

The Program

By Jean Kirkpatrick, Ph.D., WFS Founder

What is meant by “The Program”? How do we view it? How is it to be used?

The Women for Sobriety “New Life” Program is comprised of thirteen acceptance statements that, when accepted and used, will provide each woman with a new way of life through a new way of thinking.

As alcoholic women, we must learn about ourselves and how to avoid the pitfalls of faulty thinking and destructive behavior that used to lead us to taking that first drink, even though we sometimes did not want to drink.

Since we had a faulty approach to life and living, we must turn our attention to finding new ways of overcoming. This starts with coping first but than moving on to overcoming and a whole change in our approach to each day.

To make the program effective for you, arise each morning fifteen minutes earlier than usual and go over the thirteen statements of acceptance. Then begin to think about each one by itself. Take one statement and use it consciously all day. At the end of the day, just before sleeping, review the use of it and what affects it had that day for you and your actions. For some, it has proven helpful to use a notebook for recording the sequences of the day and the statement’s effects upon you. (*A Program Booklet* is available, and also *The Beginner’s Booklet*, that is helpful to those new in the program.)

To make the program effective for you, it must be consciously used each day. Never forget that our faulty thinking is a result of many years. It cannot be corrected overnight. It takes a long time to realize that most of what we thought was cast in the negative view.

The philosophy of the Women for Sobriety “New Life” Program is that the image precedes our actions. Whatever we think, we eventually act out. If our thoughts are always negative, our actions will also be negative. If our thoughts are positive, so are our actions. One writer once said a garden of weeds cannot produce a beautiful flower. This is also true of our minds. If we have upsetting thoughts, we cannot have a serene life.

We used to think that life was upsetting and our problems followed but it is usually the other way around. Our thoughts were confused and negative, and life’s actions came to be that way also. We create our own world. No one else does. We are responsible for ourselves and our choices. What we are, we made ourselves become.

We have the power of changing our way of thinking. We live in the atmosphere created by our mind and our thoughts.

We are now beginning to create a new woman, the woman we always wanted to be but never thought possible. The Women for Sobriety “New Life” Program helps you to

change your thinking and shows you how to be the dynamic woman you have the capability of becoming. We begin by being in charge of our actions through our thoughts. We no longer react but, now, begin to act the way we want to act. We end game playing. We become our whole person by learning independent thinking.

Negative thoughts, so much a part of a drinking woman's life, are often carried into sobriety. These negative thoughts frequently make the sober woman unhappy and depressed. She begins to wonder if sobriety is really worth it.

We used alcohol to cover pain, emotional pain. When we remove the alcohol, we must then learn a way to remove the emotional pain, which requires a new way of thinking about life.

Our program makes sobriety a happy existence by helping us to understand ourselves better. Our sobriety is more than simply a period of time in which we are not drinking; it becomes a happy learning experience.

Learn to know yourself and your illness. This is how to overcome.

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Comments from Mary:

The title of this article reaches a place deep inside myself and stirs feelings of hope, just as it did twenty years ago. This is truly a formula with which we achieve and maintain sobriety. Our program empowers us to take charge of our lives and create a future without drugs or alcohol. The 13 WFS Statements provide us with the framework to live each day fully.

I chose this article so that we could reflect on our program and remember how important it is. Sobriety is our number one priority."

Comments from Nancy:

I still remember back to the day 12 years ago when I read the 13 Acceptance Statements for the first time. It felt as though someone were giving me back my life. The Statements were just what I had been searching for in my recovery: responsibility, letting go of guilt, moving on, taking life by the tail!

I WAS a worthy, loveable person... so much more than just an alcoholic. I was a woman first of all... albeit a woman with a drinking problem. I was no longer defining myself as an alcoholic... I had a new definition... a woman who had the power of choice. Having this Program in my life has taught me responsibility, patience, happiness, self-love, and forgiveness.

Comments from Lynn:

Indeed the WFS "New Life" Program can and will give us a whole new way of thinking and of living our lives. To me, the WFS "New Life" Program Statements all work together to create a whole new thinking pattern, a new way to successfully live our lives as we were meant to live them. The "Program" has two elements, sobriety and recovery. Without the first element, sobriety, recovery is not possible and recovery is where we move forward and live our lives fully and richly alcohol free. Jean suggested that we arise 15 minutes earlier than usual and go over the Statements and start to think about each statement individually. That was JUST the beginning for me. First I learned the Statements, took each statement one by one and focused on applying it to my life. Once our mind starts the retraining process, the next step is living the "Program", making it a way of life.

I started out reading the Statements each night before going to sleep so I went to sleep with the Statements floating around in my head and then I read them immediately in the morning to start my day out so that I would start my day focused on them. Little by little the “New Life” Program was my way of thinking. I did learn about who I was, what I thought and how to be “in charge of myself and my thoughts”, to be “responsible for myself and my actions”. This “Program” has empowered me and given me a roadmap to follow regardless of what challenges I face. I know “I am what I think. I am a competent woman that has much to give life. This is what I am and I will know it always.”

Even after all these years I still recite the 13 Statements of the “New Life” Program as I fall asleep. Now, I don’t have to read the Statements, I know them by heart and I own them.