

## THE JOY OF SOBRIETY

**The raw electric feel of life –  
My mind has been set free,  
The world lies now before me  
To be as I make it be.**

**Yes, the darkness lurks about,  
In corners here and there.  
Like a nasty nagging doubt,  
But now I couldn't care.**

**Every day is wonderful,  
And I will tell you why,  
I've done my rite of passage  
And I'm on that natural high.**

**I tell you friend, hang in there  
Though it scare you for a while.  
Look the stuff right in the face  
And give your coolest smile.**

**Hold your sobriety to your chest  
Like a beautiful new born child  
And know your life is going to be  
Great, joyful, magnificent and  
wild.**

— W. T. Somers

**When trying to have "just one" no  
longer works, there's no practical  
alternative to abstinence. But  
there is another abstinence option  
besides 12-step:  
LifeRing**



### About LifeRing

LifeRing is a self-help recovery network for individuals who seek group support to achieve abstinence from alcohol and other addictive drugs, or who are in relationships where chemical dependency is a problem.

LifeRing is a poly-abstinence group that welcomes everyone without distinction based on "drug of choice."

LifeRing includes people of all religious faiths and none. Meetings are free of religious observances.

LifeRing supports participants in working out their own personal recovery programs, and requires no particular Steps other than abstinence from alcohol and "drugs."

LifeRing meetings are autonomous except in matters affecting other meetings. A basket may be passed for voluntary donations but there is no charge for participation.

LifeRing is a free-standing, self-supporting organization and is not affiliated with any other.

LifeRing meetings are conducted by peer volunteers called convenors.

For more information about the LifeRing approach and philosophy, and to connect with LifeRing participants, or to order LifeRing books and other literature online, please visit us online at [www.lifering.org](http://www.lifering.org). If you have questions, please feel free to call or email the Service Center.

**You can find a LifeRing Colorado meeting at:**

[www.liferingcolorado.org](http://www.liferingcolorado.org)

You may also  
email [liferingcolorado@gmail.com](mailto:liferingcolorado@gmail.com)  
or call 303-514-4778.



# Sobriety Is Our Priority

**When nothing  
works anymore  
to control your  
drinking/using  
... try something  
new and radical:  
abstinence.**

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**LifeRing Service Center  
Oakland, CA  
800-811-4142  
[www.lifering.org](http://www.lifering.org)**



## Sobriety Is Our Priority

**T**here comes a time in a drinking/using life when you know inside that you need to stop. You've tried cutting down, you've tried taking time off, you've tried every trick in the book to bring your habit under control, and nothing has worked. Now it's time to try something radically new and different: abstinence.

You may be surprised to hear this, but abstinence is easier than trying to limit, control, or moderate your intake. Whenever you have "just one," you reinforce cravings that will torture you to have another and another. But if you stop completely, your cravings will fade, and you can learn effective tools to deal with them if they return.



Besides, "just one" never turned you on anyway, did it? You never wanted just to get a slight buzz. You wanted to get wasted. Even if you *could* stop after one you would never want to. So why pretend that "moderate use" is what you want? Who are you kidding?

Maybe the time has come for you to stop torturing yourself, stop kidding yourself, and stop wasting your life repeating things that don't work. Instead of "just one," step up to "just zero." Stop completely. Join the one third of Americans who never drink or use at all.

Yes, easier said than done. But not as hard as you may think, either. Visit a meeting of almost any recovery group, including LifeRing Secular Recovery ("LifeRing"), and you'll find people who are pretty much a cross section. Few saints or super-heroes. Nothing really extraordinary about us, except that we all used to drink and/or drug too much, and we all learned we could stop. If we can do it, can it be so hard?

**I**n LifeRing we have the motto: "Sobriety Is Our Priority." When we drank and/or used, our addiction was our priority. We built our lives around feeding our habit. We'd go anywhere, do anything to get our drink or drug. Now we turn that principle around. We rebuild our lives around staying clean and sober. We re-invent ourselves as persons who don't drink or use.

The Sobriety Priority means that we do whatever it takes to maintain our sobriety. We don't drink or use, no matter what. We know that if we have our sobriety, we can have everything that life has in store for us. But if we lose our sobriety, we stand to lose everything else, including life itself.

The Sobriety Priority is a bright line through the confusion of life. Every decision, even seemingly trivial ones, has two branches: one that reinforces sobriety, and one that leads away. By making sobriety our priority in everything we do, life begins to make sense again and our daily activity becomes more purposeful and intelligent.

**B**efore we got into recovery, many of us feared that sobriety was a world of gray. We imagined we couldn't be at ease socially, or have fun at a party, or feel good without the drug. We have learned that all of this was wrong. Seen in the rear view mirror, drinking/using were a constant hammering on our body's pleasure systems. It felt so good finally to stop.

Some people do experience discomfort during withdrawal, and life does not automatically turn into a rose garden. If you are a very heavy drinker or user, you may need medical care during the first day or two after stopping. But even a bad day is a victory when you end it clean and sober. Many people experience a period of spontaneous euphoria when

they stop using. Life sober has all the colors, tastes, smells, sounds and textures. Not only can you still rock 'n roll sober; you can rock 'n roll better, and remember it afterward.



Some people are afraid to stop because they see drink or drugs as "medication" for their psychological problems. But after only a few months of abstinence, they commonly find that many of these problems disappear of their own accord. The remaining problems, if any, then gradually become more manageable.

After we achieve a stable sobriety, we can confront our inner demons and stitch up the scars in our soul. A health care professional with expertise in chemical dependency can help us with counseling and/or appropriate prescription medications, if necessary.

**G**etting sober is a skill that almost anyone can learn. Like learning to ride a bicycle, at first you may fall down a lot, but you'll improve with practice and support. If you exploit a relapse as a deep learning experience, you will have longer and longer periods of comfortable abstinence. Many people never relapse at all.



Sobriety lifts a heavy burden from us and empowers us to improve our lives. What we do with our new freedom is up to us. LifeRing does not try to prescribe a "Way of Life." We celebrate recovery as a liberation of the human potential. Wherever you are, whatever you do, whatever your dream, you can move forward when you leave drink and drugs behind.

If you'd like to discuss your situation in confidence, and talk with people who've "been there" and now practice complete abstinence from alcohol and drugs, feel free to visit any LifeRing meeting or visit a LifeRing chat room online.

For a complete schedule of LifeRing meetings, face-to-face and online, point your browser to **www.lifering.org** or contact the LifeRing Service Center, 1440 Broadway Ste 400, Oakland CA 94612, 510-763-0779 or toll-free **1-800-811-4142**; email [service@lifering.org](mailto:service@lifering.org).