

FINDING YOURSELF IN SOBRIETY: A SIMPLE GUIDE



The Voyage Within

- Introduction
- Section 1: What Void? The Death of A Loved One
- Section 2: Changing Negative Thoughts - Let The Reframing Begin
- Section 3: Letting Go of Guilt "I've Wasted So Much Time"
- Section 4: Finding Out Who You Are - Discovering Your Love For You
- Section 5: Filling the Void with Good Things - Loving Yourself
- Conclusion
- Mission Statement
- Resources

Introduction

You may have just started your sobriety journey or have been in it for a minute. I like to refer to sobriety as: a return to when I didn't drink or do drugs; so applause to you for taking a huge first step or continuing down the path of sobriety!

Here's a tip. Try this mindset: instead of saying you are a recovering alcoholic and you truly have stopped, then you have in fact, returned to a time when you didn't drink or use a controlled substance - you are recovered. The next level is to sustain sobriety.

It's a big step to stop drinking and/or using drugs. But now, you might feel empty, guilty, or confused about who you are without those old familiar vices. Let me tell you, that's okay - you are not alone! And while this empty feeling, or "void," is normal for most of us; for some, we may not know that what we are experiencing or about to experience is a void. It's not a bad thing—it's a chance to discover a new you; a chance to rebuild.

This guide will help you identify what you may be experiencing is a void, change negative thoughts, let go of guilt, and find new things to love about you. With simple steps and ideas, you'll learn how to feel good in sobriety and navigate the void.

But before we dig in, notice I didn't say "easy steps and ideas." Discovering a new you, rebuilding a new version of you, while simple, it's not without its challenges, hence the implication that these steps and ideas may not be easy in the beginning or even down the road but as you commit to putting in the actions daily, you'll change old, bad habits, to new, good

habits. I'll refer to James Clear's book Atomic Habits - what we are looking for here is a 1% improvement, weekly, if not daily.

Let's get started!



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Section 1: What Void? The Death of a Loved One

Nearly, 5 years into my sobriety, into the void, and it took Jay Shetty's Masterclass session "Navigating Change With Jay Shetty" to make me realize I had been grieving the loss of the life I knew for so long; the loss of my identity.

My sobriety journey, the unplanned attempt that finally stuck, started on the turn of the year 2018, it was nighttime, my wife and I were in an empty convenience store parking lot, waiting for First Responders to arrive. My wife in the driver's seat and I in the passenger seat, hungover, experiencing shallow breathing, extremities going numb, worried. I saw my wife staring at me, her eyes filling up with tears as she tried to assure me it would be okay as the sirens approached closer and closer. Unbeknownst to me at that moment of seeing my wife's face, a hero had arrived; sobriety.

But only months ago (it's 2025 as I type this guide), I realized I had been grieving.... experiencing a void. Who was I grieving? The old me. The one that was an alcoholic for decades and used controlled substances for some of those years. When under the influence, that version of me struggled on the inside but showed a surface-level confidence to the world around me. This version was my protector, shielding me not from others, but from the hurt, the trauma, I experienced as a child; the lost child within lacking self-worth. This version of me, this loved one, came at a cost.

When you stop drinking and/or using drugs, you might feel like something's missing. Or if you are like me, you may have gone a few years into your sobriety until you realize you've been experiencing a void all along and one day, the realization of this void hits you like a ton of bricks.

Perhaps you're bored, lonely, or not sure what to do with your time. Or maybe, again if you are like me, you have yet to experience that golden sobriety experience that you read about others experiencing; you know, where people profess clarity, energy, happiness, their best life ever, since starting their sobriety journey yet you, like me, are wondering why this experience continues to elude you. This is called a "void." It happens because alcohol or drugs were a big part of your life. These vices are what you derived your identity from possibly intentional but usually by default of these vices. The vices were how you relaxed, had fun, hung out with friends, danced, coped; navigated life. But now, without them, you feel a little or hugely lost.

- **Good news:** This void is a chance to try new things and find out who you are now or to become the person you know you should have been for many years.
- **Try this:** Write down 3 feelings you have right now (like sad, scared, or excited). Next to each, write one way that feeling could help you grow (like sad → I can talk to someone new).



FINDING YOURSELF IN SOBRIETY: A SIMPLE GUIDE



Section 2: Changing Negative Thoughts - Let The Reframing Begin

Sometimes, you might think things like “I’m no fun without alcohol” or “I’ll never be happy” or “I’ve lost those I thought were friends.” These thoughts can make you feel stuck or worse can lure you back to your old habits of abuse. Know that you have the control to reframe them!

- **Notice the thought:** When you feel bad, stop and think, “What do I feel grateful for?”
- **Change it:** Turn “I’m no fun without alcohol” into “I’m alive without alcohol”
- **Be thankful:** Every day, write down one good thing about being sober, like feeling healthier or saving money, even saving your or someone else’s life.

👉 Here’s a Tool: The 3 Cs

- **Catch:** Spot the negative thought.
- **Change:** Reframe it to a positive one.
- **Cheer:** Be proud of yourself for trying, even if it’s hard. Remember, it’s simple, not always easy.

💡 **Try this:** Start a “Sober Wins” notebook. Each day, write 1-2 things you did well, like “I stayed sober today” or “I tried a new activity.” Look at it when you need a boost.



FINDING YOURSELF IN SOBRIETY: A SIMPLE GUIDE



Section 3: Letting Go of Guilt - “I’ve Wasted So Much Time”

That’s what I said to myself in my new engagement with sobriety, repeatedly. And if you don’t reframe that quickly, you’ll continue to waste time in this new sober version of you - reframe: “I have a sober me, don’t waste it!”

You might feel bad about things you did or time you lost because of alcohol. That’s normal, but you don’t have to stay stuck in guilt. To paraphrase Eckhart Tolle: nothing happens in the past, nothing happens in the future, everything happens in the NOW.

- **Accept the past:** You can’t change what happened, but you can make now better.
- **Focus on now:** Every sober second, minute, hour, day, week, etc. is a fresh start.
- **Help others:** Share your story or do something kind to feel good.

💡 **Try this:** Write a letter to your past self - In the letter, say you’re sorry for tough times, forgive yourself, and thank yourself for choosing sobriety. You don’t have to show anyone - just write to feel lighter.

👉 Say this: “My past doesn’t control me. To build a better future, I have to build a better now.”



FINDING YOURSELF IN SOBRIETY: A SIMPLE GUIDE



Section 4: Finding Out Who You Are - Discovering Your Love For You

Without alcohol, you might wonder, "Who am I now?" That's exciting! You get to explore the real you.

- **Try new stuff:** Test out hobbies like drawing, walking, or cooking. Go deep, research topics like mindset, the brain, breathwork, contrast therapy, etc.
- **Meet people:** Join sober groups, like AA or online chats, or even our community at Void To Victory, to make new friends. You may feel introverted in the beginning of your sober journey. Read books, listen to audio books, about what? About the Stoics (like Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, Epictetus), about science, about someone else's journey from alcohol to sobriety, know that you can become someone of inspiration and help someone else, just as someone may have helped you. This will strengthen your sense of self-worth.
- **Know what matters:** What do you care about? Family? Health? Fun? Let these guide you.

 **Try this:** Picture your future self - Close your eyes and imagine yourself 6 months from now, happy and sober. What are you doing? Who's with you? Write it down and read it when you need hope.

 Tip: Download apps like "I Am Sober" to get daily ideas and connect with others.



FINDING YOURSELF IN SOBRIETY: A SIMPLE GUIDE



Section 5: Filling the Void with Good Things - Loving Yourself

The void is a space to fill with things that make you realize your self-worth (**Yes, you are of worth!**)

Here's how:

- **Make habits:** Do small things every day, like taking a walk or reading, make a commitment to yourself to invest at least 1% in yourself daily.
- **Set goals:** Start with easy ones, like "Drink more water," go to bed 30 minutes earlier, then try bigger ones, like "Join a class." *Tip: While goals are important, the system by which you create to achieve your goals is the key structure - for example, want to get more steps in for your health, park further away when you go to the office, the store, etc.*
- **Give back:** Help others, like volunteering, to feel connected.

👉 Here's a Tool: The Purpose Pyramid

- **Bottom:** Take care of yourself (sleep, eat well, move, read, 1% self investment daily).
- **Middle:** Do fun or meaningful things (hobbies, friends, breathwork, nature).
- **Top:** Help others or chase a big dream aka put in the actions..

💡 **Try this:** List 3 things you've always wanted to do, like dancing or writing. Pick one and try it this week, even for a few minutes.



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Conclusion

Sobriety is a chance to build a version of you that you love. The void, the empty feeling won't last forever—it's a sign you're ready to grow. By reframing negative thoughts, letting go of guilt, and trying new things, you're creating a new you. Take it one day at a time, and be proud of every step.

The brutal truth: hopes, wishes, dreams, are all great but they mean nothing without committed action, daily - the 1% (you can do that with ease.)

You're not alone! Keep this guide, try the activities, and know you're doing great.

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Mission Statement

At Void To Victory, we empower individuals new to sobriety or on the continued path of sobriety to transform the emptiness of addiction into a life of purpose and vitality. Through compassionate guidance based on self experience, practical resources, and a supportive community, we inspire personal growth, helping you bridge the void with hope, resilience, and a renewed sense of self.

Our mission is to light the path to a fulfilling, sober life, through innovative concepts - one step at a time.





FINDING YOURSELF IN SOBRIETY: A SIMPLE GUIDE



Resources

Want more help with sobriety and filling the void? Join us at Void To Victory for tips, support, and new friends in our free community on Facebook.

Sign up at voidtovictory.com to get our free upcoming innovative resource "*I: The Hero, The Victim, The Villain*" along with ideas, resources, information about our programs to keep you going.

You are not ALONE! Let's do this together!

voidtovictory.org - coming soon!

voidtovictorytx@gmail.com

voidtovictorytx.wordpress.com

[Facebook: @voidtovictory](http://Facebook:@voidtovictory)



Suggested reading material:

The Daily Stoic by Ryan Holiday and Stephen Hanselman

Atomic Habits by James Clear

The Power Of Now by Eckhart Tolle