

Normal?

By: Walt Klamath, Outpatient Counselor

One of the questions asked during an evaluation is, "do you think that you are a normal drinker". Now, really it is a crazy question to ask someone like me, of course I am a normal drinker, everybody drinks like me. All of the people that I associated with drank like I did, therefore I considered myself a "normal drinker". They all had jobs, in fact most had two jobs, not too much of a home life, but this was acceptable, money was important.

One of the stickier questions we like to ask on our questionnaire is what is "normal" and most of the times then we are kind of stymied, *what is normal?* Now, there is a source of information that will forever lead us out of the dark, that is, the dictionary. The dictionary says "Conforming to a typical standard". Now, if we take 10 people at a bar, 9 of these people can take one drink and go about their business. 9 of those will refuse another drink because it has some kind of out-of-control feeling, and they do not like that, or they may say that if they drink any more they will get sick, that they have had enough, for whatever reason. Now nine will stop at one or two, but not I, then I must not be the typical standard, therefore not normal.

Alcohol is a toxic substance. When it is ingested, the body's first reaction is to get rid of it. That is why many times when we take the first drink, especially of hard liquor, there is a period of gagging. The body is attempting to get it out, but people like myself will tell the body that it does not know a good thing when it has it, and will continue until the body says "may as well accept it, the brain is not going to listen to reason."

I see quite often people that are considered heavy drinkers by some standards, the "Normies". They will buy a small drink at a club, 4 hours later it still is over half full. Now that, in my language is "sick drinking" but, this is normal even typical, believe it or not. As far as I was concerned that could have been in *Ripley's Believe It or Not* category.

If these people should drink a little more than they should they don't feel good the next day will be quite sick. Their bodies are telling them to leave it alone and these people will continue to drink but very little. Now when I take alcohol into my system, my stupid brain says, "Hey, this is alright, give me some more". My body says, "brain you're alright, get with it." I do not get sick, I get slightly out of control, by my standards, I get obnoxious, by other peoples standards, (the normal behaved people). Where the others will quit and go home, I will drink as long as the establishment will serve me, then I will have some stashed away in case they decide that I have had enough. Then, if I am cut off, I feel that they are discriminating against me and I get some bitter feelings and think of how I will get even with them, but in the mean time I need another drink.

Now this is not the definition of normal. I am not drinking like the other nine people. I must be an abnormal drinker. Those others can quit any time they wish to, and just walk out if they choose. I cannot. I cannot stop drinking at any given time. I have to have another drink. Consequences do not enter the picture at all. My family's welfare will not enter the picture.

The fact that I am too drunk to drive is not going to keep me from driving, after all I do better when I have had a little to drink. If I should have an important appointment the following day, I will forget about it, I will still be drinking. I cannot stop, though I may wish to. This is abnormal by anyone's definition, but mine and others like myself.

I may want to quit drinking entirely, and will quit sometimes for a day or two, then feel that I owe myself a reward, and have a drink. This will set off another spree.

Now comes another factor: it takes money to drink, therefore I have to have a job. Now it is difficult to drink and keep a job, but it can be done. Of course it takes a lot of garlic and sen-sen and other breath deodorizers and not get too close to anyone. In other words, become quite anti-social so that no one wants to talk to me or even see me, which is just what I want. I do not want anyone interfering with my drinking. Is this normal?

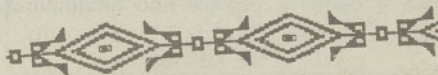
I heard a story of two people on an airplane. Now these airlines all serve alcohol. They have little bottles that hold 1 ounce. That's hard for me to believe, but as the story goes, this person was observed to take a glass of a mixer of some kind, and very carefully measured half of the one ounce bottle and pour it in his mix, put the cap back on the bottle, put the remainder in his pocket. One of those watching this ordeal could not hold back his curiosity any longer and asked this person what was he going to do with the rest of it. He said "when I get home I am going to have another drink". THAT IS NORMAL?

Normal drinkers do not usually have problems with the law related to alcohol. It is possible that they may get a DUI, it really does not take much for that, but it will not happen again. If it should cause a problem in the home, very simple, just don't drink. No problem. Alcohol does not mean too much to this type of person, which is most people. Now if most people react to alcohol in this manner, by the dictionary, this is normal. If one out of ten react such as I, then I must be abnormal, in matters relating to alcohol.

People like myself, will never be able to drink alcohol, or use any kind of mind mood altering chemical the rest of our lives. Actually we don't need it, we can do everything that any free person is allowed to do and we enjoy doing it. Once we have crossed the invisible line of addiction, we will never be able to successfully drink alcohol, no matter how small of a quantity, not even 1/10th of a percent, such as is in some of the non-alcoholic beverages. Sometimes just the shape of the bottle will trigger the imagination that we want a drink.

Elections

All Tribal members that have not sent in signature cards, be sure and send them in. The cards are available at the area offices. All members that have cards on file in December will be mailed ballots. The signature will have to match that on the official roll. If members have changed their names through the court system, then a document from the court will have to be shown, if by marriage then a copy of the marriage certificate.



Jaws of Life

By: Walt Klamath, Outpatient Counselor

The Siletz area needs a jaws of life. The last time that they were needed it was almost 45 minutes before a set got to where it was needed. The Siletz Grange is going to have May as a Bingo Month with all the proceeds from the Bingo games going for the Jaws.

Some have asked what are the Jaws. Well I have not personally even seen one, but I have a general idea of what they do. They are either electrically or hydraulically operated. If you will, picture a pair of sissors that cuts metal. They will cut the structure posts and sheet metal of an auto or truck that has entrapped a person inside after an accident. Also, there are accessories available that are pressure jacks that will bend the metal so that the victim can be extricated from the vehicle. The Jaws do work fast, and are not near as noisy as the air chisels that we currently have on our rescue unit.

Just because someone does not live in this community that the Siletz Rural Fire Department serves does not necessarily mean that it does not apply to you personally. Many people just passing through do get into accidents and need the services of the Siletz Quick Response team. We hope upon hope that we never have to use the Jaws, but to be realistic, they will be used, and it could be any one of us. Accidents do not discriminate.

So this is kind of a commercial. Come out on the Saturdays in May and play Bingo at the Siletz Grange Hall for the benefit of the Siletz Rural Fire Department Jaws of Life Fund. Someone will even Bingo. This will be a 50/50 split!

Dance Class

Beginning Friday April 3, 1992 at 6 to 8 p.m. a Country Western Dance class at the Siletz Grange Hall will start. We will be teaching basic two-step, the Ten-Step, then later into Country Swing. There will be no charge for these lessons, however we will have a donation jar with all proceeds going for the Jaws of Life. The instructors will be Myself and My Wife, Frances. No partners will be necessary, as we will be changing dance partners every two minutes or so.

Meetings to be Held Regarding Toledo High School Changes

Meetings for community input regarding extensive changes to Toledo High School next year will be held at the Tribal Community Center in April. Changes in class scheduling, curriculum and approach will be discussed. Meetings will be held 1:00 & 7:00 p.m. on April 7 and April 14.

Be there for your kids!!!