

Wasted Time

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Redefine Wasted Time as Learning Time

Users often refer to using or drinking as “getting wasted.” When they are actively drinking or use, getting wasted seems cool. Later on, as they head out on the road toward sobriety, they often see the time they spent getting wasted as *wasted time* that they wish they could get back.



Rather than focusing on **wasted time** (or any other negative definition of drinking), it is best to make use of the time spent getting wasted in the past as a learning tool.

If this does not make sense to you, think about wasted time through the lens of obesity. Overeating is much like overdrinking. Food, in small quantities, is not bad for you, nor is eating time considered wasted time by most people.

Now, consider the adult who recognizes that they have an eating disorder, identifies the initial causes of the overeating, identifies the triggers for their continued overeating, and uses the information they have identified to develop a plan for healthier eating choices.

The overeater described above could only look back at their experiences as *wasted time* if they neglected to take an honest look at their actions, learn the lessons of overeating, and develop a plan for better health.

How can you turn wasted time into a learning tool for future success?

Maintaining a positive focus on sobriety will help you accept the choices you made when you were drinking. The choices of yesterday defined you yesterday but have no hold on you today. The choices you make today define who you are now and prepare the way for who you will be in the years to come. The **wasted time** of your past is rich with information. Some of it, maybe all of it, will be extremely difficult to examine, but it is the best route toward your recovery.



Try these journaling ideas to learn from your wasted time drinking:

- Write about your first experiences: When did you start? Do you remember the first experience? How did it make you feel? Do you have a different perception of that moment today?
- Write about your triggers: What made you feel like drinking or using most? What was the emotion you felt before a binge? Did you feel shame? Fear? Disappointment? Do

you know where these feelings came from? Can you follow them to their origins?

- Write about a life without wasted time or roadblocks. What do you need to change in order to achieve sobriety? What are three small, simple changes you can make?

Journaling can help you begin thinking about these tough subjects but you don't have to face them alone. A **trained psychologist or counselor** can help you look deeply into the wasted time in your past so that you never have to feel like you have wasted time again.

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