

moment at which you experienced mindfulness in a manner such as never before. It's impossible to tell your story without including this moment of clarity.

One quick note should be made for those whose stories include a relapse. The structure of your story will be a bit different than that of most. You might choose to include your previous attempt(s) at recovery under the banner of "what things were like," and focus on why things are different this time around.

This section would then be dedicated to how and why you began embracing new means of [https://www.amethystrecovery.org/relapse-prevention-tips-to-remember/relapse-prevention], or at the very least how they started working for you. Again, it is your story. The final structure is up to you, but this is one way of doing it.

What Things Are Like Now

If you are telling your story to others, then you have likely undergone your spiritual awakening. Be sure to talk about how this happened.

This is the crux of your story, the reason that you have chosen to tell it in the first place. If it were not for the improvements to your life that have been discovered in sobriety, there would be little point in telling your story in the first place. This is the light at the end of the tunnel, the part of your story that will leave your listeners feeling as if sobriety may benefit them as well.

When you reach this stage of your story, you may choose to discuss many things. There is much talk in recovery about spiritual awakenings. If you feel that you have experienced such a thing, you may consider this moment to constitute the beginning of this section.

Your spiritual awakening is the moment not at which recovery began to click, but the moment at which you began to realize that certain promises could come true in your life if you did not return to addiction.

Embracing Tradition

You may discuss the newfound joys in your life, such as the manner in which embracing the First Tradition has put an end to your previous state of isolation. There are also many other benefits you may have experienced, such as new jobs, a new love, and repaired relationships with friends and family.

Feel free to talk about these things, but try not to boast. When talking about your new job, focus on your newfound reliability rather than your material gain. When discussing new love, focus on your newfound emotional stability rather than the physical attractiveness of your partner.

When discussing repaired relationships, do not make yourself out to be a deity in the eyes of your

children. The focus should be on the improvements to your principles; you should not be simply feeding your egoist personality.

Even Through the Tough Times

This part of your story may seem difficult if life has been particularly hard on you. For some of us, life gets much more difficult after recovery. People we love will die. Our jobs will be downsized.

We may find that we do not always receive forgiveness from those we have wronged. Even then, you may choose to talk about these things when telling your story.

But instead of a laundry list of complaints, you will be focusing the discussion on the ways in which recovery has made it easier for you to deal with these issues. The joy of sobriety is that we do not need synthetic euphoria to deal with life's problems. This may not sound like the light at the end of the tunnel, but it is the closest that some will ever get.

Our Lives As Examples

The point is that you shouldn't worry about whether or not your life is perfect. No one's life usually is. There will be people hearing your story who may be far more interested in learning how to deal with life's problems in recovery than they are in hearing a fantastical success story.

So if life has been hard on you, yet you have managed to survive, be honest about this. After all, you are telling your story. You don't have to try and tell someone else's if you haven't lived it.

Finally, do not worry too much about ending your story on some sort of snappy line or inspirational quote. If you excel at this sort of thing, then go for it. But if you feel that your story has ended and you are at a loss for words, it is time to leave the podium. You aren't there simply to fill time.

Telling your story is the task at hand. There is no need to keep it going once the tale is complete. If you have been honest and fulfilled the task of telling others what it was like, what happened, and what things are like now, then you have been successful. No one will ask any more of you. And hopefully, one or two just may stay sober through the inspiration they have received from your honesty.

Tri County Recovery

The Do's and Dont's of telling your Story

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DO'S AND DON'TS OF TELLING YOUR STORY

When was the first time you acted out, drank, used drugs (or all three)

You may not know the answer to this question when you first begin, but the following should help you figure it out

Those of us who enter programs such as SA/AA and NA may eventually be charged with the task of telling our stories to others. This may be in the form of a speaking meeting, or it may simply be a situation in which we feel as if another recovering addict or alcoholic may benefit from our counsel. Telling your story can be a frightening prospect if you have trouble opening up to others, but it is a skill that everyone should have in their wheelhouse if they intend to stay in recovery for the long haul.

Telling your story requires you to focus on three aspects: what it was like, what happened, and what things are like now. Focusing too much on any one of these aspects will not give people a full picture.

Hopefully, this pamphlet will imbue you with a sense of how best to balance these aspects when sharing your tale with others who are in recovery. But never forget that this is your story, and it is ultimately up to you how you choose to tell it.

These are simply suggestions, which will hopefully make telling your story a bit easier if you are going into it for the first time.

What It Is Like

In order to set up our stories, we must, unfortunately, dip into some of the worst moments of our addictions.

When telling your story, you may feel the urge to start off as you would start any other story—from the beginning. This is sensible, but you must have an idea regarding which parts of your history are most important and which can be left out. You will want to make some notes, and practice telling your story aloud to see how long it takes. Otherwise, you risk running too long and never getting past the story of your addiction.

This is a major concern, as you are essentially running the risk of telling an hour-long war story. While you may have many gut-wrenching tales from your childhood and from your addiction, focusing on them for the full length of your share will leave your listeners with no light at the end of the tunnel. They will walk away lamenting their own similar stories, rather than embracing the joy they have discovered in sobriety.

Tri County Recovery newcomers may even decide that 12-step programs are nothing more than a bunch of depressing people telling woeful tales, and they

may decide not to return to the fold. As such, you don't want this part of your story to run more than half an hour, assuming that you are telling your story at an hour-long speaker meeting. Since most meetings begin with literature readings and group meditations, you should actually shorten this to about 20-25 minutes.

Not only will this keep you from engaging in too many war stories, but it will also help you refine your focus to the most important aspects of your story overall.

With this time frame in mind, the next step in telling your story is to determine which aspects of your past are the most important. If there are certain things in your childhood that have created long-standing emotional burdens for you, then there is no harm in mentioning these; however, be careful not to make them the entire focus of your past. You are, after all, telling a story about addiction and recovery.

Your Emotions & Your Story

Your emotional burdens have likely played a hand in your addiction (especially in the case of those who have dealt with abuse or other traumas), but people do not need to know every minute detail. In detailing your pre-addiction past, you are essentially focusing on the aspects that have defined you the most. Many develop addiction in the military.

There is also a notable run of addiction in the LGBT community. More importantly, however, these are both examples of things that have molded your personality and experiences. Without our pasts, we would not be who we are today. So while you don't need to go through every minute detail, you should still endeavor to hit the major points. Don't just stand before the podium and present yourself as someone who abused substances for a while and then quit.

You, the Chosen One

This is a rare opportunity to let people in, let them get to know you. Use this opportunity to let people know why you have been chosen for the task of telling your story. As long as you're open and speak with honesty at all times, this will not be an act of egotism.

More than anything, the first stretch of your story should detail how you fell into addiction in the first place. When was the first time you drank or used drugs (or in the case of many, both)? When did you notice yourself using more and more each day? On the Jellinek Curve, this part of your story would be the downward slope, leading to the point at which your addiction became a continuous cycle. The next part of your story will focus on how the cycle was broken.

What Happened

When telling your story, you must note the moment at which you woke up, and begin to see the harm in your addiction—and the benefits of sober living.

This will not likely be a lengthy part of your story,

but it is a pivotal one. For some, it may comprise about a third of their story. For all, it will provide a transition between what things were like and what things are like now. When telling your story, "what happened" should be considered the turn of events that led you to hitting rock bottom, and in doing so spurred your willingness to enter recovery.

For instance, your friends and family may have staged an intervention. If this is the case, then it should definitely be factored into your story. A big part of recovery is taking suggestions, and agreeing to go to treatment was a big part of your story. If your friends and family had previously thrown an intervention that failed in convincing you to enter recovery, be sure to note how this time was different.

Many of us have tried to quit drinking or abusing drugs on our own, only for some outside influence to finally push us in the right direction. Noting this in your story may convince newcomers who struggle with the stubbornness that taking suggestions from others can change their very lives.

In The First Stretch

Much as the first stretch of your story included the tale of your first encounter with drugs and alcohol, this stretch will include your sobriety date. You may even want to give your sobriety date when you very first begin telling your story, then recall it again when you get to it. Open by telling people how long you've been sober (something which will often be an inspiration in itself), and then consider the first stretch of your story as the lead-up to this moment.

Your sobriety date is the midpoint of your story, the point at which addiction became a recovery. Of course, those of us who look back at our lives in addiction and recovery will often recall that recovery was something of an uphill battle at first. That is why you should also remember when telling your story to note the very first time you took Step One.

You may have accepted your powerlessness and unmanageability from the very moment you decided to get sober. But some of us have entered rehabilitation against our wills due to legal issues or family ultimatums, only to reach a point of acceptance after the fact. If this has been the case for you, then you will need to remember it when telling your story.

The Structure of Story

Let people know when you gave your life over to sobriety, and why. In many ways, you don't have to stress too much about this section when trying to devise the best structure for telling your story. Nobody in AA or NA simply woke up one day and stopped using.

Out of all three major components of your story, this one should come the most naturally. This is the moment at which your life changed for the better, the