in bed. My poor mother, thinking I had food poisoning, wanted to call the doctor, but I had to reassure her that it was just the mother of all hangovers. As a result, I ended up being four hours late for my own wedding! Thankfully, my guests made the most of the free bar downstairs while I dealt with the aftermath of the night before. By the time I managed to drag myself out of bed and hastily pull on my wedding dress, it was already 4 pm - three hours late. No idyllic morning spent leisurely getting ready and doing my hair and make-up - I was literally thrown together and pushed out the door by my traumatised father.

Not one of my finest moments. But even this didn't put an end to my drinking escapades. Fast forward a few unsuccessful years of trying for a baby, the doctors finally did investigations and discovered that I had severe endometriosis - a condition that affects one in ten women and can make getting pregnant very challenging. For the first time in my life I was forced to take a look at my health and lifestyle. It was the wake-up call that I needed. I was very lucky that after my first surgery to remove the disease I became pregnant shortly after (despite the doctor telling me I would not be able to conceive naturally). Nine months later my little miracle, Nina, was born. During the pregnancy I realised how wonderful it was to wake up hangover free, to still go to the party, have all of the fun, and to have a 'valid excuse' on why I wasn't partaking in the long boozy lunches, without the peer pressure.

It was a whole, fabulous, new world.

After Nina was born my relationship with alcohol massively changed for the better. I became interested in nutrition and health and started researching the best ways to manage by condition and improve my health. I fell in love with cooking nutritious food and looking after my body. The more research I did the more I understood the correlation between endometriosis flare ups and the massively detrimental effect alcohol can have on your health and wellbeing. Now, when I do choose to drink I am very mindful and know my limits. One or two and I'm done. Any more than that and my body tells me.

Angela's Vs Alcohol

My story is a very similar one to Nicola's. I had my first drink when I was in third form in school, age 14. Terrifying.

We were invited to a party and my best friend and I raided my parent's drinks cupboard before-hand. We got our finest Tammy Girl denim skirts and belly-tops on and proceeded to fill a plastic bottle with all the alcoholic drinks we could find. Whiskey, weird miniature bottles from holidays (some green disgusting mint drink), gin, vodka, you name it, it went into the bottle of green concoction. The two of us walked to the party, along the main road (also terrifying) and slugged it on the way. Luckily it tasted so disgusting that I couldn't drink much, but it was enough to give me a happy high and do all sorts of embarrassing things. My friend then got so drunk that she got into an argument with a much older girl, accusing her of all sorts, then swinging a garden rake at her. Everyone was laughing at us as I tried to get her to stop. In the process, she fell on the grass and started rolling round. Age 14 and trying to be ultra-cool, it's not the best look.

But it didn't deter us.

We continued to sneak drink from our parents house, each and every weekend.

We laughed at ourselves as we would wake up, not recalling what happened or sometimes even how we got home!! I had an older brother and his friend's kindly provided us with alcohol when we wanted it.

This progressed to fake IDs to get us served at the off licence, buying a two litre bottle of cider and drinking it at our local train station with a group of older boys. We would get the train to the off-licence, argue between us about who looked the oldest to get served that night, then walk the train tracks back to the party – yes, the train TRACKS! Unbelievably terrifying behaviour.

As the years went on, the cider and alcopops got replaced with stronger drinks like, Peach Schnapps and then a quarter bottle of vodka which seemed to fit so nicely into my denim jacket pocket.

We drank every Friday and Saturday night.

For me, there were many nights that ended in black outs. How did we get home? Was I sick in the bar? Did I start a row with that girl? Did I lose my phone?

This behaviour, whilst tamed down, and enjoyed more in bars and clubs rather than train stations, continued for over two decades. I continued to drink every single weekend, usually both nights. My stomach was sore all weekend, whole days spent in bed, but I carried on regardless. My mood and brain power was low until at least Tuesday. Monday's in work were a low and slow day. Eating carbs and salt to make myself feel better.

Every social occasion with friends, family was laced with drink! If you tried to say no, you were interrogated. "Why are you not drinking?" "Are you pregnant?" "Don't be a bore bag!"

So, I carried on. To fit in. To have fun. To be part of the party.

Then, everything changed when I got married and had babies.

All of a sudden, I had an excuse not to drink. I saw another side to life. A sober one.

Don't get me wrong. I was never an alcoholic, or not even close. But every weekend involved a lot of drinking.

Being pregnant meant the weekend drinking stopped immediately.

And I didn't miss it one bit. In fact, I loved it!

Going to bed early and getting up early was my new way of life.

I loved my new glossy hair, my hangover free days and my new precious baby growing inside of me.

I no longer wanted to poison my body for the sake of a good time.

Once the baby was born, I didn't go back to weekend drinking.

I turned down parties. Or if I did go, I drove and came home early.

I maybe had one glass of wine, or one beer then I drank water. I got made fun of. In fact my friend's love to call me out on my 'waterboarding' on a night out. (Drinking copious amounts of water while they do wine)

I didn't care. It was a whole new me.

I found that I could still enjoy 'a drink' the very odd weekend or special occasion and that was plenty. In fact, sometimes that was even too much.

I found that my tolerance to alcohol had lowered – now, even this small amount of alcohol hurts my stomach and gives me a rubbish nights sleep. It also gives me this weird 2am palpitations and anxiety, which was not welcome to an already sleep deprived mum.

Along came baby number two and the drinking mostly dried up completely.

It was wonderful to not feel like you 'have to drink' to enjoy a night out. I loved the excuse of having to get up in the night or early morning with the baby and drinking just became something I didn't want to do.

However, I was in the extreme minority. And still am.

None of my friends could understand why I didn't want to drink any more. My family couldn't. But luckily, my husband could. He knows the way alcohol hurts my stomach, how it ruins my sleep, gives me anxiety and makes me crave every kind of junk food known to man.

So, here we are. Two ladies in our forties and not slaves to alcohol like we once were.

We go out and socialise without the need to drink the bar dry.

We go dancing. We go on holiday.

We are still friends with our same social circle who all continue with our old patterns.

We do still sometimes enjoy one or two drinks on the very odd night out, but then we stop.

We have a lot of fun - we are socialible and are the first up to dance, we get involved in the fun of the night. We don't get involved in the drama (there's almost always drama when drink is involved), and we are able to sleep without palpitations and we are able to get up the next day without the fear of God about what we did or said the night before and to eat for Ireland.

The difference? We have a different mindset when it comes to drink. We have regained control. We understand how it steals your joy and puts both your mental and physical health in jeopardy.

We can take it or leave it. If we want one, or two, we have it. But we stop there. The fun continues, and our focus on living happy, healthy lives, remains. We would describe ourselves as 'soberish' - which is why this course is called so.

It has taken us two decades and hundreds of drinks and hangovers to get to this point, but with the benefit of age, education and hindsight we know that alcohol is not the faithful friend it once claimed to be.

So, where do you come in?

Maybe you have a similar story? Or maybe its very different. The power lies in owning your past, accepting that it has made you the person you are today and learning from it.

Do we regret those days? Quite simply, no. They were brilliant. But did we know the damage we were doing to our bodies at the time? No. And do want our children to do the same thing as us? Hell No. Do we want to continue doing this as we progress through middle-age and older? Absolutely no.

That's when the real problem starts. The dark side of alcohol.

What we do want is to create a community of people just like us, who dont want to compromise on having maximum fun and socialising, but no longer want to be a slave to 'the drink'.

We want to create a place where people know that it is OK to say NO. Or to drink less.



Why?

WHY have YOU signed up to this programme, and what YOU want to get from it?

Maybe your story is similar to ours and you are caught in a vicious cycle of 'being good' Monday to Thursday and drinking alcohol both weekend nights, and want to make a change.

Maybe you have just fallen into the habit of 'wine o'clock' drinking wine every night, are having difficulties sleeping, losing weight and getting motivated, you maybe want to stop or cut back but find it hard to do it alone.

Or you might just want to cut back and not be reliant on the booze on social occasions, whilst still having fun.

Or maybe you want to get healthier, fitter, push forward with your career and personal life and find that booze is hindering you rather than helping you.

Or maybe you are looking for a new challenge and you would just like to put yourself to the test, and see how difficult (or easy!) going AF for 30 days would be for your health, relationships and finances!

Whatever your motivation, we are here to support you and provide you with the information and tools you need to succeed.

Everyone's motivation will be different, and at this stage, we want to focus on just you.

How does booze effect you?

We want you to really think about how alcohol impacts your life and family life. How does drinking effect your physical and mental well-being? How does it affect your relationships with your partner, children, friends, or colleagues?

How does it effect your work, hobbies, or goals?

When you're drinking alcohol do you tend to make less healthy food choices, not only when you're drinking but the next day too?

How much money do you spend on alcohol every week, month, or year?

How much time do you spend drinking or recovering from drinking? Does feeling hungover drain you and stop you from wanting to do things with friends or family.

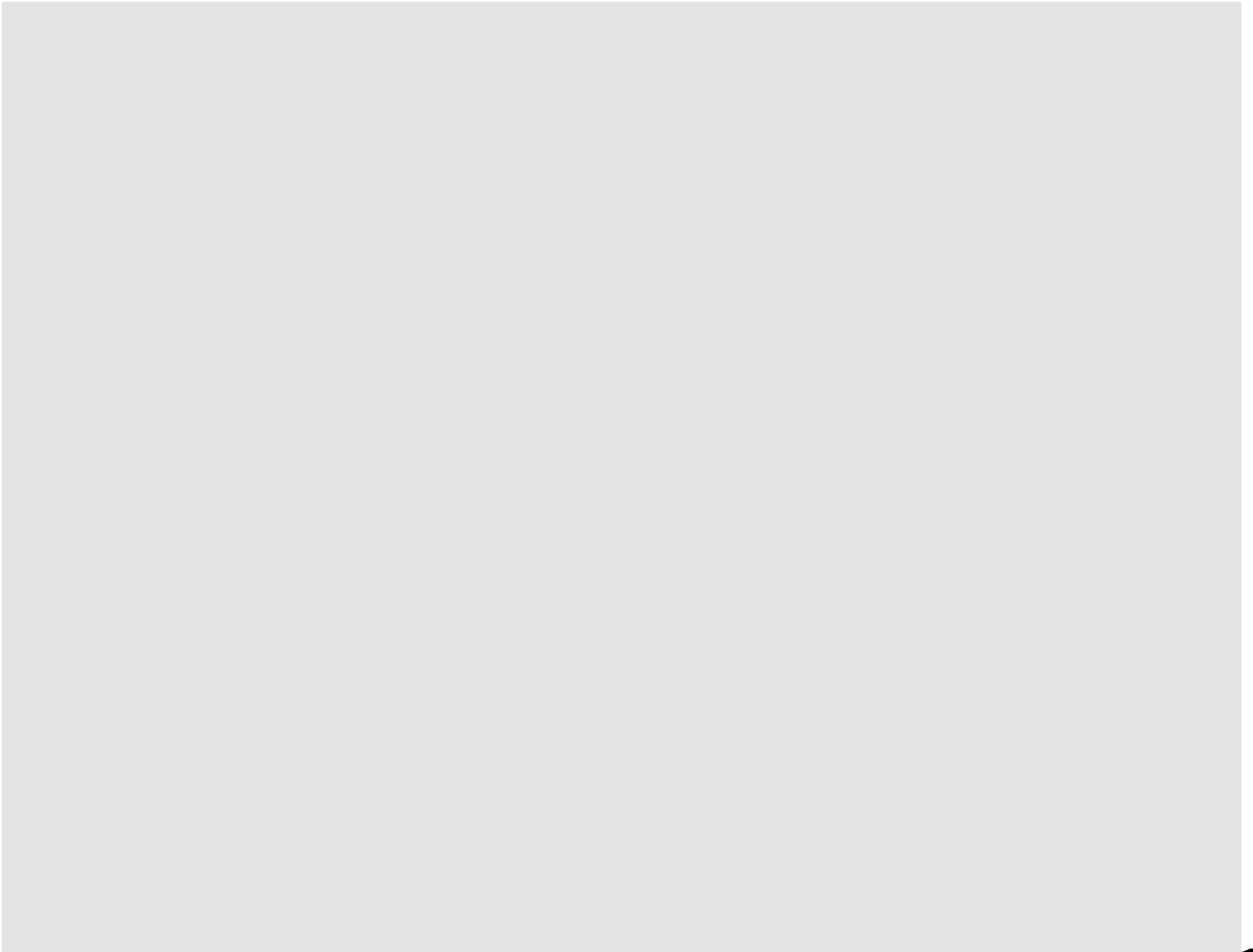
Spend some time in this next section answering these questions.

You Vs Alcohol

1. Why are you here?



2. What needs to change with regards alcohol?



You Vs Alcohol

3. How would you describe your relationship alcohol?

1. OK
2. Good
3. Average
4. Needs improvement
5. Terrible

5. Do you tend to drink more on specific days of the week?

1. Every day
2. Monday to Wednesday
3. Thursday to Sunday
4. Friday nights only
5. Saturday nights only
6. Sundays only

7. Is there a consistent pattern to your drinking, such as...

1. After work
2. Whenever I decide that it is 'wine-O'clock'
3. When my friends share with me that it's Wine O'clock
4. With my evening meal
5. When something stressful happens
6. When I socialise
7. Binge drinking
8. When the weekend starts
9. No pattern, it varies
10. Other _____

9. Have you noticed an increase in the amount of alcohol needed to achieve the desired effect?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Explain:

4. How often do you consume alcohol in a typical week? (be honest!)

1. 1-2
2. 3-4
3. 5-6
4. 6-7
5. 7-8
6. 9+

6. On average, how many drinks are you having on each occasion?

1. 1-2
2. 3-4
3. 5-6
4. 6-7
5. 7-8
6. 9+

8. What are the primary reasons you choose to consume alcohol?

1. Socialising with friends or family
2. Relaxation and stress relief
3. Celebrating special occasions
4. Habit or routine
5. Coping with negative emotions or situations
6. Enjoying the feeling
7. Enjoying the taste and flavours
8. Peer pressure or societal expectations
9. To get rid of nerves ahead of an event or occasion
10. Other _____

10. Would you like to drink less?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Explain:

You Vs Next 30 Days

FOCUS

In the next 30 days, I will achieve the following with my relationship with alcohol:

HABITS

In the next 30 days, I will achieve the following habits:

BARRIERS

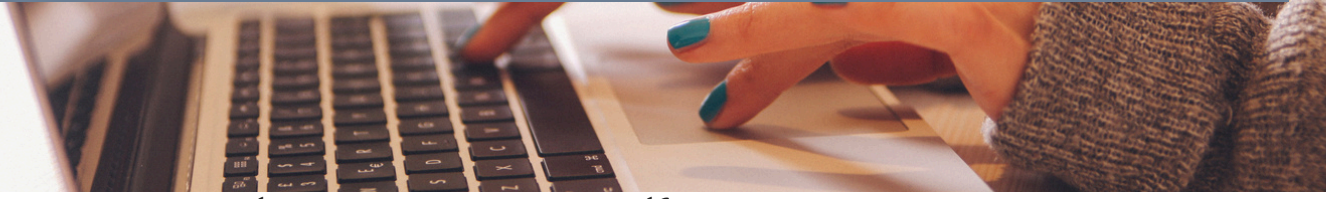
In the next 30 days, I will overcome the following barriers:



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CHAPTER 2

You Vs Next 30 Days



In this exercise, we want you to make a commitment to yourself!

Drawing on the findings from the last exercise, complete this statement, and sign and date it. This act is a very powerful one, and by committing it to paper, you are solidifying your commitment to this course.

I _____ am so excited and delighted that in the next 30 days I will
commit to the following behaviours involving alcohol _____

Signed.....Date.....

I will do this by following the below actions over the 30 days (insert action steps to help
you achieve the above):

- 1.....
.....
- 2.....
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- 3.....
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- 4.....
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- 5.....
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- 6.....
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- 7.....
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- 8.....
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- 9.....
.....
- 10.....
.....

Signed by: _____(yourself) Date_____

YOUR Goal....

MY Goal!

I am so delighted and excited to be alcohol free

for the next 30 days starting

on.....

Signed.....Date.....

Set your goal high and don't stop until you get there...



GOAL CARD

Read, re-read, read again!

Print this page out, cut out the goal card, write down your weight loss & size goal for the next 30 days and carry it in your purse with you. Read it as often as you can, and consider it already done!



SOBERISH

CHAPTER 3

The Biggest Lies You Tell Yourself



‘Sure I don’t really drink that much.’ “I only have one.” “It relaxes me.” “Sure one glass of wine is good for you.” “It’s my only pleasure.” “Sure, what’s the harm in it?”

Just like the majority of people (including us!) I am sure you have told yourself a few of these statements over the years. It may be true, it may be not. But, our aim is to educate you on the truth about the biggest legal drug on the planet.

Here’s a difficult question that we all try to dodge - could you live without alcohol?

And do you know the reality of just how dangerous it is?

We are not here to scare you - but tbh this scared us, so we feel a duty to share. Everyone should be informed of the hidden dangers of the highly-marketed, ‘glamorous’ addictive drug.

Ever poured yourself a glass of wine at home, only to realise it's more like three servings in disguise? Guilty as charged! The above photo comparison reveals the stark reality – what we might perceive as one serving at home often amounts to much more. In this case, the at-home pour equates to three servings or a hefty 4.5 units of alcohol.

It begs the question: how often do we unwittingly exceed recommended limits when pouring our own drinks? Guiltily, as charged! Both of us nod in recognition.

Similarly, ever mixed up your own gin and tonic at home, only to realise your "splash" of gin could be more like a generous pour? It happens to the best of us! Comparing our at-home measurements to what we get in the bar can be eye-opening. Turns out, our home "measure" might be a bit on the heavy side, equating to a lot more than just one standard drink. The drink on the left shows the bar measure of 25ml, and the right was more like 75ml. Once again, 3 times more, equating to 3 units in just one ‘wee harmless’ G&T!



What is a Unit?

Understanding units helps you keep track of how much alcohol you're drinking.

The amount of alcohol you drink is measured in units.

1 unit = 10mls of pure alcohol, which means half a pint of beer or 1 single 25ml shot of 40% spirit.

1.5 units = a small glass of wine or a bottle of alcopop

2 units = a bottle of beer or a medium size glass of wine

3 units = a large glass of wine

9 units = a bottle of wine

Always check the strength of the alcohol as some stronger drinks contain more units.



Source: <https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/lifestyle/alcohol/how-much-is-safe-to-drink/>

Terrifyingly the current recommended amount of alcohol adults can drink is:

Men (adults):

- Maximum of 14 units a week
- And no more than 3-4 units a day

Women (adults):

- Maximum of 14 units a week
- And no more than 2-3 units a day
- Pregnant women shouldn't drink any alcohol as even a small amount can harm their baby

Just looking at this logically, we find it ludicrous that the guidelines have not been updated; men and women are both classed the same with regards to alcohol intake. So, a six foot five rugby player has the same recommendation as a five foot nothing, nine stone woman?! Terrifying.



SOBERISH
CHAPTER 4

The Biggest Lies You Are Told...

There's an eerie parallel between the glorification of smoking in the 1950s and the current portrayal of drinking in our society. Back then, smoking was depicted as sophisticated and even healthy, with actors posing as doctors in advertisements to reassure the public and promote its use.



The big nicotine corporations invested millions to promote smoking, turning it into one of the fastest-growing industries globally, reaping billions in profit. It was everywhere, glamorised, and seemingly harmless, with no mention of its devastating health consequences like cancer and heart disease to name but a few. Fast forward a few decades, and now cigarette packaging bears graphic images of the dire consequences of smoking, hidden away behind cabinet doors. However, think of the lives and families ruined, peoples health destroyed and slow painful deaths, by these seemingly 'healthy' cigarettes.

Could alcohol be heading down a similar path? Imagine purchasing your favourite bottle of gin, only to be confronted with a shocking image of someone in a dire state due to alcohol abuse. It's a sobering thought, prompting us to reconsider the narrative surrounding alcohol and its potential impact on our health and society as a whole. The reality is that the big drinks companys invest billions on the shiny packaging, the trendy bottles, the pink gins, the adverts, the Botanicals, all luring in girls looking for a seemingly harmless night out of 'fun'.

The Institute of Alcohol Studies has estimated that the production and sale of alcohol was worth £46 billion to the UK economy in 2014, accounting for 2.5% of Gross Domestic Product and 3.7% of all consumer spending.

No wonder we all believe the lie. It's glamorous, it's fun, there's no harm in it, sure "I dont even drink that much." "Only alcoholics have a problem. It's them, not me."

Alongside the carefully designed labels and catchy slogans, consumers would be confronted with the harsh realities of alcohol's impact on health and well-being. From liver damage and increased risk of cancer to impaired judgment and addiction, the list would serve as a cautionary tale, urging individuals to think twice before indulging. Such transparency could potentially lead to greater awareness and informed decision-making among consumers, ultimately prompting a shift towards more mindful drinking habits and healthier lifestyles.

The sobering facts!

The below facts are only scratching the surface. As you progress through the programme, you will start to see a clearer picture of the effect of alcohol on society and families.

- In Ireland, 70% of individuals aged 15 or older report consuming alcohol during the past 12 months.
- Almost three-quarters (73%) of men report drinking alcohol in the past 12 months, compared to 67% of women.
- 38% of people drink at least once a week.
- 21% drink multiple times per week

Source: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/73c9d-healthy-ireland-survey-2023/#alcohol-consumption>

Researchers estimated that in 2019 there were 1543 deaths in Ireland directly attributable to alcohol from all causes, representing 4.77% of all deaths.

1104 of these deaths were in males (6.6% of all male deaths) and 439 in females (2.81% of all female deaths).

NOTE: These figures do not include figures that are indirectly caused by alcohol. (e.g. Drunk driver - cause of death is road traffic collision, not alcohol).

Alcohol related cancer

This is the scary part for us, while we are all trying not to eat 'highly processed foods,' reduce our carbs, dairy and gluten, practising Intermittent Fasting, zenning out to meditations etc. This seemingly innocent drink we have a couple of times a week is doing more damage than we can even comprehend.

Alcohol is classified as a group 1 carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) as there is a proven, causal link between alcohol and several types of cancer including oral cavity, throat, larynx, oesophagus, liver, colon, rectum and female breast cancer.

According to the Health Research Board between 2012 and 2017, there were 55,097 discharges from Irish hospitals due to partially alcohol-attributable cancers. A recent global population-based study found approximately 1000 diagnoses of cancer in Ireland in 2020 were attributable to cancer (670 male, 380 women). This study also found that risky and heavy drinking contributed most to the burden of alcohol-attributable cancers; however, moderate drinking still contributed one in seven alcohol-attributable cases and more than 100,000

How much is safe?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that there is no safe level of alcohol consumption.

Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer type in the WHO European Region, with 1,579 women diagnosed every day. Alcohol consumption is one of the major modifiable risk factors for the disease, causing 7 of every 100 new breast cancer cases in the Region.

The risk of breast cancer increases with each unit of alcohol consumed per day.

Source: [https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/20-10-2021-alcohol-is-one-of-the-biggest-risk-factors-for-breast-cancer#:~:text=There%20is%20no%20safe%20level,100%20ml%20each\)%20every%20day.](https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/20-10-2021-alcohol-is-one-of-the-biggest-risk-factors-for-breast-cancer#:~:text=There%20is%20no%20safe%20level,100%20ml%20each)%20every%20day.)

Can drinking alcohol cause breast cancer?

Regularly drinking alcohol increases your risk of developing breast cancer.

- The more you drink, the greater your risk
- Just 1 alcoholic drink a day can increase your risk, although you can still develop breast cancer even if you do not drink
- To reduce your risk of breast cancer, limit the amount of alcohol you drink
- The earlier in your life you start to reduce your drinking, the better.

How does it cause cancer?

It's not fully understood how alcohol increases the risk of breast cancer.

It might change the levels of hormones in the body, including oestrogen. Oestrogen can help some breast cancers to grow.

There may be other ways that alcohol increases the risk of breast cancer, but these are not yet clear.

Source: <https://breastcancernow.org/about-breast-cancer/awareness/breast-cancer-causes/alcohol-and-breast-cancer-risk/#:~:text=In%20a%20group%20of%2050%20women%20who%20drink%20two%20units,50%20to%20develop%20breast%20cancer.>

The overall estimated association is an approximate 50% increase in Breast Cancer risk from 15-30g per day of alcohol consumption (about 1-2 drinks a day.)

Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3832299/>





SOBERISH
CHAPTER 5

** Own It: Be Proud of Your Choice **



One of the very first things we encourage you to do is to stand up tall and be proud of this decision you have made to better your health. Embracing a soberish lifestyle is a powerful decision that deserves celebration.

Instead of feeling ashamed or self-conscious about your choice, own it with pride and confidence.

Talk positively about your decision to have a more mindful approach to alcohol highlighting the benefits and improvements it has brought to your life.

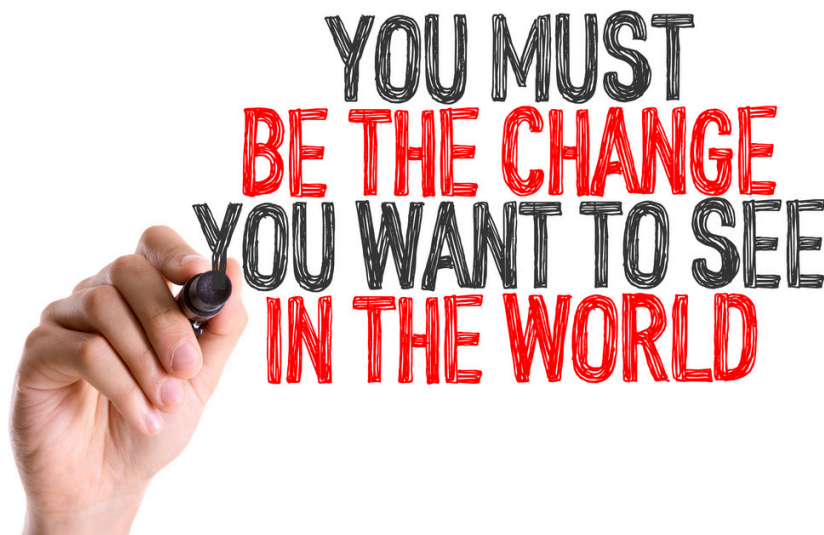
By owning your choice and speaking openly about it, you are not only reprogramming your brain to believe your new reality, but you may just inspire others to consider their own relationship with alcohol and help to break down societal stigmas and norms surrounding drinking.

At Cinch, we have seen first-hand the repercussions of leading by example and showing others that living a soberish lifestyle is not only possible but also so fulfilling, rewarding and truly life-changing.

So, embrace your decision, stand tall, and share your journey with pride. You never know who you might inspire or empower along the way.

Together, let's create a world where choosing to say NO is celebrated, not criticised, and where everyone feels empowered to live their best, soberish or alcohol-free life.

Own it, and be the change you wish to see in the world.



How?



Now that we have identified WHY you are doing this. Now, we'll delve into the strategies and tools you need to navigate the challenges and triumphs of living a soberish lifestyle.

From identifying triggers to exploring alternatives, we'll equip you with the knowledge and resources to create a roadmap for success on this challenge.

Identifying your triggers and potential challenges is key to success on your journey. Take some time to reflect on situations or emotions that typically lead to alcohol consumption.

Whether it's social gatherings, stressful situations, or habitual drinking patterns, understanding your triggers will empower you to navigate these situations with confidence. Then, we want you to look at your calendar for the next 30 days and make a plan of action.

Consider alternatives to alcohol that align with your goals and preferences. Mocktails, herbal teas, or sparkling water can be satisfying substitutes that help quench cravings while keeping you on track. Experiment with different options to find what works best for you.

Planning ahead is absolutely essential for staying committed to your Cinch goals.

Motivation and self-discipline are not enough, you are human, and alcohol is a very addictive substance.

The key to success is planning.



PLANNING YOUR AF LIFE AT-HOME

Planning the next 30 days is key to your success.

Take some time right now to look at your calendar, your home, your drinks cabinet, your mindset.

Make the decision right now to commit to the next 30 days.

Then perhaps consider implimenting some of these strategies in your own home....



Create a Supportive Environment:

Surround yourself with a supportive environment that reinforces your commitment to your goals. Remove any alcohol from your home or workplace and designate a specific area where alcohol is stored, out of sight and out of mind (even better, out of the house!). When it isnt there, it isnt an option.



Stock Up on Alcohol-Free Alternatives:

Fill your fridge and pantry with delicious alcohol-free alternatives, such as sparkling water, herbal teas, and mocktail ingredients. Having tasty and satisfying beverages readily available makes it easier to resist the temptation to drink alcohol.



Pimp Your Glass!

Present your new-found, delicious AF drink in the most special glass you can find. Make it a ritual. Make it special, appealing, filled with lots of ice, fresh fruit and enjoy every refreshing mouthful! You are actually helping to program your mind into believing that this drink is absolutely amazing and you are enjoying every single mouthful!



Practice Mindfulness and Self-Care:

By engaing in this programme you are prioritising your self-care. Take that one step further and introduce practices like meditation, yoga, journaling, or deep breathing exercises into your daily routine to promote relaxation, reduce stress, and enhance your sense of inner peace.

AF AT-HOME

Planning the next 30 days is key to your success.

Take some time right now to look at your calendar, your home, your drinks cabinet, your mindset.

Make the decision right now to commit to the next 30 days.

Then perhaps consider implementing some of these strategies in your own home....



Establish Healthy Routines:

Create healthy routines and habits that align with your soberish lifestyle. Set regular meal times, prioritise adequate sleep, and incorporate daily exercise into your schedule. Structure and routine provide stability and consistency, making it easier to maintain your goals.



The Power of Community

Use the Cinch Soberish Community to stay connected. Get together with friends, family, and supportive communities who understand and respect your decision to reduce or quit alcohol. Schedule regular check-ins, attend AF social events, and get involved in our groups to connect with like-minded individuals who share your journey.



Explore New Hobbies and Activities

Use your newfound sobriety as an opportunity to explore new hobbies and activities that bring you joy and fulfillment. Whether it's cooking, knitting, gardening, crafting, or practicing music, yoga or running, channel your energy into activities that nourish your mind, body, and soul. You will soon see that alcohol has little to no place in your life.



Celebrate Milestones

Celebrate your milestones and achievements along the way. Whether it's one day, one week, or one year, take time to acknowledge and celebrate your progress, recognising the strength and resilience it takes to live a soberish life.

PLANNING YOUR AF SOCIAL SITUATIONS

Now, let's move on to navigating the next 30 days without or reducing alcohol. It can feel daunting at first, but with the right strategies, planning and preparation, you can enjoy yourself and stay true to your goals.

Here are some tips to help you thrive in social settings:



Mental Preparation

Before attending a social gathering, mentally prepare yourself for the event. Visualise yourself confidently navigating the situation without alcohol and remind yourself of your reasons for choosing to drink less or none at all.



Communicate Your Choices:

Be open and honest with friends and family about your decision to reduce or eliminate alcohol from your life. Let them know that you're committed to your goals and ask for their support in respecting your choices.



Focus on Connections

Shift your focus away from alcohol and towards connecting with others on a deeper level. Engage in meaningful conversations, participate in activities, and enjoy the company of friends without relying on alcohol as a social lubricant.



Bring Your Own Drinks

If you're attending a gathering where alcohol will be served, bring your own alcohol-free drinks to enjoy. This ensures that you always have something delicious and satisfying to drink while avoiding the temptation of alcohol.



Practice Assertiveness:

Don't be afraid to assert yourself if someone offers you a drink or questions your decision to drink less or abstain. Politely decline offers of alcohol and confidently reaffirm your commitment to your Cinch goals.



Have an Exit Strategy in Place

If you find yourself feeling uncomfortable or tempted to drink, have an exit strategy in place. Plan to leave the event early if needed, or have a trusted friend or family member on standby to support you.



Morning Momentum: Plan Engaging Activities

Having something lined up on your calendar adds a dose of accountability and purpose, making it way easier to say no to that nightcap. Plus, getting active or catching up over coffee reminds you of the awesome benefits of living your best, healthiest life. So swap that drink for a date with your sneakers or a friend—your body and mind will thank you for it!



Find Alcohol-Free Alternatives

Shift your focus on what you can have, not what you can't have! Explore non-alcoholic drink options that you enjoy and feel comfortable ordering or preparing. Mocktails, sparkling water with fruit, or herbal teas can be refreshing and satisfying alternatives to alcoholic beverages. With every sip visualise all the benefits that the beverage is delivering and how good you will feel going to bed without the cloud of alcohol over your head.

ACTION

MY AF PLAN

Now, take some time to make your own plan of action.
Both for at-home and social events....

MY GOAL:

MY PLAN:

HOME:

HOME:

HOME:

HOME:

HOME:



MY *ACTION* AF PLAN

Now do the same for any social occasions you will face over the next 30 days.

MY GOAL:

MY PLAN:

EVENT:

EVENT:

EVENT:

EVENT:

EVENT:





SOBERISH

CHAPTER 6

Day 7: Celebrate the Milestone!

Congratulations! You've reached your first milestone on your journey to going AF or drinking less. At Cinch Soberish, we believe every step forward deserves to be celebrated, and your commitment to positive change is truly inspiring.

Here are some ideas to celebrate your one-week sober milestone or your progress in reducing your alcohol intake:



1. **Treat Yourself:** Take some time to indulge in a little self-care. Treat yourself to a lovely face mask, some me-time, a good book or a day out with family! Be very proud of this first week's achievement .
2. **Share Your Success:** Share your achievement with us in the Soberish Community! Celebrating with others not only amplifies the joy but also reinforces your commitment to your goals.
3. **Reflect on Your Journey:** Take a moment to reflect on how far you've come since starting your Soberish journey. Journal about your experiences, challenges overcome, and the positive changes you've noticed in yourself.
4. **Set New Goals:** Use this first milestone as an opportunity to set new goals for yourself. Whether it's aiming for another week of sobriety or further reducing your alcohol consumption, having clear goals will keep you motivated and focused.
5. **Feel the Feelings!** This journey is all about improving your wellbeing! Take a moment to realise how good you feel without the booze.

Remember, every milestone, no matter how small, is a significant achievement on your journey to a healthier, happier you.



SOBERISH
CHAPTER 7

You Vs Drink



So, whilst all of the previous section was heavy going. The reality is, that this is just a small part of the picture. It's important that we are all aware of the risks, and how they relate to us. In this next part, we want you to have a think about what kind of drinker are you? For ease, we have classed this into 4 categories....

1) The Social Drinker:

A social drinker drinks to celebrate, have fun, or bond with others. Alcohol is commonly used as a social lubricant, as it can make you feel more relaxed, outgoing, and confident. Social drinkers usually drink in moderation and in the company of others. They may not drink at all when they are alone or in situations where drinking is not appropriate.

Social drinking is general is more likely where you would binge drink, matching your friends drink-for-drink. The hangovers are usually and teh promise that you will 'never drink again' is soon forgotten as soon as the next invite lands.



Let's take a moment to reflect on a different aspect of our lives. How often do you find yourself out socially, enjoying a few drinks? Are these occasions sporadic, allowing you to wake up the next morning feeling refreshed and ready for the day? If so, fantastic! But what if your social drinking involves weekly outings, leaning on alcohol to socialise, or succumbing to peer pressure and drinking more than you intended? And being less than sparkly the next morning affecting family time, work, resulting in lying in bed all morning craving toast and cheese and a packet of Tayto Cheese & Onion crisps. with the Fear of God as your only company.

2) The Habit Drinker



Being a habit drinker means that alcohol consumption has become a routine part of life, often ingrained into regular activities and rituals. Whether it's the weekend, a drink after work to unwind, or a beer or wine with dinner, the habit drinker tends to reach for alcohol almost automatically, without much thought or consideration. Unlike social drinkers who may indulge on special occasions or in specific social settings, habit drinkers may find themselves turning to alcohol as a coping mechanism or out of habit, regardless of the situation. While habit drinking may not always lead to excessive consumption, it can still pose risks if it begins to interfere with your health, responsibilities, or relationships. This type of drinking can be one of the most unhealthy as the units soon mount up and without proper measures it's very difficult to gauge the actual amount of units you are consuming

~~2) The~~ Conformity drinker:

A conformity drinker drinks to fit in, avoid rejection, or please others. Alcohol is used as a way to conform to the expectations or demands of others, such as friends, family, or colleagues. Conformity drinkers may not enjoy drinking or may prefer not to drink, but they do so anyway to avoid conflict or criticism. It's the ultimate peer pressure drinking.



They may also drink to cope with feelings of insecurity, low self-esteem, or social anxiety. This style of drinking is usually associated with low levels of alcohol consumption, as conformity drinkers tend to follow the drinking patterns of their peers. However, conformity drinking can also lead to excessive or risky drinking, especially among young people who are influenced by peer pressure. Unfortunately we live in a world where it's more socially acceptable to drink than not!

3) The Enhancement Drinker

Have you ever found yourself knocking back that first glass of wine to get that fast hit? An enhancement drinker drinks because it's exciting, stimulating, or rewarding. Alcohol is used as a way to enhance positive emotions, such as happiness, euphoria, or thrill.

Enhancement drinkers seek the pleasurable effects of alcohol and may drink more than others to achieve them.



They may also drink to cope with boredom, monotony, or dissatisfaction.

Enhancement drinking is often associated with high levels of alcohol consumption, as enhancement drinkers tend to drink more frequently and heavily than other types of drinkers.

Have you ever found yourself reaching for a drink not out of social obligation but for the sheer thrill it promises? The quest for heightened emotional states propels you to down a few more sips, chasing that elusive sense of euphoria that alcohol promises.

Is alcohol for you a means of enhancing positive feelings, whether it be happiness, euphoria, or an overall sense of reward?

Enhancement drinkers, in their pursuit of the pleasurable effects of alcohol, may find themselves downing more than their friends to achieve the desired emotional highs.

Do you ever resort to alcohol to alleviate moments of boredom, monotony, or dissatisfaction? Does the prospect of enhancement drinking sometimes overshadow the underlying reasons for reaching for that glass?

4) The Coping Drinker

A coping drinker drinks to forget, escape, or reduce negative emotions, such as stress, anxiety, depression, sadness, loneliness or anger. Alcohol is used as a way to cope with difficult situations or feelings, as it can temporarily numb or distract from them.

It often is the gateway to alcohol dependence and can happen as a result of many things, stressful job, unhappy marriage, or traumatic event such as an accident, divorce, death or illness (yourself or family or friend).



Coping drinkers may drink alone or in secret, and may drink more than they plan to or lose control over their drinking. They may also drink to cope with the negative consequences of their drinking, such as hangovers, guilt, or shame. This type of drinking can worsen the underlying problems and create new ones.

It can also lead to alcohol dependence, as coping drinkers may develop a psychological or physical need for alcohol to function.



Have you ever found yourself reaching for a drink as a means to forget, escape, or alleviate the weight of challenging emotions? Does the prospect of momentarily numbing or distracting yourself from difficult situations resonate with your experiences?

Digging deeper into the world of coping drinkers, the coping mechanism extends beyond social contexts. These people may find themselves drinking alone or in secret, creating a private refuge where they attempt to cope with their emotional struggles.

Have you ever found that the amount you drink surpasses your initial plans, or have you ever felt a loss of control over your drinking habits?

The intricacies of coping drinking don't end there. Think about your own life and whether, at times, you may find yourself using alcohol as a remedy for the negative consequences it brings—hangovers, guilt, or shame. It's a complex cycle where drinking becomes a coping mechanism for both the original emotional distress and the aftermath of excessive drinking. It's crucial to acknowledge that coping drinking holds the potential to be the most harmful type of drinking.

Rather than addressing the underlying problems, it may exacerbate them and give rise to new challenges.

Also, coping drinking can act as the gateway to alcohol dependence, where the individual develops a psychological or physical reliance on alcohol to navigate day-to-day life.

What Type of Drinker are You?



This chapter invited us all to examine our relationship with alcohol.

It all begins with a pivotal question: What type of drinker are you?

Speaking from our own experiences, we've found that our drinking habits have often straddled the line between social and conformity drinking. Sometimes even coping – especially after a stressful or traumatic time.

Angela's perspective, "There are often times when I find myself reaching for that glass just to blend in, not being bothered to defend my reasons why I didn't want to drink. Conforming to the expectations around me for the sake of not attracting attention."

Nicola agrees, "For me, it's both conformity and also enhancement. There are those moments when the social buzz kicks in, and the excitement becomes entwined with the clink of glasses. It's easy to get carried away, enhancing the whole experience. Forgetting about the reality of the hours that follow and the next day."

What did you discover about yourself? It's not about right or wrong – it's about understanding yourself. Remember, you're not defined by your drinking motives. You're a unique individual with the power and choice to shape your habits.

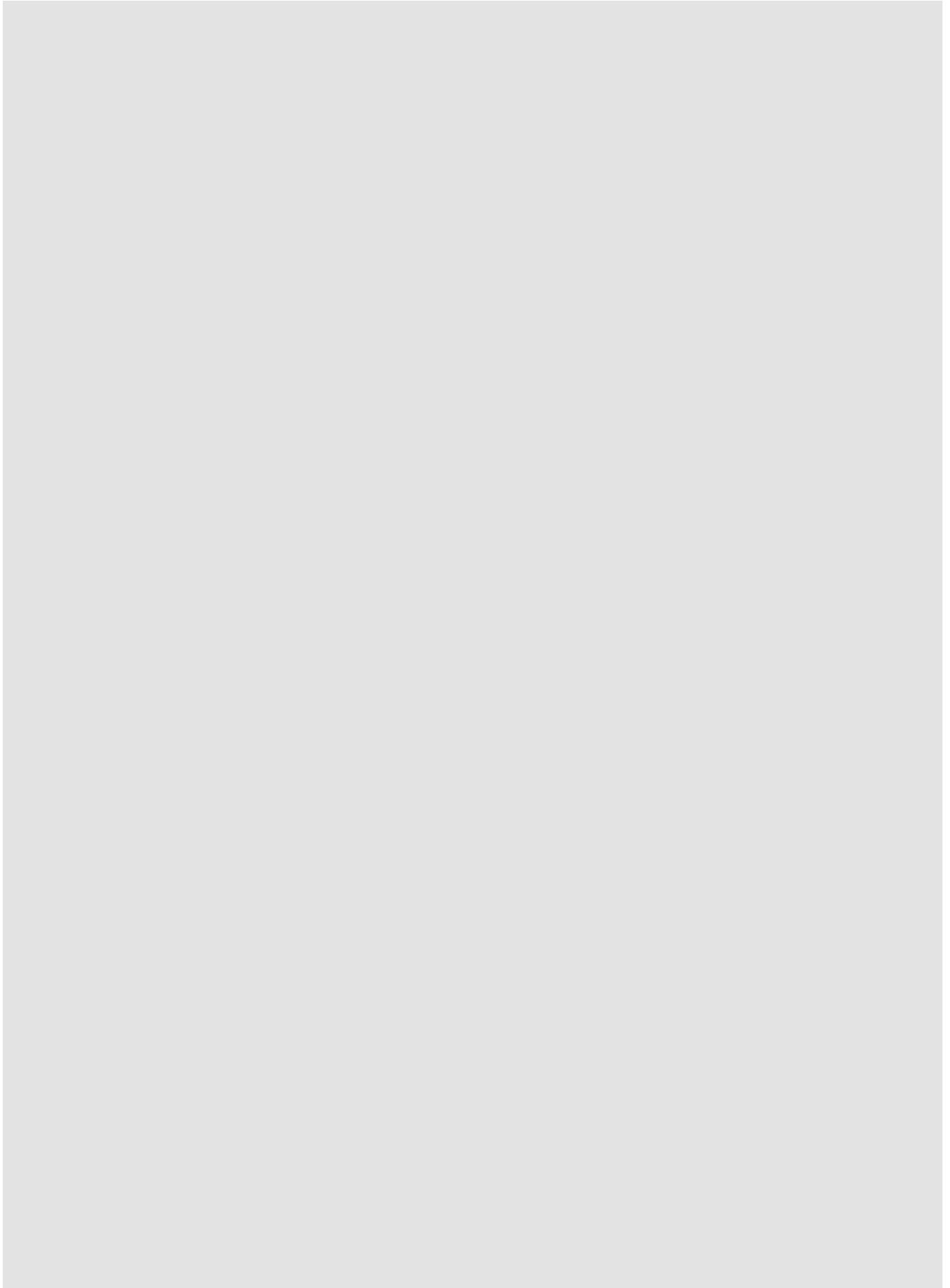
You are a unique and complex and a fabulous person, and you have the power and the choice to change your drinking habits and improve your life.

You can do this.

Next time you reach for a drink, ask yourself why you are doing it....

You Vs Alcohol

What did you learn in the last section about what kind of drinker you are?

A large, empty light gray rectangular area, likely intended for a user to write their response to the question above. It occupies the majority of the page below the question.

Wendy Vs Alcohol



Meet Wendy Donaldson, age 63 from Antrim. Wendy is one of our Cinch Fast 30 Challengers who has kindly shared her positive story about giving up alcohol....

“During lockdown, like many of us, I found myself enjoying a few more drinks than usual. What was once a Friday and Saturday night treat became a more frequent occurrence. However, my enjoyment was tempered by some skin issues, specifically Rosacea, which would flare up after indulging in a glass of wine. Add to that the munchies and a habit of having a large cooked breakfast each morning, and I started to question my relationship with alcohol.

“It was a TV interview that sparked something in me. I watched as a man accepted a challenge from his friends to give up beer for a year. It got me thinking, "Could I do this?" With my 60th birthday on the horizon, I made a decision - I would give it a try. Initially, it was tough, especially combating that ingrained feeling of "wine o'clock." But I was determined, telling myself that if I truly wanted that glass of wine, I could have it.

To ease the transition, I started with non-alcoholic wine when out with friends, but I soon found I didn't need it. And the rewards were worth it. My sleep improved, and I was getting up less in the night to pee, my skin cleared up, and my mood stabilised and I saved money. I found a new sense of confidence and control. Now, I wake up refreshed and ready for the day, without the fuzzy head or lethargy that alcohol once brought. I don't think I will ever go back now that I am feeling so good.

My choice to forgo alcohol has opened up new possibilities. In fact, it's what led me to the Cinch Fast 30. I find that without the empty calories of alcohol, I can now indulge in my love of food without worrying about increased calorie consumption, and I enjoy the simple pleasure of a coffee and a chocolate without the guilt. It's all about choice for me, and my decision to quit (along with joining Cinch) was the best I ever made.

I am so excited to see Angela and Nicola launch 'Soberish' as I feel so many people would benefit massively from improving their relationship with alcohol, especially in Northern Ireland we have all been conditioned to think we 'need to drink' to relax or have a good time, and that simply isn't the case.



SOBERISH

CHAPTER 8

UNVEILING THE TRUTH ABOUT ALCOHOL



OK, so now you have the plan in place, it is time to strengthen your resolve. The best way to do that is to face the reality of the facts surrounding alcohol...

Let's break it down. We're all on this journey to live our best lives, right? We're so focused on living clean and green, yet we don't bat an eye at regularly downing this toxic concoction that messes with our mood, messes with our minds, and messes with our bodies.

It's like, WTF is that all about? We know that alcohol isn't exactly a health tonic. It's been linked to all sorts of serious stuff like cancer and heart disease (as covered in the past sections). So, why are we still cool with pouring it down our throats like it's no big deal?

It's time to get real about this. We're putting in all this effort to live our best lives, and yet we're letting alcohol slide under the radar. But here's the thing—we don't have to keep doing that. We can make a change. We can take control of our health and happiness by saying no to the stuff that's dragging us down.

For us, the first step towards drinking less, or abstaining altogether is to understand all we can about what alcohol is and how it affects us; knowledge is everything.

To quote self-help experts Tony Robbins and Brene Brown, say; knowledge is power. It is the whole foundation upon which change is built.

So, let's equip ourselves with all the knowledge that we can, in as easy to understand language as possible.



WHAT THE AF IS ALCOHOL?



Right, let's talk about ethanol—aka the main player in the alcohol game. You know when you crack open a bottle of Prosecco, beer or pour yourself a glass of wine? Well, that warm, fuzzy feeling you get? Yeah, that's ethanol doing its thing.

Ethanol is the main player of the alcohol world. It's the stuff that gives booze its kick, its buzz, its whole reason for being. Ethanol, the primary psychoactive ingredient in alcoholic drinks, acts as a central nervous system depressant, impairing cognitive function and altering mood.

In addition, additives such as sulphites, congeners, and sugars further compound the potential harm, exacerbating the negative impact on our health and well-being. But here's the thing—it's also the stuff that can mess with your head and your body in not-so-great ways.

A Nation of Label Checkers

Considering we are a nation of label-checkers, avidly checking our food for fat content, sugar, salt this chemical or that toxin and consciously avoiding it, it feels odd that we aren't checking the label of our daily wine or gin bottle. It is after all, a toxic compound used as both a fuel and a solvent.

Unlike all other food and drinks, the law requires very little information on alcohol labels. The only information that is required is the volume of the container, the drink's strength, and whether any of the 14 most common allergens are present.

If alcohol companies were required to list all the ingredients, side effects and warnings of alcohol consumption on their products, it would likely paint a stark and sobering picture and would fill a lot more than the bottle has capacity for.

Think of it this way, when you pick up a prescription for medicine be it painkillers, antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, heart medication, steroid creams etc. The folded-up information leaflet with all of the possible side-effects are so long and detailed that you get a full understanding of the risks involved. Alcohol is one of the strongest and most potent drugs on the planet and we can freely buy this after the age of 18 without so much as a warning about how much we should drink or the consequences of drinking too much not to mention the far-reaching health risks.

Don't believe us? Go look at the label on your favourite bottle now....

UNVEILING THE DRUG IN ALL IT'S GLORY

Here's the scoop: Ethanol starts its journey as sugars or starches found in stuff like grains, fruits, or even vegetables. When these sugars get cosy with yeast—yeah, that same stuff that makes bread rise—they throw a little party and fermentation kicks off.

During fermentation, the yeast starts to eat those sugars and spits out ethanol as a byproduct. So, basically, ethanol is the result of yeast munching on sugars and turning them into everyone's 'favourite' party fuel.

Now, here's where it gets interesting. Along with ethanol, fermentation also produces other stuff like carbon dioxide and heat. But for us, the main event is definitely the ethanol. It's what gives alcohol its kick and its character.

So, what else is hiding in our drinks besides ethanol. When it comes to alcoholic drinks, there's often more than meets the eye.

Here are some common ingredients you might find in your favorite tipples:

1. Water: Yup, the most abundant ingredient in most drinks is good ol' H₂O. Whether it's the main component in beer or the mixer in your cocktail, water is essential for diluting the alcohol and balancing out the flavours.

2. Sugars: From the natural sugars found in fruits to the added sweetness of syrups or liqueurs, sugars play a big role in many alcoholic beverages. They not only add flavour but also contribute to the fermentation process in drinks like wine and beer.

3. Yeast: Speaking of fermentation, yeast is the magical microorganism responsible for turning sugars into alcohol.

4. Flavourings and Botanicals: Think herbs, spices, fruits, and botanicals like juniper berries, herbs, or fruits. These ingredients add depth, complexity, and character to drinks.

5. Additives and Preservatives: Some alcoholic beverages may contain additives or preservatives to enhance flavour, colour, or shelf life. These can include sulfites in wine, artificial colours or flavours in spirits, or stabilisers in beer.

6. Carbonation: For those fizzy drinks like beer, champagne, or sparkling wine, carbon dioxide is often added to create bubbles.

7. Distillation Byproducts: In distilled spirits like whiskey, vodka, or rum, you might find traces of byproducts from the distillation process, such as congeners. These compounds can contribute to the flavour and aroma profile of the final product.

WHAT THE AF IS ALCOHOL

Unveiling the Poison in Disguise



Fueling the Future:

First up, let's talk about ethanol's role as a fuel. Yep, you heard that right—this stuff can power more than just a good time. Ethanol is commonly used as a biofuel, meaning it's derived from renewable sources like corn, sugarcane, or even switchgrass.

Ethanol can be mixed with gasoline to create a blend called E10 or E85, depending on the percentage of ethanol in the mix. (Think petrol stations for your car)

Cleaning Up:

But wait, there's more! Ethanol isn't just good for powering vehicles—it's also a potent cleaning product. Ethanol is an excellent solvent, which means it's great at dissolving stuff like grease, oil, and dirt.

You might even have some ethanol-based cleaning products in your kitchen cupboard! They're often used in things like hand sanitisers, surface cleaners, and even windshield washer fluid.

Ethanol's ability to break down grime and kill germs makes it a go-to ingredient for keeping things clean.

Now, let's talk about the real deal—the effect of putting ethanol into your body. A powerful toxin that can fuel vehicles, clean surfaces, sanitise your hands?!

Sure, it might give you that warm, fuzzy feeling or a temporary buzz, but it also comes with some not-so-great side effects.

Ethanol is a central nervous system depressant, meaning it slows down your brain activity and can impair your judgment, coordination, and reaction times. That's why you might feel a bit off-kilter or unsteady after a few drinks. Plus, ethanol can mess with your sleep patterns, leaving you feeling groggy and tired the next day. And let's not forget about the dreaded hangover—the headache, nausea, and general feeling of bleh that can follow a night of heavy drinking.

So, we all know it, and we don't have to harbour this point, while ethanol might offer a temporary escape, the important thing to ask yourself is the short-term high really worth the risk?



SOBERISH

CHAPTER 9

ALCOHOL'S EFFECTS ON THE BODY

So in essence, what we have established is that despite its widespread acceptance and glamorisation in society, alcohol is fundamentally a toxic substance that can have detrimental effects on physical and mental health. It is one of the world's most commonly abused drugs, and is a leading contributor to morbidity across cultures.

Marketing campaigns, social events, and cultural norms frequently portray alcohol as a symbol of sophistication, relaxation, and social status, contributing to its widespread acceptance and consumption.

Drinking too much – on a single occasion or over time – can take a serious toll on your health. Here's how alcohol can affect your body:

Brain:



So, when you toss back a drink, that ethanol stuff doesn't just sit there—it gets busy messing with your brain. Seriously, it messes with the communication pathways in your head, making everything a bit wonky. Picture this: your brain is like a bunch of wires sending messages back and forth. But when ethanol crashes the party, those messages get all jumbled up. Suddenly, your mood swings like a pendulum, your behaviour goes off the rails, you do things you would never normally do, and thinking straight becomes a Herculean task. Plus, forget about walking a straight line—that coordination you had? Yeah, it's out the window.

Your heart is a muscle, right? Well, when you're constantly flooding your system with alcohol, it's like stretching and drooping that muscle out, a bit like an rubber band that's been pulled too far. This can lead to all sorts of issues, like cardiomyopathy, where your heart muscle gets weak and flabby.

It can also mess with your heart's rhythm, making it irregular and out of sync. We're talking arrhythmias, where your heart starts beating like it's marching to its own drum. Drinking too much can also up your risk of serious stuff like stroke and high blood pressure. It's like putting your heart through a marathon when it's only trained for a sprint.

Heart:



Liver:



Your liver's like this superhero organ—it filters out all the junk in your system and keeps things running smoothly. But when you start drinking like there's no tomorrow, it's like sending your liver into overdrive and puts a serious strain on it, scuppering its ability to perform the job it needs to, leading to all sorts of problems. For instance, ever heard of fatty liver? It's when your liver starts storing up fat like it's preparing for hibernation. It is dangerous to our health because it can progress to more severe liver conditions, such as cirrhosis, and increase the risk of liver failure and other serious complications.

And then there's alcoholic hepatitis—a fancy term for inflammation of the liver. It's like your liver's throwing a tantrum because it's had enough of all the abuse.

But wait, it gets worse. Drinking too much can also cause fibrosis, where your liver starts scarring up like a worn-out patch on your favourite jeans. And if you keep pushing it, you might end up with cirrhosis—the ultimate showdown for your liver, leaving it battered and beaten like an old punching bag, damaged beyond repair.

Pancreas



Think of your pancreas as a multitasking genius—it's like the Swiss Army knife of your digestive system. One of its main jobs is to produce enzymes that help break down food in your intestines, turning it into nutrients that your body can absorb and use for energy.

It also plays a crucial role in regulating your blood sugar levels by producing insulin and other hormones. So basically, your pancreas is the unsung hero behind the scenes, keeping your body running smoothly and keeping you feeling your best.

So, what happens to this vital organ when you start hitting the bottle a bit too hard? Well...your pancreas can't perform its vital function and starts churning out all these toxic substances. It's like it's trying to fight off the invaders, but instead, it ends up causing chaos inside your body.

One of the big problems is pancreatitis. It's like your pancreas is throwing a major fit, swelling up like a balloon and causing all sorts of pain. And it doesn't stop there—pancreatitis can mess with your digestion, making it harder for your body to break down food and absorb nutrients.*A3

Gut Health



Alcohol can also disrupt your gut health, which is the foundation of your body's overall health. It can mess with the good bacteria living in our gut, throwing off the balance of our microbiome. Plus, it can weaken the lining of our intestinal walls, which is where things get really serious.

When this lining gets compromised, it's like opening the floodgates to trouble. You might end up with something called "leaky gut," where undigested food particles sneak out of your digestive tract and wreak havoc. This can set off inflammation and even trigger autoimmune responses, especially if you're dealing with conditions like endometriosis, which some folks think of as an autoimmune disease.



Women's Health

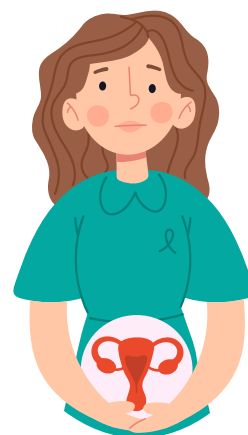
As we have already established, alcohol messes with estrogen levels in our bodies, and that's a big deal for women's health. Estrogen is the hormone that thickens the lining of the uterus during our menstrual cycle. But when alcohol comes into the picture, it can crank up our estrogen levels, which isn't great news for those of us dealing with endometriosis.

Endometriosis is already a tough customer; it is like this unwelcome guest that crashes the party in your body. Normally, the lining of your uterus grows and sheds each month during your period. But with endometriosis, that lining starts popping up in places it shouldn't be—like your ovaries, fallopian tubes, or even your intestines. And high estrogen levels can make things even trickier. It's like pouring fuel on the fire, aggravating symptoms and making life with endometriosis even more challenging.

This rogue lining doesn't just sit there quietly—it causes all sorts of chaos. It can lead to excruciating pain, especially during your period or when you're getting busy in the bedroom. Plus, it can mess with your hormones, throwing everything out of whack and making life feel like a never-ending rollercoaster ride.

Polycystic Ovary Disease

Another women's condition that is affected by alcohol is polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). Alcohol messes with your body's hormone balance, making it harder for ladies with PCOS to manage their symptoms. From irregular periods to skin issues, alcohol can make things even more challenging.



Nicola's Vs Endometriosis



Living with endometriosis has been a constant battle for me, and alcohol has only made the fight even tougher. When I first got diagnosed, age 32, I didn't fully realise the impact that alcohol could have on my symptoms.

But as time went on, I started to notice a pattern—a cruel cycle where every drink seemed to amplify the pain and discomfort I was already dealing with.

It's hard to describe the agony of a flare-up, the stabbing pain that feels like it's tearing me apart from the inside out. And because it's a hidden disease, many people don't quite understand and are therefore able to support sufferers when they have flare-ups.

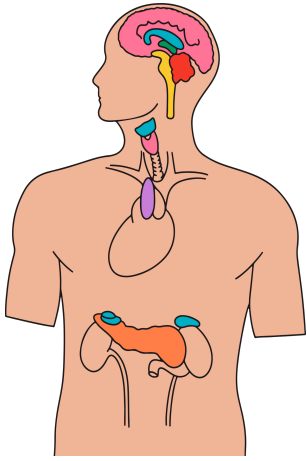
The truth is, alcohol wreaks havoc on my body in ways that I never could have imagined. It intensifies the inflammation, exacerbates the bloating, and sends my hormones into a tailspin. And the next day? The hangover is nothing compared to the aftermath of a night of drinking—every movement feels like a struggle, every twinge a reminder of the toll that alcohol takes on my already fragile body. (Maybe that sheds more light on why I was 3 hours late for my wedding!)

So, as the years have progressed, I have had to become very mindful of what I drink. For me it just isn't worth it. I do enjoy the odd glass of wine or gin and tonic and if I have more than that I pay for it for the next 3 days.

My body is shouting loudly at me, and I know I owe it to myself to listen and drink less.

Now, age 47, I am acutely aware of my changing hormones, and the disrupting affect that drinking alcohol has on them. When everyone is talking about peri-menopause and what they can do to help manage their symptoms the very first thing I would suggest is reduce their alcohol, not that anyone wants to hear that!

Endocrine System



Alcohol messes with our body's communication system, called the endocrine system, which keeps everything in check internally. It helps us handle stress, heal from injuries, and stay balanced. But when we drink too much, it throws this system out of whack, disrupting its connections with the brain, immune system, and body clock. This disruption messes up our hormones, causing all sorts of issues, from stress problems to trouble with reproduction, growth, thyroid, and even our immune system. Plus, it can lead to serious stuff like cancer, bone diseases, and mental health issues.

Cancer

As touched upon in previous chapters, according to Cancer Research UK, alcohol causes 7 types of cancer, including breast, mouth and bowel cancer. Essentially, when you sip on any type of alcohol, your body starts breaking it down into this not-so-friendly chemical. The risk of developing these types of cancer starts to increase even at low levels of drinking. So the less you drink, the more you reduce your risk.



Peri-Menopause



Alright, let's talk about the dreaded menopause. this deserves a whole section to itself—a major milestone in a woman's life that comes with its fair share of twists and turns.

Picture this: hormones are doing the cha-cha, and your body's going through all sorts of changes, both inside and out. It's like navigating through a rollercoaster ride of physical and emotional ups and downs.

Now, add alcohol into the mix, and things can get even trickier. For many women, knocking back a few drinks during menopause can kick symptoms into overdrive and make the whole journey even bumpier. Alcohol has an effect on your blood vessels (think of your red, rosy face after a few). This can trigger or worsen hot flashes and night sweats, making menopausal symptoms more uncomfortable. Alcohol interferes with the body's natural hormonal regulation, leading to mood swings and increased emotional sensitivity during menopause. It's like throwing fuel on the fire, making those hot flashes hotter and those mood swings swingier.

Sleep!

On top of that, insomnia, a common issue for women going through menopause, can get even worse with alcohol. We can all admit, drinking well and truly messes up your sleep, making it restless, sweaty, then throw in the anxiety and palpitations and you don't get a lot of shut eye.

Bone Health Concerns

During menopause, women's risk of osteoporosis goes up because of lower estrogen levels. Drinking too much can make it even worse, weakening bones and upping the chance of fractures. It is thought that alcohol may slow down bone growth and speed up bone loss. So, if you're already dealing with menopause, best to go easy on the drinks to protect your bones.

Angela Vs The Menopause

For me, navigating the past few years, I put down my lower tolerance to alcohol to simply getting older! But upon closer inspection, I believe it is in large-part down to my journey through these uncharted peri-menopause years. As the years have gone on, I've noticed an increasing pattern—a very real "hanxiety" feeling that always seems to accompany my drinking sessions. In fact, it is one of my main reasons for reducing my consumption. It won't happen with one drink, but any more than that and it will almost, always happen. And weirdly its more with wine and spirits than beer - so I haven't touched these in a long time.

It typically kicks in around 2 am, waking me with a rude awakening and a racing heart, sick feeling in my stomach. I wake up with a really sore stomach, head and sense of dread. It's like clockwork, and it goes beyond the usual inflammation and longer recovery time I've experienced before. As I've delved deeper into understanding what's going on, I've come to realise that hormones are playing a significant part in this. It's like my body's internal balance is getting thrown off-kilter, and alcohol is only exacerbating the situation. So, not only am I dealing with the physical symptoms of peri-menopause, but I'm also contending with the added stress that alcohol brings into the mix.



Premature ageing



Turns out, booze can do more than harm what's on the inside—it can fast-track the ageing process, leaving you looking older than your years. This one is a hard fact to swallow - literally! Ever seen a hardened drinker with the puffy, red face, broken capillaries and less than glowing? Or looked in the mirror after a hard session? It's not pretty! Yep, we're talking premature ageing, and it's not just a myth.

How Alcohol Accelerates Ageing:

1. **Dehydration:** Alcohol is a diuretic, meaning it increases urine production and leads to dehydration. Chronic dehydration can result in dry, dull skin, exacerbating the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.
2. **Skin Damage:** Alcohol consumption can impair the body's ability to produce collagen, a protein vital for maintaining skin elasticity and firmness. This can result in sagging skin, uneven texture, and increased susceptibility to sun damage.
3. **Inflammation:** Alcohol consumption triggers inflammation throughout the body, including the skin. Chronic inflammation contributes to the breakdown of collagen and elastin fibres, accelerating the ageing process.
4. **Poor Sleep Quality:** While alcohol may initially induce drowsiness, it disrupts the sleep cycle, leading to poor sleep quality. Inadequate sleep inhibits the body's ability to repair and regenerate skin cells, leading to a tired, aged appearance.
5. **Nutrient Depletion:** Excessive alcohol consumption can deplete essential vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin A, vitamin C, and zinc, which are crucial for maintaining healthy skin and combating oxidative stress.

ALCOHOL; YOUR WEIGHT



This is a subject we know ALL about. Alcohol can throw a major spanner into your weight loss journey and overall well-being. When it comes to shedding those extra pounds and feeling your best, alcohol can be a major roadblock. It's not just about the empty calories—it's about how alcohol affects your body's ability to burn fat and regulate hunger.

At Cinch, we recognise the importance of alcohol's role in weight management and overall health. Our CinchFast 30 program, has helped thousands of people from all walks of life achieve their weight loss goals while improving their overall wellbeing. One of the most often asked questions is can I still drink and lose weight? Well....let's take a closer look...

Effects on Weight:

Alcohol is basically empty calories—it packs a punch without giving your body any real nutrition. Those sneaky extra calories? Yeah, they like to hang around as stubborn fat, especially around your belly. Plus, alcohol can crank up your hunger, making you more likely to overeat. Think about it, once you have a glass or two, you crave the crisps, olives, cheese, any wee salty nibbles, plus, then before you know it all of those good intentions are out the window.

Sleep:

As we have already established, alcohol disrupts the natural sleep cycle by interfering with the release of hormones like cortisol and adrenaline, which should normally decrease as you prepare for sleep. Instead, alcohol consumption can cause an increase in cortisol levels, particularly around 2 am, leading to a disrupted sleep pattern and potentially heightened anxiety. This surge in cortisol can contribute to waking up during the night and experiencing restless sleep, impacting overall sleep quality and leaving you feeling groggy and anxious the next day. Lack of sleep can disrupt hormones involved in hunger and appetite regulation, potentially leading to weight gain over time. Picture waking up the morning after a few glasses of wine and the first thing you want to do is get the toaster on or go to McDonalds!

Anxiety

Alcohol, often turned to as a quick fix for stress and anxiety, ends up making things worse in the long run. Sure, it might offer a temporary escape, especially in social settings, but its impact on mental health can't be ignored. We have established that alcohol messes with your brain's neurotransmitters—especially serotonin and dopamine—the ones responsible for keeping your mood in check. When alcohol gets involved it throws these guys off balance, and can leave you feeling even more anxious and down in the dumps over time.



Alcohol, as it turns out, is a bit of a downer for your nervous system. It basically hits the brakes on your brain activity, which might sound relaxing at first. But here's the reality: as your body tries to counteract this slowdown, it can actually ramp up feelings of anxiety. And that's not all—alcohol messes with your sleep too, throwing off your sleep cycle and leaving you tossing and turning all night. And we all know what happens when you don't get enough shut-eye—hello, anxiety!

If you wondered as I have for a long time, why you wake up in the middle of the night after drinking, there is a very good reason. Scientists know that after the alcohol sends you off to sleep, it precipitates a burst of norepinephrine, a hormone that increases as a result of excitement or stress. So, hours after drinking, your body releases a burst of norepinephrine and you are wide awake at 3am.

Angela Vs Anxiety

Remember Angela's story earlier with reference to The Menopause? Well, it's all anxiety related: The above is like a decryption of Angela's night after a few drinks. She jolts awake at 3am, her heart racing, her mind flooded with irrational fears. It's like a wave of anxiety washes over her, leaving her feeling overwhelmed. These intense feelings of anxiety are totally out of the blue for Angela when she hasn't had any alcohol. She tosses and turns, unable to shake off the grip of anxiety, knowing deep down that it's all because of the drinks she had earlier. This experience leaves her feeling completely powerless and drained, showing just how much of a toll alcohol can take on her mental well-being.

★★ THE DOWNER DISGUISED AS AN UPPER ★★



So, here's what we have established so far: Alcohol's got a lot of false promises. Despite the fancy bottle and the tasty Botanicals, the truth is, it's not all fun and games. Contrary to what we all might think, alcohol isn't some magic upper—it's actually a downer for your body and mind.

Debbie Downer

Alcohol falls into the central nervous system depressant category, which means it slows down brain function and messes with your thinking skills. Sure, it might seem like a party starter at first, but trust me, it's all downhill from there.

The Deceptive High

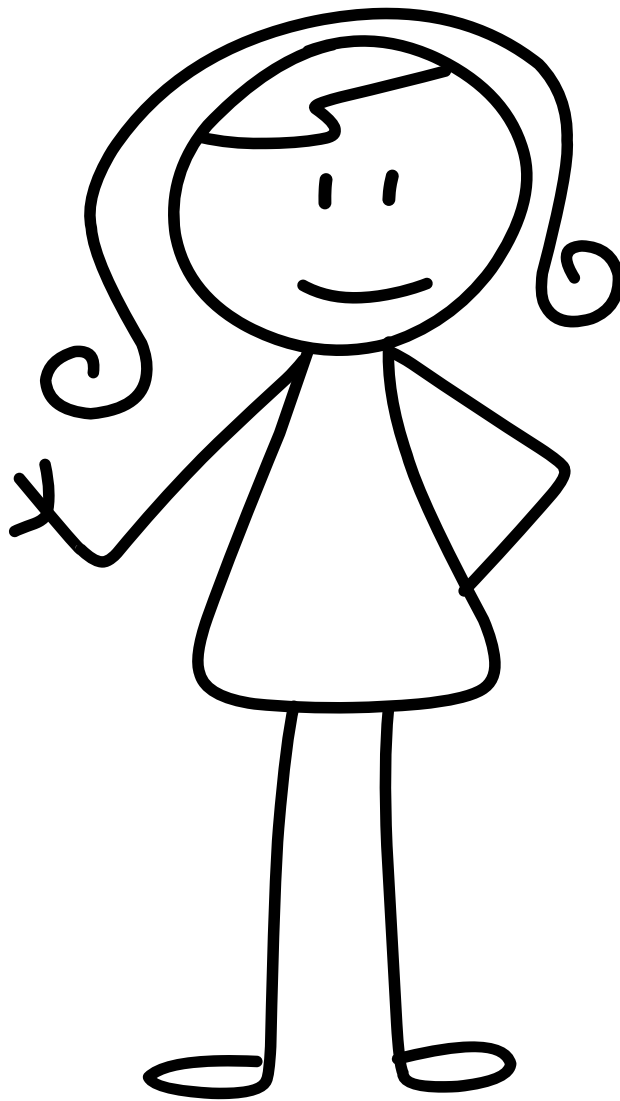
At the beginning, alcohol might make you feel all warm and fuzzy inside—more sociable, relaxed, and happy. But don't be fooled! That happy buzz doesn't last long, and pretty soon, you'll be feeling more down than up.

The Real Buzzkill

As you keep sipping, alcohol's downer effects start to take over. You'll notice your reactions slowing down, your coordination going out the window, and your speech getting a bit slurred. And if you're not careful, things can get seriously dangerous—think passing out, trouble breathing, or even worse.

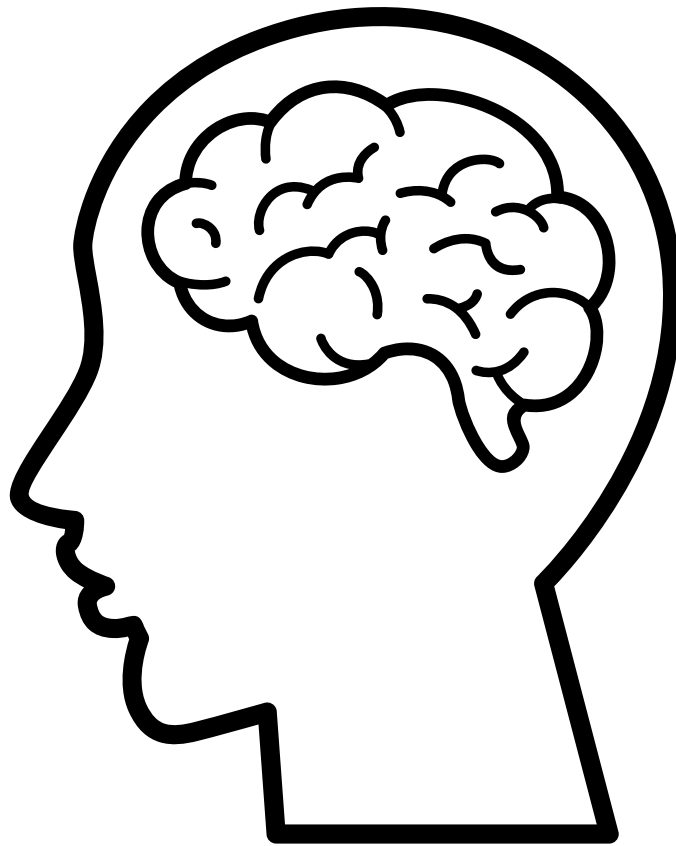
You Vs Alcohol

Chart down below how you think alcohol is PHYSICALLY affecting your health....



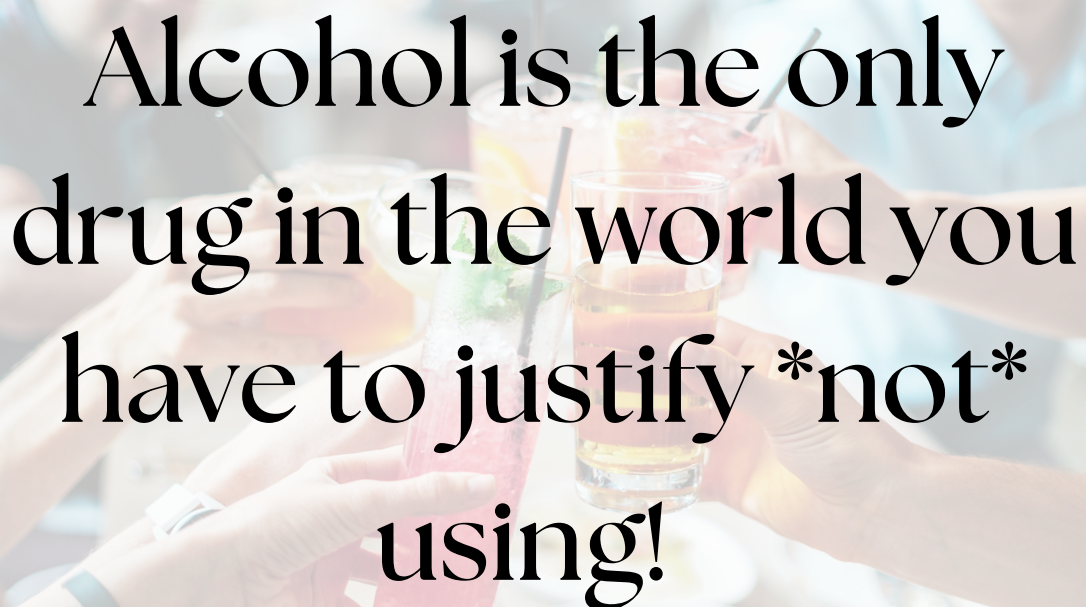

You Vs Alcohol

Chart down below how you think alcohol is Mentally affecting your health....



You Vs Alcohol

3. What changes do you want to make to your alcohol consumption?



Alcohol is the only
drug in the world you
have to justify *not*
using!



SOBERISH
CHAPTER 10

The Dark Side of Alcohol



Now, it's time to get real. When we talk about having a drink, most people see it as harmless fun. "So what if you get a bit too rowdy and make a fool of yourself? You're just having a good time!" We're quick to brush off unacceptable behaviour and give people a free pass—"Oh, they were just a bit too tipsy." It's like we're programmed to forgive and forget, sweeping their actions under the rug and moving on like nothing happened. But here's the thing: turning a blind eye only perpetuates a culture where bad behaviour is tolerated and excused.

It's time to hold ourselves and others accountable, to have the tough conversations, and to create a safer, more respectful environment for everyone.

It blows our minds how alcohol has become this socially accepted drug that we not only embrace but practically shove down each other's throats.

Imagine living in a world where your friends are like, "Seriously, you're not having heroin tonight? What's wrong with you? Just take a shot, it'll be fun." It's like we've been brainwashed by society and culture to think that alcohol is just a harmless pastime, when in reality, it's causing chaos and devastation left and right.

Here's the harsh truth: Alcohol plays a major role in most violent crimes, domestic abuse cases, and sexual assaults—and that's not just hearsay, it's a fact. More than any other 'drug' be it heroin, cannabis or Ecstasy tablets. And let's be real, those are just the incidents that get reported. The impact on the victims is immeasurable, leaving behind a trail of destruction that's impossible to ignore.

When we talk about sexual assaults and crimes, we're talking about any form of unwanted or unlawful sexual contact or violence.

It can range from creepy comments and unwanted touches to full-blown rape or exploitation.

And here's the thing—it can happen to anyone, anywhere, by anyone. But the reality is these incidents are more likely to happen when alcohol is in the picture.

We all know that one 'friend' who becomes a little too familiar when the 'drink is in and the wit is out.' - again, is it acceptable?

No? Is it tolerated?

Terrifyingly, yes it is!

Nicola Vs The Dark Side

I was only 14 when I experienced an attempted sexual assault from someone that had been drinking heavily. I was having a sleepover at my friend's house, her parents were away for the night and there was great excitement that we would have the house to ourselves. However, what I wasn't aware of (and neither were my parents) was the fact her 18 year old brother and his friends would also be there.



I still remember arriving with my overnight bag and a bit bag of sweet 'n salty popcorn and a load of 10p crisps. When I arrived the 'party' had already begun and I quickly started to feel uneasy.

The guys were chugging down the bottles of beer and pouring drinks for my friend and I. I had never tried alcohol before, so after a few mouthfuls I felt really ill. I remember the boys comments getting cruder and feeling really uncomfortable. As I'd had a few sips of the beer, there was no way I could call my parents to come get me. So, I left the kitchen and went into my friend's bed to get some sleep. The next thing I knew, I was being woken up by a very heavy body lying on top of me trying to unzip my jeans. I went into total panic, what the hell was happening and what could I do? I was only a wee slip of a 14 year old and there was a man literally lying on top of me trying to pull my jeans off. I remember the total overwhelming feeling of fear that I felt, and I projectile vomited all over the attacker. He jumped off me and called me all the most horrible, disgusting names you can imagine. To this day, I believe my vomiting was the only thing that stopped me from being raped at 14.

I remember the next day I woke up and I felt violated, but not only that, I felt ashamed and full of self-disgust. I walked into the kitchen and immediately the brother and his friends started laughing. I was the one that felt ashamed, I got home as quickly as I could and never told anyone.

To this day, this is the first time I have spoken about this attempted sexual crime.

How many girls or boys have gone through similar experiences, maybe theirs ending up very differently. There was a part of me felt it was my fault and that I was the one to blame. I am pretty sure that if the older boy had not been drinking, then this attack would not have happened. The cold hard reality is that alcohol plays a massive role in sexual assault, judgement is massively impaired, people put themselves in situations they never normally would. How many occasions have you put yourself in a dangerous position or worry about your kids doing the same thing?

The Results

Sexual assaults and crime are a major problem that affects millions of people around the world, especially women. According to the Crime Survey of England and Wales, an estimated 3.1 million adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced sexual assault since the age of 16 years, including 2.5 million women and 0.6 million men. According to the World Health Organisation, an estimated 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.

Alcohol is a common and significant factor in many cases of sexual assault and crime, both as a factor for the offenders and the victims. Alcohol can impair judgement, consent, memory, and communication, and can increase aggression, impulsivity, and risk-taking. Alcohol can also be used to justify or excuse sexual assault and crime, or to cope with the consequences.

For example, according to the Crime Survey of England and Wales, 39% of victims of rape or attempted rape believed the offender had been drinking, and 39% of victims reported being under the influence of alcohol themselves. According to a survey by Drinkaware, 35% of women and 9% of men have reported receiving unwanted sexual contact on a night out. Alcohol-related sexual assault and crime can have devastating physical, psychological, and social consequences for the victims, the offenders, and the society. They can cause injuries, infections, pregnancies, or sexually transmitted diseases. They can cause trauma, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, or substance abuse. They can cause shame, guilt, fear, isolation, or low self-esteem.

There is no other drug on the planet that causes this amount of chaos.. yet we still choose to look at alcohol as a wee bit of harmless fun.

I am sure a very high proportion of people reading this will be able to identify with how alcohol has played a part in an assault, or a sexual assault that they have either been witness to or have been the victim of.



SOBERISH
CHAPTER 11

Cool AF

Time to lighten things up again!

This course isn't meant to scare you into never drinking again and demonising anyone who does, it's about helping to educate us all about the reality of alcohol and give you the tools to live a life where you can choose to 'take it or leave it.'

As we create this course, (2024). There has never been a more popular time to be soberish. Overall, one in five (18%) people in the UK don't drink alcohol, including 15% of men and 21% of women.

In the UK, the following famous faces have chosen an alcohol free life;

Davina McCall (TV Presenter, Wellness Advocate)

Davina has been sober for over two decades, triumphing over addiction to both alcohol and drugs. She's a staunch advocate for Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), expressing her unwavering commitment to attending meetings. In a revealing conversation with Steven Bartlett on his Diary of a CEO podcast, Davina shared the raw details of her struggle with addiction. She opened up about her tumultuous upbringing and early exposure to substance use, starting with smoking weed at 12 and later experimenting with cocaine. Despite her challenging past, Davina's openness about her journey serves as a beacon of hope for others in recovery. Today, she stands as a testament to the transformative power of overcoming addiction.



Tom Holland (British Actor)



Tom Holland, known for his role as Spider-Man, got candid about his sobriety on Jay Shetty's podcast. He confessed that quitting alcohol was "the best thing I've ever done," realising how much he relied on it. Holland admitted he was "definitely addicted to alcohol" and struggled to socialise without it. Deciding to test himself, he committed to six months without alcohol, reaching his goal by his birthday. Holland reflected, "It's honestly been the best thing I've ever done," now a year and a half sober, feeling happier and healthier than ever.

Fearne Cotton

Fearne Cotton, a well-known UK TV presenter, proudly embraces her teetotal lifestyle. She openly shares how abstaining from alcohol has brought newfound happiness into her life. Gone are the days of wild house parties, replaced by the comfort of an early bedtime. While she still loves socialising, Fearne now finds joy in being tucked into bed by 9:30 pm.

In an interview with Ideal Home, Fearne reminisces about her past escapades but assures us that those moments are firmly in the rearview mirror. Despite struggles with anxiety and low self-esteem, Fearne finds solace in sobriety. She admits that life without alcohol is preferable, especially considering her husband's journey with recovery. Fearne now hosts one of the UK's most popular wellness podcasts, Happy Place, spreading positivity and inspiration to listeners nationwide.



Daniel Radcliffe (British Actor)



Daniel Radcliffe, known for his role as Harry Potter, has shared his journey to sobriety. His struggle with alcohol began during the filming of the Harry Potter series at eighteen, using it to cope with fame's pressure. In 2010, he decided to change, staying sober for two years until a setback in New York City. Since then, he's remained committed to sobriety, finding solace in long walks and gym sessions.

This routine keeps his mind occupied and cravings at bay, showing that recovery is possible with determination and healthy habits.

The Bright Side of AF



So, what are the benefits of living a soberish or alcohol free life ? There are so many....and in this section, we want to remind you of the many benefits to be had on the other side of the equation. Trust us, there's a whole lot more fun to be had!

1. Enhanced Physical Well-being:

Say goodbye to those dreaded hangovers and hello to vibrant energy! Living a soberish life or alcohol-free means waking up feeling refreshed and rejuvenated every morning with no 'hanxiety'. You'll notice improvements in your skin complexion, weight management, and overall physical health. Without alcohol weighing you down, you'll have the energy to conquer your day with gusto.



2. Improved Mental Clarity

Banish brain fog and embrace mental sharpness! Soberish living allows your mind to operate at its optimal level. Experience heightened focus, concentration, and cognitive function. Say goodbye to those forgetful moments and hello to mental clarity that empowers you to tackle challenges head-on.

3. Enhanced Emotional Well-being:

Break free from the rollercoaster of emotions that alcohol often brings. Living a soberish life fosters stable and balanced emotional well-being. Experience a greater sense of inner peace, resilience, and emotional stability. You'll find yourself better equipped to navigate life's ups and downs with grace and confidence.



The Bright Side

4. Deeper Connections:

Living a soberish life can help create authentic connections and meaningful relationships. Say goodbye to superficial interactions and hello to genuine connections that enrich your life. Whether it's bonding over shared interests or engaging in heartfelt conversations, you'll experience deeper connections with others that leave a lasting impact.



5. Empowerment and Self-Discovery:

Living a soberish life is a journey of self-discovery and empowerment. Say goodbye to societal pressures and hello to embracing your true self. At Cinch, this is our Opus Motorandi - Empowering people to live a happier, healthier life. Discover new passions, hobbies, and interests that ignite your soul. You'll gain a newfound sense of self-confidence and empowerment as you embrace your authentic identity.

6. Enhanced Productivity:

Alcohol-free living fuels productivity and achievement. Say goodbye to wasted hours and hello to pursuing your goals with unwavering determination. Experience increased productivity, creativity, and efficiency in all areas of your life. Whether it's pursuing your career aspirations or embarking on passion projects, you'll unleash your full potential. It's your superpower!

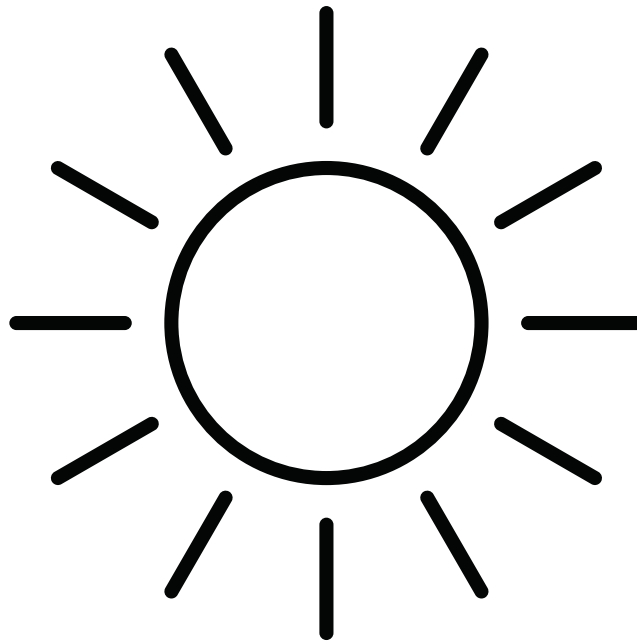


7. Vibrant Social Life:

Contrary to popular belief, living a soberish life doesn't mean sacrificing your social life. Say goodbye to the pressure to drink and hello to vibrant social experiences. Explore alcohol-free events, activities, and gatherings where you can connect with like-minded people. Whether it's enjoying outdoor adventures or attending wellness workshops, you'll find endless opportunities to thrive socially.

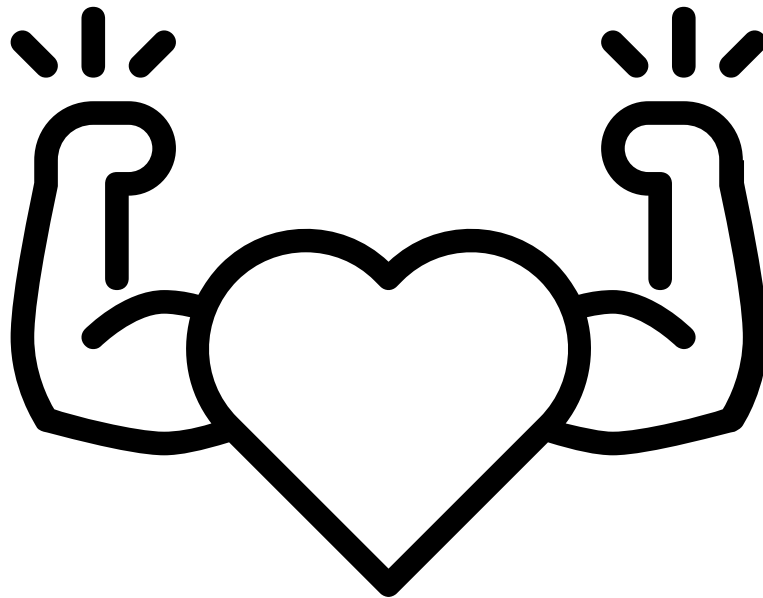
You Vs Alcohol

The things I am looking forward to about being more mindful about my alcohol consumption are...(e.g. Having a restful night's sleep and waking up fresh as a daisy)



You Vs Alcohol

The things I will use the Cinch community for support on are... (e.g. Reminding me that drinking too much alcohol will only dull my fabulous sparkle and that I'm actually really good craic without the need for wine).





SOBERISH
CHAPTER 12

Navigating Drink Related Triggers

It's OK, we 100% get it. Life is full of unexpected twists and turns, and sometimes, challenges arise that test our resolve to stay on course. Whether it's a stressful day at work, a frustrating encounter with the kids, or a tempting invitation from friends or colleagues, these situations can trigger cravings and threaten our soberish commitment. Don't lose heart. We are all human, and tomorrow is a new day. But getting in one step ahead of your triggers is essential for maintaining this lifestyle.



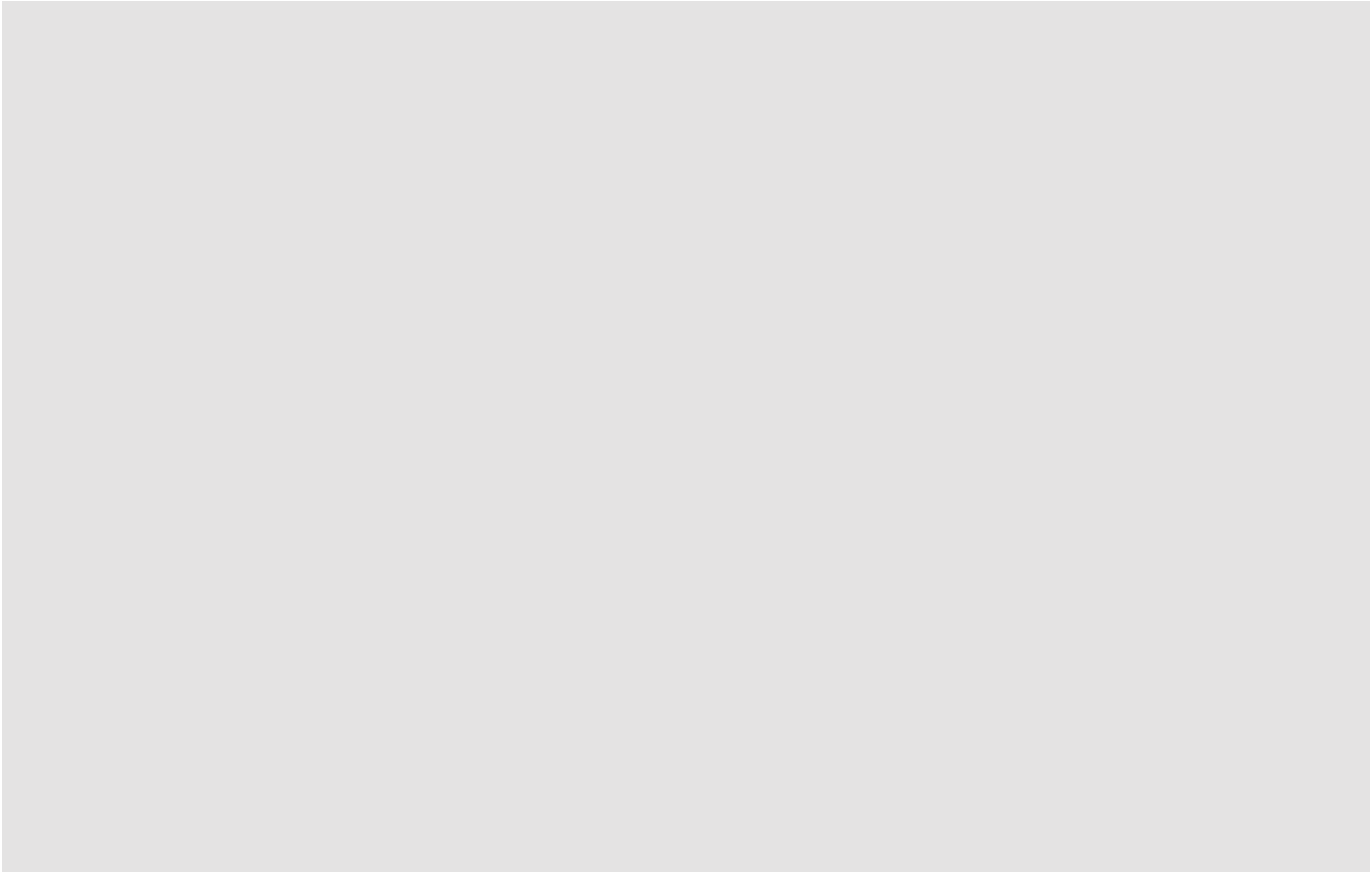
By recognising the situations, emotions, and thought patterns that lead you to drink, you can develop effective strategies to manage them and stay on track. In this section, we'll delve into the process of identifying your triggers and empowering you to make positive changes that support your journey to soberish. Let's take a closer look at your life and explore how you can navigate tricky waters with confidence and resilience.

- 1. Reflect and Learn:** Take a moment to reflect on your past experiences with alcohol. Think about the times when you were most tempted to drink and the environments where alcohol consumption was prevalent. Look for patterns in your behaviour and emotions, noting any common themes or triggers that emerge. Write them down below....

Tricky Triggers

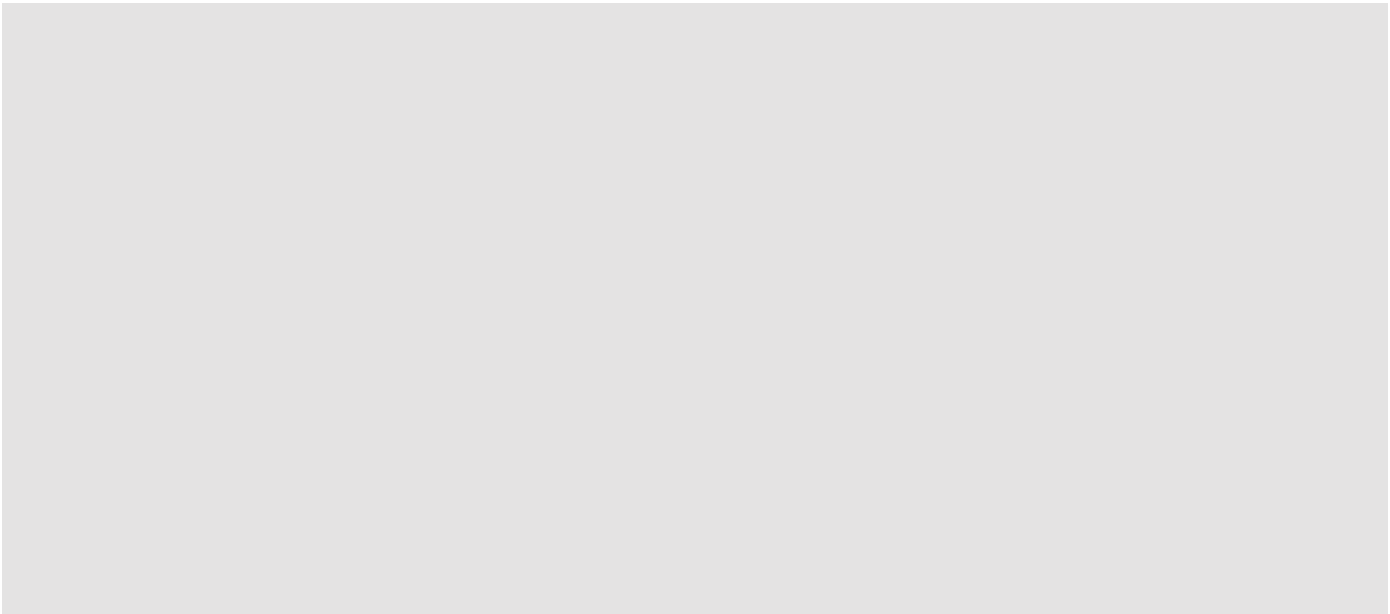
2. Embrace Emotional Awareness:

Emotions often play a significant role in triggering alcohol cravings. Tune into your feelings and identify the emotions that you may be feeling that is feeling your desire to drink. Whether it's stress, loneliness, or excitement, understanding your emotional triggers can help you develop healthier coping mechanisms.



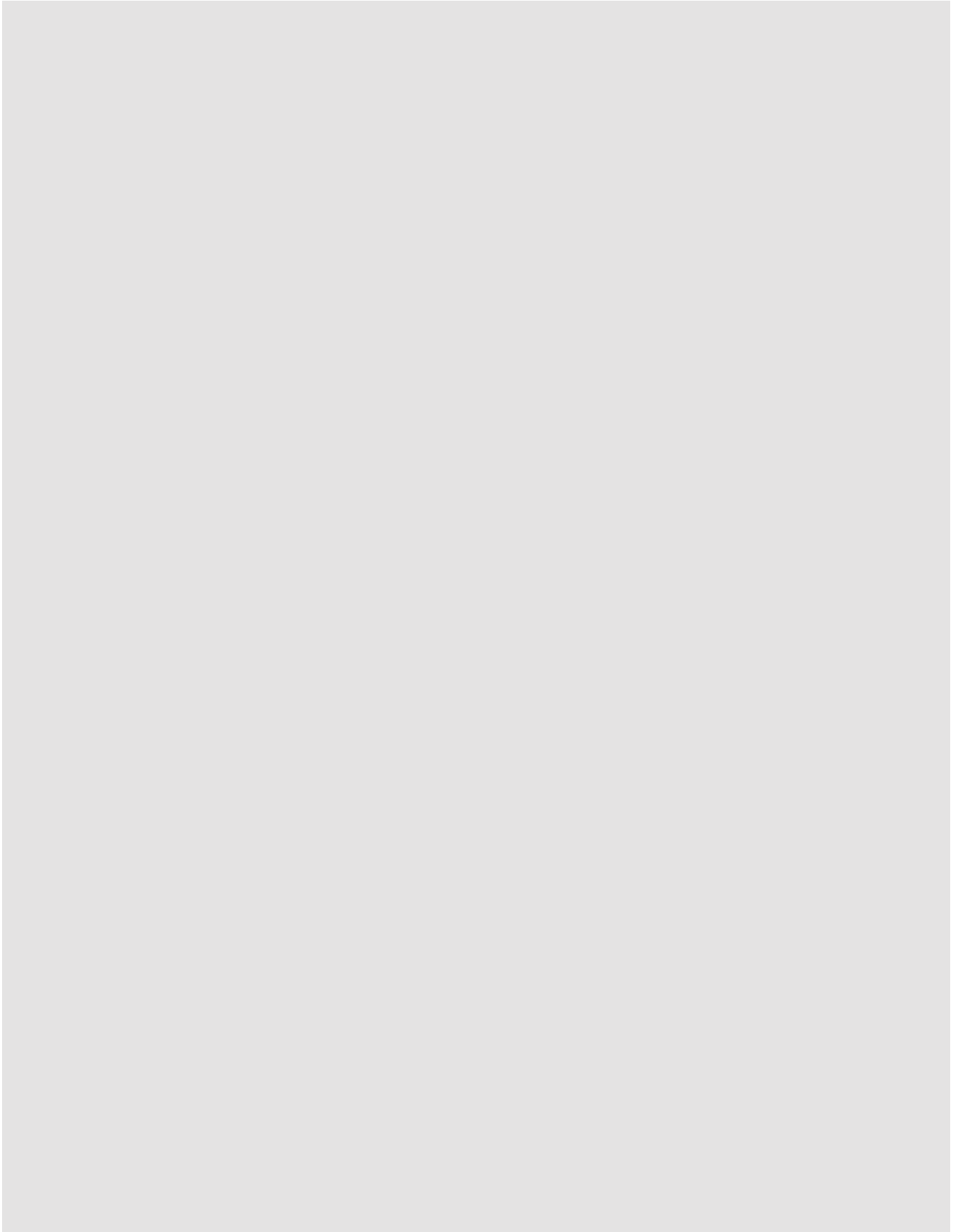
3. Navigate Your Environment:

Your surroundings can influence your drinking behaviour. Pay attention to the places and people that are associated with alcohol in your life. Identify any environments or social situations where you are more likely to drink, and consider making changes to support your new choices.



Tricky Triggers

4. Challenge Your Thoughts: Your thoughts and beliefs about alcohol can shape your behaviour. Notice any patterns in your thinking that justify or rationalise drinking. Challenge these beliefs and replace them with more empowering thoughts that support your commitment to living this lifestyle.

A large, empty light gray rectangular area, likely intended for a user to write their thoughts or reflections on the challenge provided in the text above.

Trigger Tracker Journal

In this exercise we want you to get quiet and do a little inner work. This works! It is a private exercise that can be so very powerful.

Get yourself a notebook or journal to track your triggers and cravings. Record each instance when you experience the urge to drink, along with the circumstances and emotions surrounding it. Reviewing your journal can help you identify patterns and gain insights into your triggers.

Set aside five minutes each day to engage in this activity, preferably in a quiet and reflective environment...



1. Reflect on your thoughts and feelings about alcohol. Ask yourself:

- Why do I drink?
- How does alcohol affect me physically and emotionally?
- What makes me want to drink?
- What do I hope to achieve by cutting back or quitting alcohol during this challenge?

2. Write down your reflections in your journal. Be honest and use descriptive language.

3. Pay attention to any emotions, memories, or associations that come to mind when you think about alcohol. Look for patterns or recurring themes.

4. Without judging yourself, jot down any insights or revelations that arise from your subconscious mind. These could be past experiences, deep beliefs, or hidden motives related to alcohol.

5. Consider how your conscious thoughts align with your subconscious beliefs. Are there any contradictions or conflicts? How might your subconscious beliefs influence your behavior?

6. Set a goal for how you'll apply this newfound awareness to your alcohol-free journey. Think about practical steps you can take to align your thoughts and actions with your goals.

7. Repeat this exercise regularly throughout the 30-day challenge. Notice any changes in your thoughts and feelings about alcohol over time.

8. Approach this activity with an open mind, curiosity, and kindness towards yourself. Your journey towards mindful drinking is a process of discovery and personal growth.



SOBERISH
CHAPTER 13

Your CINCH Soberish Roadmap



Here's the reality.

Willpower alone isn't enough.

Life happens, social occasions, sunny days in the garden, stress, initial excitement of a new challenge fades, and temptations come knocking when you least expect them.

So, what can you do?

Well, that's where both you and we come in.

It's not just about gritting your teeth and hoping for the best—it's about equipping yourself with a whole toolkit of strategies to help you navigate life's twists and turns without reaching for a drink.

Read as many AF books as you can, follow Podcasts, download audiobooks, the more support and education you have on this subject, the more likely you are to succeed in the long-run.

This next session is really exciting. It's where you will actually create new wiring in your brain to reinforce your new healthy relationship with alcohol.

To begin with, we have to go back to the beginning, when you were just a child. What were you exposed to? What were you told? What did you think and feel about yourself?

From rewiring your brain with positive associations to nurturing healthier habits and embracing the power of visualisation, this next section is your roadmap to lasting change.

It's about shifting your mindset, reclaiming your power, and rewriting your story—one small, intentional step at a time.

Your Self Image. ✨

First things first, time to look inward... self image is really rather important in your journey, not just about how you view yourself but also the world and everyone in it. It is a fundamental part of who you are at your very core. It is not who you think you are that is holding you back, it's who you think you are not.

What is your self-image like?

What is your inner voice telling you every day that is keeping you in your current reality?



Your self image is like a pair of glasses that you wear all the time, that colour everything you see and experience. No two pairs of glasses are the same. Your perspective on the world, events, people and yourself included will all be different to mine.

Imagine this... Two children grow up in the same house - let's call them Emma and Rachel.

From the moment they were born, their core beliefs were being shaped by their mum's words.

Mum: 'Oh, our Emma was such a sweet wee baby, she slept like a log, she was an angel, I could take her anywhere.'" On the other hand...."Our Rachel was a different kettle of fish, she was a nightmare, she wailed all night and drove us up the wall, we couldn't take her anywhere without her making a scene."

If you hear that at an early age, and it's repeated over and over through the years, Emma will probably grow up thinking that she is a good, loveable, reliable person. Rachel will probably think that she is a pain in the neck, a troublemaker, and not easy to love, and ultimately, unworthy. In her teens, Rachel is always the one downing the shots, in an attempt to boost her low self-esteem, her self-confidence and self-worth is so low that she thinks, sure why not? This is seemingly harmless in the beginning, but as the reliance on alcohol to dampen these feelings magnifies over the years, in her 20's, 30's 40's and beyond, that's where the problems come in.

These early beliefs are stuck in our heads, and we don't even realise it. They are just what we think we are. We never doubt them or check if they are true or not. They form our self-image - even if they are wrong, which they often are!

People are not always addicted to alcohol because its down to some genetic factor. They are often continually self-sabotaging because of the image they are holding in their mind about themselves and the stories they tell themselves on repeat. That image causes them to continually reach for that drink, not stick to their goals and fall off the wagon every weekend.

Understanding Self-Image

As you can see from this example, your self-image was developed in your early years and from past experiences.

What is your self-image like?

What is that voice in your head telling you every day that is keeping you in your current reality?

Is what is reflected in the mirror and in your results what is actual reality? Or is it some outdated lie that your brain continues to tell you?

Let's suppose that your self-image is that you need to drink to cope with the stresses of life. Your mum and dad both drank every night, as do all of your friends.

You have had a stressful few years and drinking helps

you cope. It is essential.

This is a very common self-image among people with a reliance on alcohol. The above is what they tell themselves, but scratch the surface and it is often underpinned by a feeling of inadequacy or low self-worth. They may perceive themselves as lacking control or discipline, feeling overwhelmed by their dependence on alcohol. Additionally, they might see themselves as unable to cope with stress or negative emotions without resorting to drinking, leading to a cycle of self-doubt and reliance on alcohol as a coping mechanism.

Your self-image is like a lens through which you view yourself and the world around you. It shapes your thoughts, feelings, and actions, influencing every aspect of your life, including your relationship with alcohol. But here's the good news – your self-image isn't set in stone. It's malleable, capable of change and transformation.

Think about it: if you've always seen yourself as someone who 'needs' alcohol to cope with stress or social situations, it's time to challenge that belief.

Start by questioning the validity of that narrative.

Is it really true that you need alcohol to deal with stress, or have fun?

Or is that just a story you've been telling yourself for so long that it's become ingrained in your identity?



Understanding Self-Image

By examining and reframing your self-image, you open yourself up to new possibilities. You can choose to see yourself as someone who is capable of overcoming challenges without relying on alcohol. You can cultivate a self-image that is empowered, resilient, and in control – one that aligns with your goals for an alcohol-free life.

So, how do you begin this process of reshaping your self-image?

It starts with awareness and intention.

Pay attention to the thoughts and beliefs you hold about yourself and alcohol.

Notice when those thoughts arise and challenge them with more empowering alternatives.

Affirmations can be a powerful tool in this process, helping you to reinforce positive self-beliefs and reshape your self-image from the inside out. (in the next section).

Remember, your self-image is not fixed.

It's dynamic and adaptable, just like you.

With conscious effort and commitment, you can redefine how you see yourself and create a new reality aligned with your aspirations for a healthier, happier life without alcohol.

Once you start seeing your truly fabulous self, you will not want to dim that new found sparkle with anything as unworthy as alcohol.

Understanding Self-Image

Let's take a moment to reflect on your upbringing and how it has influenced our relationship with alcohol. Think back to the environment you grew up in, the dynamics of your family, and the messages you received about yourself and how you are. Was your childhood home a place of warmth and support, where you felt loved and valued? Or was it marked by tension and discord? Consider the attitudes and behaviours of your parents or caregivers towards you.

Imagine the below sketch is you. What were you exposed to in your home? And how has it shaped who you are?

Take a moment to envision yourself as a child, surrounded by the influences of your upbringing. What messages were you given about yourself? Were you recognised, celebrated and made a positive fuss of? Or were you made to feel unloved or unworthy in any way? This exercise isn't about blame, it's about taking stock and recognising things that happened in your formative years that might have shaped how you see yourself today, and ultimately how it shapes your behaviour with regards to alcohol....

When I was a child I was made to feel the following about myself....



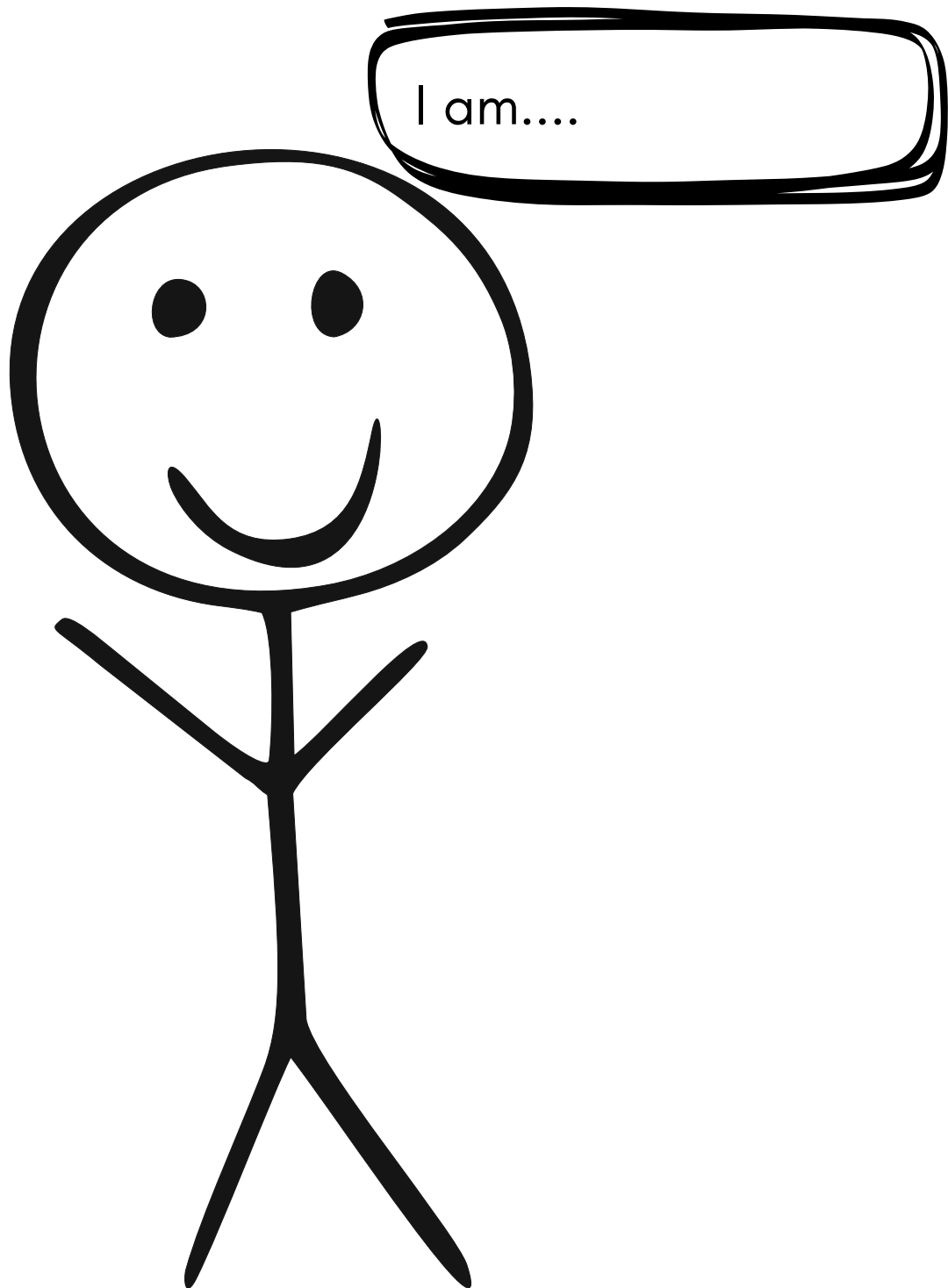
Understanding Self-Image

OK, for some people. the last section may have been a little difficult.

For many of us, our childhood experiences play a significant role in shaping our self-image and relationship with alcohol. By exploring these memories and reflecting on their impact, we can gain valuable insights into our behaviour patterns and motivations. So, take some time to journal about your upbringing and your self-image today.

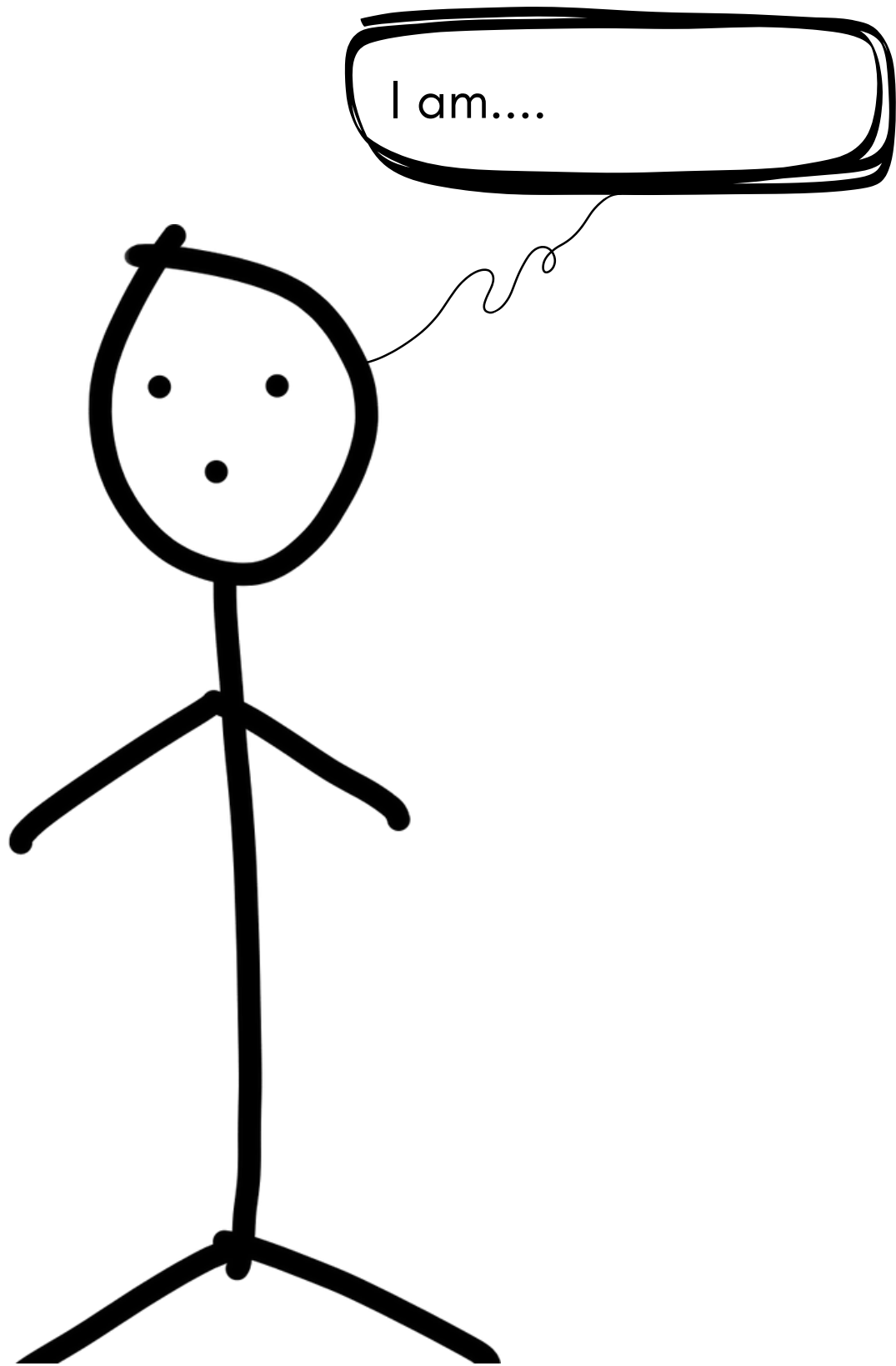
Your Self Image

Write down all the positive beliefs you hold about yourself ...



Your Self Image

Now, write down all the negative beliefs you hold about yourself



Understanding Self Image

My self-image is currently like the following....
(write in exact detail what you feel about
your self and your life).



Understanding Self Image

I would like to feel this way about myself instead....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



The steps I need to take to do that are....



SOBERISH
CHAPTER 14

Understanding Your Programming

Now that we've looked at our self-image, is it sufficient? Not quite. We must examine what's truly driving your habits, and it all comes down to programming. If we aim to reshape the future, we must first rewrite the past.



While self-image and programming are closely related, they are not exactly the same thing. We have established that self-image refers to the mental picture or perception we have of ourselves, including our beliefs, attitudes, and feelings about ourselves. It is shaped by our experiences, interactions, and the messages we receive from others, particularly during our formative years. Our self-image influences how we perceive ourselves, how we behave, and how we interact with the world around us.

Programming is like the software that runs in our brains, shaping how we think, feel, and behave. It's all the stuff we've been told, seen, and experienced since we were little. Imagine it's like a playlist of thoughts and beliefs that keep playing in the background of our minds. This programming comes from everywhere - our parents, friends, society, and the world around us. It's the voice in our heads that tells us who we are and what we're capable of. Our self-image is part of this programming - it's like a snapshot of how we see ourselves based on all this input. So basically, our programming is like the foundation of our self-image, built on all the messages we've received throughout our lives.



Angela's Programming....



Growing up, my family dynamic regarding alcohol was a bit of a mixed bag. While my mum chose not to drink at all during my formative years, my dad was more inclined to enjoy a drink or two.

Despite this difference, my early childhood was characterised by a stable and loving environment. My mum and dad created a home filled with warmth, where my brother and I were always encouraged to pursue our dreams and believe in ourselves. Their unwavering support and belief in our potential instilled in me a strong sense of self-worth and confidence.

As I grew older, and my sister was born, I began to notice the contrasting effects of alcohol on different family members. There was a definite growing reliance on alcohol that ultimately took a toll my family environment. Witnessing firsthand the negative consequences of alcohol abuse on both the family environment and mental and physical health, I became acutely aware of the importance of maintaining a healthy relationship with alcohol and was determined that I would not follow this same path.

Today, my perspective on alcohol is heavily influenced by my upbringing and the lessons I learned from my family's experiences. I strive to emulate the nurturing and supportive environment that my mum and dad created for me and my siblings in my early years. I am determined to provide my own children with a safe and loving home where they feel valued and empowered to pursue their dreams.

My upbringing has taught me the value of moderation and the importance of prioritising my physical and emotional well-being. It has taught me that alcohol dependance can happen at any age and can destroy families. That is why I am committed to helping others see a different path, a different way of dealing with life's stresses. I choose to approach alcohol with mindfulness and moderation, recognizing its potential risks and making conscious decisions that align with my values and goals. By prioritising my health and happiness, I hope to break the cycle of alcohol reliance and create a brighter, healthier future for myself and my family.

Have you ever considered what your internal programming says about alcohol consumption? How has your upbringing shaped your connection with alcohol?

Reflect on how much and how often you drink.

What narrative is your past programming replaying, anchoring you to your current drinking habits?

Your Programming

Begin by reflecting on your earliest memories or experiences with alcohol.

Q: What role did alcohol play in your family or social circles while you were growing up?

Q: Were you exposed to any specific messages or beliefs about alcohol during your childhood or adolescence?

Your Programming

Q: How did you perceive alcohol during your formative years, and how has that perception evolved over time?

Next, explore any personal experiences or significant events that have shaped your relationship with alcohol.

Q: What was your first experiences with alcohol, including any memorable occasions or milestones.

Your Programming

- Any positive or negative associations you have developed with alcohol throughout your life.

Positive:

Negative:



SOBERISH
CHAPTER 15

REWIRING YOUR PROGRAMMING

OK, so we have explored why you feel the way you do about yourself and your relationship with alcohol. We have explored how your early programming effects your choice and attitude towards alcohol. But how do we change the narrative? Those stories that play on repeat in our head threatening to sabotage our commitment to drinking less or becoming AF forever!



In this section, we'll explore CINCH method to living a happy, healthy soberish life in the long-term. By harnessing the principles of the CINCH method, you'll pave the way for lasting change and embrace a healthier, more fulfilling life free of the need to grab a glass of wine at every social event/stressful situation/weekend/night/sunny day etc. you get the picture!

This system features some of the principles of neuro reprogramming; a process that involves rewiring the neural pathways in your brain to adopt new beliefs and behaviours. This approach emphasises the power of the mind to create profound shifts in our lives by replacing old patterns with empowering new ones.

Step 1: C- Creating New Associations: Cultivate positive mental images of yourself thriving in alcohol-free environments, embracing joy, and enjoying vibrant health.

Step 2: I- Instill Negative Associations: Instill a strong negative association with alcohol over-consumption, hangovers, anxiety, and discomfort linked to alcohol drinking too many. Whenever alcohol comes to mind, immediately connect it with feelings of physical and emotional distress.

Step 3 - N- New Habits: By consciously choosing activities that nourish your mind, body, and soul, you'll gradually replace old drinking habits with healthier alternatives, reinforcing your commitment to an alcohol-free lifestyle.

Step 4 - Cultivating Gratitude: Initiate a daily gratitude practice to shift your focus towards the blessings in your life. Express gratitude for the newfound clarity, energy, and vitality that accompany living a soberish life, reinforcing your dedication to this journey.

Step 5 - H- Harnessing the Power of Affirmations: Dive deep into the realm of positive affirmations to fuel your new lifestyle.

STEP 1 – CREATING NEW POSITIVE ASSOCIATIONS



Step one involves the transformative power of creating new positive associations to support your journey. By actively visualising a new positive life and creating a positive mindset focused on fun, happiness, laughter and brilliant mental and physical health, you can reshape your relationship with alcohol and embrace a life filled with fulfilment and well-being.

Reframe how you see yourself thriving in alcohol-free environments, surrounded by positivity and vitality. Close your eyes and imagine moments of happiness, laughter, and connection, knowing that alcohol plays no role in enhancing these experiences. See yourself loving life on the dance floor, chatting to people in an un-self conscious way. Going to bed feeling healthy, happy and without poisons in your body. Allow yourself to immerse fully in these mental images, letting them evoke a deep sense of empowerment and motivation within you.

Envision yourself waking up each morning feeling refreshed and energised, ready to embrace the day ahead with enthusiasm and vitality. Picture yourself participating in activities that nourish your body, mind, and soul, knowing that you are making choices that support your overall well-being. Embrace the feeling of freedom that comes with living soberish, knowing that you are prioritising your health and happiness above all else.

Creating new positive associations takes time and effort, so it's essential to practice consistency and persistence. Set aside dedicated time each day to engage in creating positive mental pictures.

The power of VISUALISATION

Visualisation serves as a powerful technique and tool that you can call upon to navigate the triggers and trying times in life where you are tempted to revert to old habits. By vividly picturing yourself confidently navigating social situations without the need for alcohol, you reinforce a sense of empowerment and control. Similarly, envisioning yourself waking up refreshed and energised, free from the burden of hangovers and regret, cultivates a positive mindset conducive to lasting change. Visual imagery has a profound impact on the subconscious mind, influencing beliefs and behaviors. Consistently visualising yourself thriving in alcohol-free environments helps internalise these positive associations, making it easier to resist the temptation of alcohol and remain steadfast in your commitment to a healthier lifestyle. Do it every morning before you get out of bed and before you head into social situations.



DECIDING WHAT YOU
WANT YOUR AF LIFE TO
LOOK LIKE IS THE FIRST STEP IN THIS
MARVELLOUS JOURNEY.

“The mind is everything.
What you think you become.”

Buddha

VISUALISATION FOR SOCIAL SITUATIONS

- Find a quiet, comfortable space where you can sit or lie down without any distractions.
- Close your eyes and take a deep breath in, then slowly exhale.
- Repeat this a few times until you feel relaxed.

Now, imagine yourself getting ready for a night out with your closest girlfriends. Picture yourself choosing a fabulous outfit that makes you feel confident and beautiful. Feel the excitement building as you prepare for the evening ahead.

As you travel to the venue you are excited for the fun evening ahead and know that you can leave whenever you want in the safety of your own car.

You arrive at the venue feeling amazing and full of confidence, you notice the lively atmosphere and the sound of laughter filling the air.

You greet your friends with warm hugs and smiles, feeling grateful for their company.

As the night progresses, you find yourself in control of your choices regarding alcohol. You may decide to have just one drink or opt for delicious alcohol-free alternatives. Regardless of your choice, you feel empowered knowing that you are making decisions that align with your health and well-being. Your drink arrives and you enjoy every sip, your friends are supportive and inquisitive about your positive decision to drink less.

You spend the evening chatting, laughing, and enjoying each other's company. You may even hit the dance floor if you feel like letting loose and having some fun. You feel confident, alive and happy.

As the night comes to a close, you feel a sense of contentment knowing that you've had a wonderful time without overindulging in alcohol.

You say your goodbyes to your friends and make your way home feeling happy and satisfied. Upon arriving home, you slip into bed feeling relaxed and at peace.

As you drift off to sleep, you reflect on the positive choices you made throughout the evening, feeling proud of yourself for prioritising your health and happiness.

The next morning, you wake up feeling refreshed and rejuvenated, ready to tackle the day ahead. You smile as you recall the fun memories from the night before, grateful for the meaningful connections and the positive experiences shared with your friends.

VISUALISATION FOR NAVIGATING HOME LIFE ALCOHOL-FREE

Visualisation Exercise:

1. Find a Quiet Space: Begin by finding a quiet and comfortable space where you can relax without distractions.
2. Close Your Eyes: Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to center yourself and clear your mind.
3. Envision Your Ideal Home Environment: Visualise your home as a sanctuary of peace and serenity. Picture yourself moving through each room with ease and contentment, surrounded by a sense of warmth and tranquility.
4. Visualise Daily Routines: Imagine yourself engaging in daily routines and activities without the need for alcohol. See yourself cooking healthy meals, enjoying quality time with your loved ones, and unwinding in the evenings without reaching for a drink.
5. Create Positive Associations: Associate feelings of relaxation, happiness, and fulfillment with your soberish home life. Visualise moments of joy, laughter, and connection with your family and friends, knowing that you don't need alcohol to enhance these experiences.
6. Handle Triggers: Visualise encountering triggers or challenging situations at home, such as stress or boredom, without turning to alcohol. See yourself implementing healthy coping mechanisms, such as deep breathing, journaling, or practicing mindfulness, to navigate these moments with grace and resilience.
7. Reinforce Your Commitment: End your visualisation by reaffirming your commitment to living an alcohol-free life at home. Visualise yourself feeling proud and empowered by your choices, knowing that you are creating a happy and healthy environment for yourself and your loved ones.
8. Open Your Eyes: When you're ready, slowly open your eyes and take a moment to reflect on the positive feelings and intentions you've cultivated during the exercise.

Repeat this visualisation regularly to reinforce your commitment to an alcohol-free home life and strengthen your resolve to overcome any challenges that may arise along the way.

STEP 2 - INSTILLING NEGATIVE ASSOCIATIONS TO OVER-CONSUMPTION



In this step, we'll work on instilling a strong negative association with overconsumption of alcohol. It's time to connect alcohol with feelings of physical and emotional distress to reinforce your commitment to be more mindful of your alcohol intake.

This process of instilling negative associations with overconsumption of alcohol is deeply linked to neuro reprogramming, a technique that involves rewiring the brain's neural pathways to change behaviour patterns. As neuroscientist Dr. Joe Dispenza emphasises, "By rewiring your brain with new thoughts and beliefs, you can create a new reality." Similarly, Tony Robbins advocates for neuro reprogramming as a powerful tool for transforming behaviour, stating, "Change your thoughts, and you change your world." By harnessing the principles of neuro reprogramming, we can effectively reshape our relationship with alcohol and pave the way for lasting change.

So, how can you put this into practice?

1. Whenever thoughts of alcohol surface, immediately link them to feelings of physical and emotional discomfort. Picture the dreaded 2 a.m. fear, the pounding headache, and the heavy fog in your mind. Remember the regret, the stomach ache, and the emotional rollercoaster. Visualize the aftermath of overindulgence, including overeating and the subsequent drop in mood and irritability.
2. Take a moment to deeply reflect on these negative outcomes. Replay them in your mind, acknowledging the toll alcohol takes on your body and mind.
3. Envision yourself vividly experiencing these adverse effects of alcohol, allowing yourself to feel the discomfort and distress it brings.
4. As you nurture this strong association, reinforce your commitment to a more mindful approach to drinking and the positive changes it brings to your overall well-being.

NEGATIVE ASSOCIATIONS VS POSITIVE



Angela says: “For me, the mere thought of alcohol now triggers a cascade of negative associations that make it difficult to even consider having more than one drink. The memories flood back—the sleepless nights filled with anxiety, the throbbing headaches, and the overwhelming sense of regret. It's like a mental slideshow of all the times I've felt physically and emotionally drained after indulging in alcohol. The fear of the 2 a.m. wake-up call, the heaviness in my stomach, and the fog that clouds my mind—they all rush back with such intensity that it's hard to shake them off. I find myself recoiling at the idea of alcohol, knowing all too well the toll it takes on my well-being. It's not just about avoiding the physical discomfort anymore; it's about protecting my peace of mind and staying true to my commitment to live a healthier life.”

Nicola continues: “As time goes on, I find myself not only acknowledging the negative associations with alcohol but also reframing all the positive things I get from saying no. I remind myself of the lovely clarity of mind, the feeling of staying in control, and the lovely sleep and pain-free day I will have tomorrow. I essentially link so much joy to not drinking that I find it almost impossible to have more than one or two drinks. Each time I resist the temptation to drink, I strengthen my resolve and reaffirm my commitment to this lifestyle. I choose healthy drinks that nourish me, like in this photo we were drinking Kombucha in cocktail glasses - we were having so much fun that the guests at our retreat assumed we were drunk - we weren't! We were high on life!

It's not just about avoiding the negative; it's about embracing the positive and recognising the immense value that reducing alcohol brings to my life.

This reframing process bolsters my determination and reinforces my belief that living a soberish life is the right path for me.”

How many times have you woken up to swear “NEVER AGAIN!”. We've all been there, and repeated the same pattern for decades.

Now, we encourage you to take a moment and reflect on the negative associations you might have with alcohol in your own life. Think about the times when alcohol has brought discomfort, regret, or pain. Dive deep into those memories, allowing yourself to feel the emotions that accompany them. The more vividly you can recall these experiences and attach emotion to them, the stronger the neuropathway becomes. This exercise isn't about dwelling on the past; it's about understanding the impact of alcohol on your well-being and reinforcing your commitment to making positive changes.

Now, equally have a think about how you can link new positive associations with choosing to drink less or abstaining altogether.

STEP 3: NEW HABITS

This is the fun part – realising that your future lies in your hands.

Gone are the old, depression-inducing alcohol fuelled days, and you now get to design a future with habits, activities and challenges that bring joy, vitality, and a skip to your step! Say goodbye to old drinking routines and hello to exciting new memories that nourish your mind, body, and spirit. Nicola says: “Angela and I love our wee crazy journey of positive activities and days and nights out as we explore how to create new ideas for having fun that don’t involve drinking! We’ve been canoeing, paddle-boarding, clean clubbing, to sound baths, rollerblading and this weekend we are doing some ‘Extacic Dance in the Woods at 7am!’. Fun is at the top of our list, we have no time for alcohol and its energy zapping qualities.”

Angela continues: “The secret to this is to not focus on the void alcohol has left in your life, but fill it with new habits and activities that elevate your well-being. Instead of turning to alcohol to unwind, consider activities like a nature walk listening to a new audiobook or podcast or an energising gym session. These choices give you a whole new perspective on life and focus on you spending quality time with you!

Deliberately choose habits that nurture every facet of your being. Whether it's immersing yourself in a great book, starting a new hobby, getting out for a good walk, or simply spending quality time with loved ones, prioritise self-care. Creating this nurturing environment empowers you to resist the pull of alcohol.

Commit to your chosen habits unwaveringly, even when faced with challenges. Remember, building new patterns requires dedication and patience. Stay the course, and with each day, you reinforce positive behaviours and reinforce your resolve to live more mindfully.

Mark each milestone with celebration and acknowledgment. Whether it's completing a week without alcohol or mastering a new hobby, recognise your achievements and the positive impact on your well-being. These victories fuel your journey forward.

See what weird and wonderful activities you can sign up for. Just do it! Push yourself out of your comfort zone and enjoy every second.

Once you embrace it, it's truly liberating!



STEP 4: CULTIVATING GRATITUDE

Step 4 of our CINCH method is all about cultivating an attitude of gratitude!

It's time to shift our focus and start counting our blessings. Embrace the clarity, energy, and vitality that living soberish brings, and let gratitude fill your heart. By cultivating an attitude of gratitude, you'll reinforce your commitment to this incredible journey and keep those positive vibes flowing. (You too may even start wearing socks with your sliders!)



Living soberish isn't just about saying no to drinks; it's about embracing a whole new way of life, and keeping your mindset strong! People who make gratitude a daily practice experience all sorts of awesome benefits: more positive vibes, better sleep, extra kindness, and even a stronger immune system.

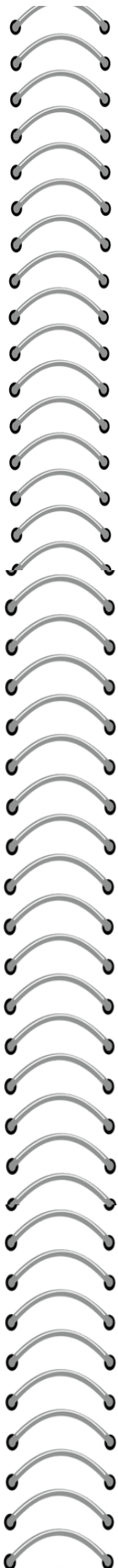
Each morning, take a moment to jot down ten things you're grateful for. But on top of that: send love to three people who've been getting under your skin lately. Yep, even those annoying colleagues or family members deserve some love! It might be tough at first, but trust me, it's worth it.

This practice isn't just about warm fuzzies; it's about rewiring your brain, to focus on all the positives in your life! I always start with my healthy body, my precious family and my freedom to make choices I want in my life. When you choose to focus on the good stuff, the bad stuff loses its power. So, when life throws you a curveball—a rude comment, a hiccup in your journey—flip the script. Instead of dwelling on the negative and reaching for the wine, find something to be grateful for. Maybe it's a lovely sunny day and you get to enjoy time outdoors. Maybe it's the fact that you have lost some weight on this journey, or saved a few quid. Whatever you are grateful for, write it down!

On this journey, cultivating gratitude isn't just a nice-to-have; it's a game-changer! By embracing gratitude, we're rewiring our brains to focus on the positive, making it easier to stay committed to our choices. When we're grateful for the clarity, energy, and vitality that come with this lifestyle, we're reinforcing our dedication to this journey.

.So, let's keep those good vibes flowing, and watch as your life becomes even more fabulous.

Gratitude Journal



Ten things I am grateful for today are:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Three people I send love to that are bothering me, are....

1.

2.

3.

STEP 5: HARNESSING AFFIRMATIONS

As time goes on, the journey through your soberish lifestyle can feel challenging, especially in the early stages and when triggered. During these times, it's important to remember that you have the power to shape your mindset and perspective. One effective strategy is to "fake it till you make it."



By using affirmations and positive self-talk, you can instill a sense of pride and confidence in your journey, even if you're still adjusting to your new lifestyle. Tell yourself first and foremost that you are proud of the path you've chosen and that you have the strength and resilience to navigate any challenges that come your way. With consistent practice, these affirmations can gradually transform into genuine beliefs, empowering you to embrace your alcohol-free journey with authenticity and self-assurance. Remember, your mindset is a powerful tool on your journey, so use it to your advantage and affirm your worth and resilience every step of the way.

Every thought you have about alcohol and every word you speak about your drinking habits is an affirmation. You are affirming what you believe to be true about yourself and your relationship with alcohol.

Often, these affirmations lean towards the negative, resulting in harmful outcomes. But you have the power to change that.



Introducing YOUR AFFIRMATIONS



Start by recognising the thoughts and programming you currently hold about alcohol. Are they positive or negative? Do they reflect a healthy relationship with drinking, or do they perpetuate harmful habits? Once you've identified these thoughts, it's time to rewrite them.

Draft positive affirmations that reflect the changes you want to see in your drinking behaviour. Create an Affirmation Wall in your office, bedroom or fridge door - look at it often and repeat when you can!

For example:

- "I am in control of my alcohol consumption."
- "I choose to prioritise my health and well-being over alcohol."
- "I am confident in my ability to enjoy social situations without relying on alcohol."
- "I am capable of making mindful choices about when and how much I drink."
- "I am free from the grip of alcohol and embrace a life of sobriety."

Write down these affirmations and repeat them to yourself throughout the day. Incorporate them into your daily routine, whether you're driving, exercising, or simply going about your day. Amplify their effectiveness by pairing them with energising music, like "I'm Onstoppable" by Sia, to elevate your mood and reinforce positive thinking.

In the evening, take a moment to reflect on your affirmations. Read them aloud with conviction and emotion, allowing yourself to truly believe in the positive changes you're affirming. Remember, it's the emotion behind these affirmations that will drive real change in your behaviour and mindset. Embrace the power of positive affirmations to transform your relationship with alcohol and live a healthier, happier life.

Examples of Personal Affirmations

I am living a happy, healthy alcohol free life.

I am in control of my thoughts & actions.

I have one drink and switch to water

I am sociable without the need for wine

I make mindful alcohol choices

I am nourishing my body with what it needs.

I am calm, peaceful and excited.

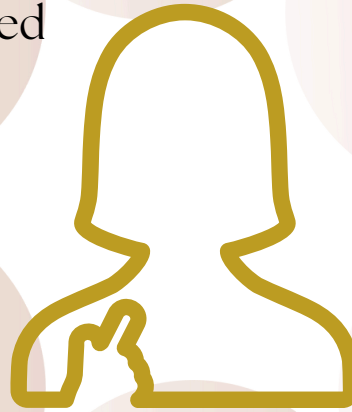
I am strong

I am safe

I make healthy choices in relation to my health.

I am in control of my life

I am handling stress without alcohol.



Your Turn.

Incorporate these daily affirmations into your morning routine without fail. As you write each one, let yourself feel the surge of emotion that accompanies it, using that energy to propel you through the day.

State your aspirations in the present tense, as though they've already come to fruition. This keeps your desires at the forefront of your mind, constantly reminding you of the reality you're striving to achieve.

For instance, if your aim is to cut back on alcohol consumption, your affirmation might be, "I am delighted and grateful to live each day sober, feeling clear-headed and vibrant."

It may seem simplistic or unusual initially, but the impact can be profound and transformative. Affirmations not only maintain your focus on your objectives but also help break free from negative thought patterns, bolster your self-assurance, and maintain a sense of vitality and excitement as you pursue your goals.

Your Affirmations

We want to share some affirmations that have helped us on our own alcohol-free journeys. Take a look and see which ones resonate with you:

Angela & Nicola's Affirmations:

- "I am loving life and alcohol has no place!"
- "I am fun and sociable without the need for drink."
- "I am Frickin' Fabulous and don't need alcohol to have fun!"
- "I am able to handle stress easily and unwind without alcohol."
- "I am choosing to nourish my body and mind with healthy alternatives to alcohol."
- "I am breaking free from the cycle of alcohol dependency and reclaiming my life."
- "I am embracing sobriety as a gift, allowing me to live each moment to the fullest."

Why not give them a try for yourself? Let these affirmations guide you on your journey towards a happier, healthier life without alcohol.

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Daily positive affirmations are a powerful first step toward developing a confident, success-focused mindset that empowers you to reach your goals. The next step is to work out what you want your life to look like, in order to fully engage your subconscious mind.



SOBERISH
CHAPTER 16

THE CROSSROADS! YOU MADE IT... NOW WHAT?



Congratulations on completing the 30-day challenge! You've reached a significant milestone in your journey towards a healthier lifestyle. Now that you've proven to yourself what you're capable of, it's time to decide where you go from here.

As you stand at this crossroads, take a moment to reflect on how far you've come and the positive changes you've experienced.

Are you ready to commit to staying AF or soberish?

If so, embrace the opportunity to continue strengthening your resolve and building upon the foundation you've laid. Repeat the process with confidence, knowing that each day brings you closer to your goals.

On the other hand, if you feel that you've achieved what you set out to accomplish and are ready to drink like you've been in the desert for the last 30 days, that's okay too. Trust yourself to make the right decision for your journey. Just remember, the choice is yours, and you have the power to shape your future.

When faced with the decision of whether to have a drink more in the future, let the image of the two paths you've encountered during this challenge guide you.

YOUR FUTURE AF PATH

If you are committed to staying on this AF/soberish path but now find yourself tempted to go back to how things were, have a read at the below...

Before reaching for that drink, pause and ask yourself:

Is this decision aligning with my WHY?

Think about the the reasons you started this journey in the first place. Whether it's to improve your health, strengthen your relationships, or reclaim control of your life, your WHY is your guiding light.

Sure, one drink may seem harmless in the moment. But consider the bigger picture. Is it worth jeopardising the progress you've made and potentially veering off course from your goals? Each decision, no matter how small, shapes the trajectory of your journey.

Remember, it's not just about the immediate gratification of having a drink; it's about honouring your commitment to yourself and prioritising your well-being. By taking a moment to assess whether a drink or more is truly serving you or hindering your progress, you empower yourself to make choices that align with your values and aspirations.

So, before you take that sip, take a moment to check in with yourself. Ask if this decision is moving you closer to the life you envision for yourself or further away from it. Trust your instincts, listen to your inner voice, and choose the path that resonates with your WHY. Your future self will thank you for it.

And remember, if you're feeling uncertain or overwhelmed, support is always available.

You're not alone on this journey, and together, you are now part of the Cinch Soberish community, dive into the WhatsApp, we can help you find your way to a happier, healthier lifestyle.

Congratulations!



WOOOO HOOOOO! Congratulations on completing the 30-day Cinch challenge! You've embarked on a journey of self-discovery, empowerment, and transformation, and now it's time to celebrate all the incredible progress you've made.

Throughout this course, you've explored the depths of your relationship with alcohol, delved into the inner workings of your mind, and learned powerful tools to create lasting change. From setting clear goals and strategies to identifying triggers and reprogramming your beliefs, you've embraced every aspect of the journey with courage and determination.

As you move forward, remember to continue practicing the tools and techniques you've learned in this course. Use your CINCH toolkit to navigate the complexities of life with confidence and grace, knowing that you have everything you need to thrive. Whether you choose to maintain a healthier relationship with alcohol or abstain altogether, trust in yourself and your ability to create the life you desire.

Above all, make a pledge to yourself for the future: to honour your journey, prioritise your well-being, and live each day with intention and purpose. Embrace the joy, freedom, and fulfilment that come with living a soberish lifestyle, and know that you are capable of achieving anything you set your mind to.

A HUGE THANK YOU from the bottom of our hearts for embarking on this journey with us. Here's to a future filled with endless possibilities and infinite potential. Cheers to you and your continued success on the path to a happier, healthier, soberish life!

Angela & Nicola

SOURCES:

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