

***"First we make our habits,
then our habits make us."***

Charles C. Noble

Volume 3
Spring 2015

Day Thirty One

The Newsletter of Moderation Management

Springtime Greetings from Our Executive Director

Happy Springtime MMs!

For many of us, the beginning of a new year produces seemingly paradoxical feelings of excitement and anxiety. It's a new beginning filled with promise, but too often we put pressure on ourselves to make that new beginning different, special, and perfect, and when it doesn't happen right away, all at once, or as planned, it can be pretty tempting to either yell a lot or give up entirely. I am certainly no stranger to either reaction.

Over the course of my many years of involvement with Moderation Management, I have learned so much from our wise and honest community. Recently, there has a lot of discussion about mindfulness, meditation, and managing and transforming negative self-talk. And there has been a lot of good discussion about the power of baby steps.

Lao-tzu said, *"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."* For anyone with an unhealthy relationship, whether it is with alcohol, shopping, gambling, or drugs, often the sanest, healthiest way to approach a new, healthier relationship with whatever your poison might be is to take a small step in the direction of better behavior. At MM, that might take many forms:

- Delay your first alcoholic drink by 15 minutes. Set a timer and distract yourself until it goes off. Recognize and celebrate that you were able to make a different choice.
- Drink a full glass of water or other non-alcoholic beverage in between every regular drink. Make this a regular practice.
- When you're comfortable delaying your drinks, try setting targets to delay your drinking until you reach a specific time, say 6:00pm or 7:00pm at the earliest. Then try setting an end time that you will not drink beyond, like 8:00pm or 9:00pm on weekdays, for example.
- Try abstaining one night per week. Buy yourself a fierce glass that you use for your sparkling water with flavored vinegar or the Fallen Yellowjacket mocktail (from Oven & Shaker in Portland, Oregon) or enjoy an NA beer (see Mike Davis' great beer article).
- When you're ready, put yourself on the Sticky (abstaining publicly for a single day, day by day) or join a Trike (abstaining 3 days per week) or F'Abs (4 days per week).
- Try a 30 (abstaining for 30 days in a row) in order to completely reset your body's and mind's relationship with alcohol.
- Read *Responsible Drinking: A Moderation Management Approach for Problem Drinkers*, a book referred to frequently by folks at MM. This is also the basis for *The Streakers* – folks who strive to moderate by the book (BTB).



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Get started



Moderation Management is pleased and grateful to join in the **Amazon Smile** non-profit support program. The link below lets you register Moderation Management as your Amazon Smile charity:

smile.amazon.com/ch/38-3152354

This setting will be remembered by your Amazon login. Once registered, shopping at "smile.amazon.com" (Shop with a Smile!) for an item flagged as "Eligible for Amazon Smile donation" will provide Moderation Management with a small but important contribution.

Your Amazon Prime membership will be honored, with the same shipping policies. Prices are the same. Product choices are the same. (Although not all products are "Smile Eligible.") Amazon makes the donation, and assumes all administrative costs.

The only difference is the Moderation Management can be supported by your smile.amazon.com purchase. Amazon guarantees you'll get the SAME top quality service you have come to expect.

Visit the Moderation Management Forum

If Focused Conversations Meet Your Needs, The Forum Might Be the Place for You

For all the wonderful energy and the gems of wisdom and compassion that flow so freely on the email Listserv, it can be overwhelming to even the most extraverted of people. It also takes time to read through people's messages, to sign up for various moderation or abstinence challenges, and to participate in various habit or maximum drinks per drinking day rosters. That said, it often takes a heck of lot more time to argue with yourself about whether or not you're drinking too much, so you may find the added time it takes to scan some emails well worth the effort.

Moderation Management Relies on Your Support

Moderation Management is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. We charge nothing for our services, and receive little outside funding. We rely on our participants and supporters for nearly all of our operating income. Your support for Moderation Management can be expressed as a donation to help us carry our program forward.

www.moderation.org/donate.shtml

Contributions should be fully tax deductible; please consult with your tax professional.

Our Newsletter Needs Sponsors

As we seek to expand our ability to deliver our programs and message, your help will be essential.

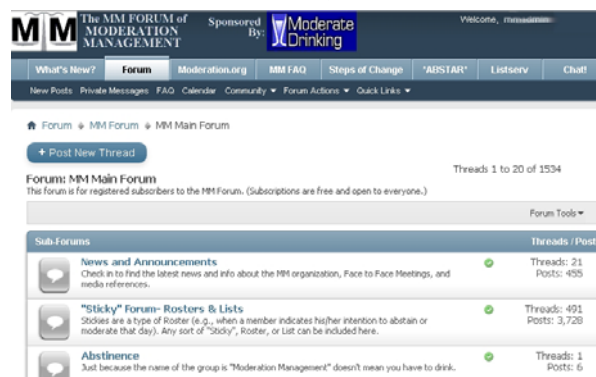
Please consider sponsoring our next issue. Write to:

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Consider How We Support You

If the programs, precepts, and services of Moderation Management have had an influence in your life, consider supporting us. Allow others to make the same discovery and to have similar life choices. With your support, what exists today is a promise of a new tomorrow...

For those of us who would either like a more focused, lower-volume approach to talking about specific alcohol moderation or abstinence issues, there is the Forum. Some folks spend their time here almost exclusively. Some spend time on the Listserv and use the tools offered there to support them in their goals and also spend time talking about specific issues on the Forum. Everyone is welcome in any part of the MM Forum, regardless of the topic.



2014 saw a gradual increase in the forum membership as the organization ramped up its social media efforts, although user post volume was up over 1,000 percent in January 2015 over the same period last year! Users can register and post under a moniker of their choice ("Forum name" or screen name) to create their own blog and have conversations with other members. The big deal this January was the support thread for Dryuary. In February, the "Accountabillibuddies!" blog heated up as users talked about a "Healthy Lifestyle", mentally, physically, and of course, moderately.

Some folks just like to read: 70% of the active users on the forum are there to read and get inspired. The easy read format allows for scrolling the latest posts at your leisure.

To Register: <http://forum.moderation.org/register.php>; "Secret Name" is **Bill**
Or email forum@moderation.org; one of the Administrators will help you.

Trending Topics

Habits (hab·its)

An acquired behavior pattern regularly followed until it has become almost involuntary.

Author and speaker, Gretchen Rubin, refers to habits as “the invisible architecture of daily life.” She goes on to say, “We repeat about 40 percent of our behavior almost daily, so our habits shape our existence, and our future. If we change our habits, we change our lives.”

In my own life, I've noticed that I have habits with a small h; things that I do almost effortlessly, like brush my teeth, wash my face, do the laundry, and shine my sink. Then there are the Habits with the capital H. Habits that can be almost insurmountably hard to start, challenging to maintain, and while they have untold benefits to my physical, mental, and emotional health, these Habits might lack a certain Voodoo donut-like instant sugar rush of gratification. Some of my Habits have included: abstaining for a single day, even though I wasn't a big drinker, just a habitual daily one; going to Muay Thai (kickboxing) lessons because I hurt all over after ever class for the first two months; and shifting from Diet Pepsi to flavored fizzy water because my naturopath showed me some frightening health information. Even knowing that Diet Pepsi was not helping my kickboxing body didn't make the habit transition any easier. Willpower and focus and sometimes gritting my teeth into powder as I white knuckled through lunchtime got me to the other side.

On the Listserv, there are two lists devoted to the practices that create healthier and/or more productive habits and Habits as you define them, and a lovely gentleman named Pierre runs both of them: TOPS (your top three priorities on any given day) and Change Habits (the habits you want to begin or maintain on a monthly basis).

As the formation of healthy, life-affirming habits takes willpower, we've also been exploring and reading about something called The Willpower Instinct. I've added TinyURL links to Amazon Smile, where Moderation Management is one of the nonprofits you can support with your Amazon purchase at no additional cost or hassle to you, to support you in your journey to nourishing and happier habits and willpower. Select Moderation Management as your Smile Charity with this link: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/38-3152354>.

Heidi McCloskey, Editor “Day Thirty-One”

The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business
by Charles Duhigg You can pick this up at your local library or bookstore,
or via Smile: <http://tinyurl.com/pbwg9st>

Better Than Before: Mastering the Habits of Our Everyday Lives
by Gretchen Rubin <http://tinyurl.com/k6fwysz>

Making Habits, Breaking Habits: Why We Do Things, Why We Don't, and How to Make Any Change Stick by Jeremy Dean <http://tinyurl.com/pksuqj2>

Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness
by Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein <http://tinyurl.com/qdmrw5p>

Gut Feelings: The Intelligence of the Unconscious by Gerd Gigerenzer
<http://tinyurl.com/oboarh5>

Small Move, Big Change: Using Microresolutions to Transform Your Life Permanently by Caroline L. Arnold <http://tinyurl.com/p8au454>

Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard
by Chip Heath and Dan Heath <http://tinyurl.com/nszemnm>

The Willpower Instinct: How Self-Control Works, Why It Matters, and What You Can Do to Get More of It by Kelly McGonigal Ph.D <http://tinyurl.com/q9pfrrl>

Who We Are

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The MM Forum
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VISIT OUR WEBSITE

<http://www.moderation.org>

A Year of By-the-Book Drinking

Somebody on the list asked that I write a little something about my last year of By-the-Book (BTB) moderation, so here it goes. BTB drinking means that men drink no more than 14 standard drinks a week, women no more than 9. From a daily perspective, men can have a maximum of four drinks per day, and women can have a maximum of three drinks. Finally, everyone must abstain from drinking a minimum of three days per week.

If you had known me before February of last year, there is a very good chance that you would have thought I drank too much. And you would have been right. I drank daily, and I pretty much got intoxicated everyday. The level of intoxication varied from mildly drunk to WTF, out of control, obnoxious drunk. It was not pretty.

When I got to MM, I had had enough. I had to change. I felt that if I didn't get my drinking under control, the rest of my life would be defined primarily by my alcohol abuse. That was a fate I was unwilling to surrender to.

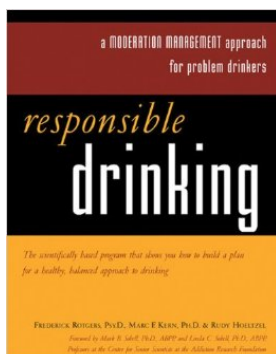
And now here I am a little over a year later and my life is dramatically different...and better. Below, in no particular order, are a few things I learned along the way.

*"I felt that if I didn't get my drinking under control,
the rest of my life would be defined primarily by my alcohol abuse."*

- 1) This email listserv is powerful. The people are wise, non-judgmental, and caring. Without this group, I doubt I would have been able to be BTB over the last year. I consider these good people to be close friends that I may never meet.
- 2) I need a plan to control my drinking. I think I always will. I have a new way of life, but it takes continued attention.
- 3) Not getting drunk anymore is not a sacrifice. I am not deprived. I am, in fact, indulging myself with my new lifestyle. Excessive drinking was robbing me of my health, both mental and physical, my self-respect, my confidence, my memory, etc. The list is long.
- 4) I didn't know whether I could successfully moderate when I got here. I hadn't done so for years. Now I know that I can, and it feels very good.
- 5) I consider BTB moderation to be MUCH closer to abstinence than the way I use to drink. Abstinence doesn't frighten me. There is no denying I do like having a few drinks a week, but it's much less important than I thought it ever could be. My goal is to continue to focus on decreasing the allure of drinking, and the longer I'm here the less I care about drinking.
- 6) Drinking moderately requires less effort than it used to require. My plan used to be very detailed. Lately, it's relatively easy and does not require a lot of thought, effort or planning. I hope that doesn't sound cocky or over-confident. It's not. I know I'm fully capable of returning to an unhealthy relationship with alcohol. The thing is that I just don't ever want to go back there. Ever again. And I am confident that if I continue to observe a few rules, I won't return to alcohol abuse.
- 7) So my current rules are simple. I drink BTB, without exception, whether I'm working or on vacation. I abstain more days than I drink. I don't drink more than two days in a row. That's it. Everything else is flexible. Your moderation may vary, but these rules work for me.

Anyway, I hope this doesn't come across as bragging or preachy. I'm not doing anything special other than reclaiming my life. If you're new here, you should believe that your life can be dramatically different if you want it to be. You can remove alcohol from a place of control in your life. And when you do, I don't think there's a chance that you'll miss it or regret it.

Mike Davis, Moderation Management Member



"The Book"
*Responsible Drinking: A
Moderation Management
Approach for Problem Drinkers*
by Rotgers, Frederick; Kern,
Marc F.; Hoeltzel, Rudy
(September 2002).

<http://tinyurl.com/nmnwh5s>



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All Beers Are Not Created Equal

...At least not in alcohol content

So you're making an effort to cut back on your drinking and you're a beer drinker. Great. The first step is to understand how much alcohol there is in your favorite brew and use that to convert your 12 or 16 oz. serving to a standard drink. What is a standard drink? In the U.S. it is

- ◆ 12 oz. of 5% beer
- ◆ 5 oz. of 12% wine
- ◆ 1.5 oz of 80 proof spirits

For you, the beer drinker, what's the alcohol level in your favorite brew? Levels can vary widely from 3.2% for some light or low-alcohol beers to 10% for others. A reasonably comprehensive resource for alcohol levels is here:

<http://www.realbeer.com/edu/health/calories.php>

(If you don't see your brew on the list, consider checking out the brewer's company web site for that bit of data.)

To convert the amount and % of alcohol into standard drinks, consider this calculator: <http://tinyurl.com/nyoafis>

Knowing how many standard drinks you're consuming will help keep you honest in your efforts to cut back on your drinking. You can also use the standard drinks to estimate your peak blood alcohol concentrations (BACs). Moderate drinking is defined, in part, as keeping your BACs under 55mg% (.055). Your BAC is a function of:

- ◆ Your weight and gender
- ◆ The number of standard drinks you have
- ◆ Over the number of hours you are drinking.

Keepers and Testimonials

There's a saying at Moderation Management: "Your Moderation May Vary." I think it's for that reason there can never be an exact roadmap that every single person from an unhealthy relationship with alcohol, drugs, shopping or food can use to navigate to a healthy one that's right for each individual and his or her life circumstances. There are, however, thousands of individual roadmaps that show up as emails on Moderation Management's Listserv or as threads in the Forum.

Some look like cries for help and are, yet they also serve as life rafts for people in that same situation who until the moment they read the words, felt so very alone. Some, like what you'll read below, walk you through a slice of someone's life as they first ignored or fought their misuse of alcohol, then were frustrated and angry as they tried, failed, and tried again to introduce and imbed healthier behaviors, and finally (if there ever is a "finally" with something you are unnaturally attracted to) they attained a measure of respect, control, and peace with how their own healthier life needed to be lived.

So while it's true, that there is no one map from here to there, it is also true that there are thousands upon thousands of maps that will lend inspiration and courage as you create your own way to a healthier life.

Keepers:

<http://forum.moderation.org/forumdisplay.php?19-Keepers>

Testimonials:

<http://forum.moderation.org/forumdisplay.php?18-Testimonials>

"Now I'd be the first to agree that the NA beers put out by the mega brewers are pretty awful. There are some good tasting NA beers though that I offer for your consideration."

So you can see that your BAC estimates will likely be different from someone else who may be drinking the same amount over the same period of time. Let me give you an example:

- ◆ A 190# male has 2 standard drinks in 2 hours. His estimated peak BAC is .01
- ◆ A 112# female has 2 standard drinks in 2 hours. Her estimated peak BAC is .06

BAC tables and estimators are available in our

<http://www.drinkerscheckup.com> (a web app that helps you increase your motivation to change your drinking)

<http://www.moderatedrinking.com> (a web app that helps you learn the skills to moderate your drinking)

Endwi (a smartphone app offered by the New Mexico Dept. of Transportation)

Another option to consider in cutting back is non-alcoholic beer. Now I'd be the first to agree that the NA beers put out by the mega brewers are pretty awful. There are some good tasting NA beers though that I offer for your consideration:

- ◆ Kaliber (by Guinness)
- ◆ St. Pauli Girl N.A.
- ◆ Clausthaler non alcoholic beer

Reid K. Hester, Ph.D., Member of the Moderation Management Board of Directors.
Developer of www.moderatedrinking.com and www.drinkerscheckup.com

Sarah's Story

I joined MM in March 2008 on yet another morning when I was so hung over I couldn't function. I sat on my couch, so sick and anxious, and searched for anything that could help me stop feeling horrible. I had been drinking almost daily- some days one drink and some days 5 or 6 drinks- and was also binge drinking on the weekends. The morning I joined was following a binge. A binge for me ranged from 5 drinks to 25 drinks and never lasted more than a day. I never knew how much of a difference Moderation Management would make in my life.

On the MM listserv I found acceptance, support, creative ideas, thought-provoking discussions, brutal honesty, and humor. Best of all, though, I found like-minded people who actually understood what I was going through. They wrote things I was sure I could have written. They replied to my posts not with judgment, but with kindness and support. They found strategies that actually worked. And they knew of ways to reduce my anxiety and guilt enough to deal with this problem drinking I finally came to accept. In my life, I had not found someone who was able to articulate just those terrible feelings I had from drinking, but through MM I finally found a home where I could deal with my drinking productively.

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Remembering Audrey Conn (Kishline)

Contradictions of a talented but fragile soul



Audrey Conn (Kishline)

1956-2014

Founder of Moderation Management

http://www.moderation.org/about_mm/in_memoriam.shtml#AudreyConn

Change. It's quite a loaded word. Many people revere it, gravitate toward it, and revel in the possibilities of what's yet to come. And many don't. Change can be scary. It can bring about the loss of a loved one, a job, or a way of life. It can bring about a shift in thinking that people have held onto for decades. Change is often messy; it's certainly imperfect; and it's always beyond any single person's control.

The founder of Moderation Management, **Audrey Conn (Kishline)**, believed in change. She believed in choice, in particular the freedom for each person to choose either a moderate or abstinent relationship with alcohol. This was something that flew in the face of what was then a very black and white system. At the time, this system was widely dictated by insurance companies and the medical profession who believed that they held the answers to alcohol addiction.

"Her intention in challenging the traditional approach to alcohol abuse was not to bring down the establishment. She was just tired of being told that one size fit all."

Her intention in challenging the traditional approach to alcohol abuse was not to bring down the establishment. She was just tired of being told that one size fit all. The alcoholism in her own family, her compassionate nature, and her own battles with alcohol made it very clear to her that there had to be at least one other way, if not more. Although she never conquered her own demons, and years later was jailed for the role she played in the vehicular death of two people, it was important to her to forge new paths for people she would never meet, paths that would lead them to a far healthier place with alcohol abuse and addiction that she would never find.

Dr. Marc Kern, Chairman of the Board for Moderation Management, co-author of *"Responsible Drinking: A Moderation Management Approach for Problem Drinkers"* and a friend and colleague of Audrey's, said of her "On some level, she changed the course of history by creating the freedom for people to choose moderation or abstinence. There is no going back to a single system of addressing alcohol abuse or addiction, and new research supports her findings. I'm so sorry that she didn't have the kind of support she needed in her life to help her find a path that was healthy. I can't stress how important that is for everyone."

Many people use the email Listserv and the Forum as support networks. Many have not yet confided in their families or friends and have been hiding their drinking or their moderation in relative silence. Audrey has gifted the world with the support she didn't get herself; something that will live for generations beyond her.

Moderation Management has a memorial to Audrey at:

<http://tinyurl.com/ktumdco>

This is the text from that memorial page:

"**Audrey Conn** (known then as Audrey Kishline) played an historic role in the harm reduction movement by single-handedly starting *Moderation Management*™ in 1993. Audrey compiled cutting-edge research with her own experience to create the popular book *"Moderate Drinking: The Moderation Management (TM) Guide for People Who Want to Reduce Their Drinking."* Moderation Management was the first harm reduction mutual aid support group and it took great courage to take the steps she did to bring MM to life. Audrey was a brave visionary who, like all of us, was vulnerable and imperfect. She spent the rest of her life trying to resolve the contradictions of her existence."

Spotlight:

Moderation Management's Board of Directors

We feel incredibly lucky to have such supportive, knowledgeable, and compassionate board members, and we're wrapping up our introduction with two wonderful men. It's a gift, really, to have a group of scientifically educated experts who never lose sight of the human face of addiction. In this newsletter we introduce you to Dr. Marc Kern and Dr. John Pasagiannis.

Marc Kern, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist

Alternatives Addiction Treatment, Los Angeles CA

Dr. Marc Kern is a pioneer in the field of addiction and substance abuse treatment. In 1982, he received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the California School of Professional Psychology. He is also a Certified Addiction Specialist, a Certified Rational Addictions Therapist, and is certified by the American Psychological Association in the Treatment of Alcohol and Other Psychoactive Substance Use Disorders. He later founded Alternatives Addictives as a private practice in Los Angeles, California, to provide clients with non-12-step addiction treatment alternatives. At Alternatives Behavioral Health, Dr. Kern serves as the Director of Clinical Services.

Dr. Kern regularly speaks at national and international professional conferences, conventions and workshops. He is Chairman of Moderation Management's Board of Directors and was a founding member of SMART Recovery and Rational Recovery, and MM.

As a guest addiction expert, Dr. Kern has made over 100 media appearances, including syndicated and local radio and TV shows, including 20/20, ABC's popular network newsmagazine show, and CNN's renowned Larry King Live. He has also been featured in articles in dozens of daily newspapers and national magazines. His practical self-help book *Take Control, Now!* is a do-it-yourself blueprint for managing unwanted habits. His most recent book, *Responsible Drinking*, which he co-authored, is the core text for Moderation Management. His work appears in professional publications, including the prestigious International Journal of the Addictions.



MM in the News!

KQED Radio Show features Oakland MM's Paul Staley: <http://www.kqed.org/a/perspectives/R201504020643>

NPR - Morning Edition 3/23/2015 featured Moderation Management and an interview with our Donna Dierker. "Rethinking Alcohol: Can Heavy Drinkers ...Cut Back?": <http://tinyurl.com/qc3kn2w>

Fox TV News "Focus On Health" with our own Dr. Marc Kern. "Moderation Management Program Helps Heavy Drinkers": <http://tinyurl.com/kyfcacg>

The British paper **The Guardian** featured Oakland's MM Meeting in "The next AA? Welcome to Moderation Management": <http://tinyurl.com/k7xl5v2>

The Fix has a new story on us, "Moderation Management Gives Drinkers an Alternative to AA": <http://tinyurl.com/lt4kj9g>

More News at <http://www.moderation.org>

What does MM mean to me?

Moderation Management is the physical representation of my own personal journey and professional life. There were no options available, other than the standard abstinence-based approach, when I started to address my own alcohol + problems. Abstinence-based programs were not a good fit for me and MM was a philosophy that did not yet exist. As I began to navigate my own journey out of the grips of addiction, I was naturally inclined toward this harm-reduction approach. The humanistic and compassionate frame of the principles underlying MM was the outlet I was seeking. MM represents the human pool of people struggling with the difficulties of life and addiction. This philosophy validates that there need be no shame or morality in how one best copes with their existence. I foresee a great future for MM and its principles beyond addiction treatment and I hope to carry it forward during my tenure as Chairman of the Board.

John Pasagiannis, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist **Center for Optimal Living, New York NY**

Dr. John Pasagiannis is a clinical psychologist with over 10 years' experience working with substance misuse issues, mood disorders, and other problematic behaviors. He works from an integrative, harm reduction model that draws upon psychodynamic, cognitive behavioral and motivational enhancement traditions. He believes that this approach is best suited for the development of a collaborative therapeutic relationship that promotes safety, empowerment, the development of coping skills, insight and well-being.

Dr. Pasagiannis specializes in working with artists and young adults. His work with actors, photographers, musicians, artists and young adults is guided by a deep appreciation of the complex bio-psychosocial factors contributing to substance misuse and the importance of developing alternative coping skills that contribute to positive change. Dr. Pasagiannis worked as the Supervising Clinical Psychologist at Cumberland Diagnostic & Treatment Center's Chemical Dependency Outpatient Program and served as liaison between Cumberland and the Buprenorphine program at Woodhull Hospital. He was a Leopold Schepp Foundation and Glass Institute Scholar, and served on NYSPA's Division on Addictions Executive Committee.



Currently he serves on the Board of Directors of Moderation Management and is a consultant at LA PALESTRA, Center for Preventative Medicine. He holds a doctorate in clinical psychology from Adelphi University's Derner Institute of Advanced Psychological Studies.

Moderation-Friendly Therapists

For the benefit of our participants we maintain a listing of moderation-friendly therapists available in most states in the US, Canada, Australia, and the UK.

(<http://tinyurl.com/4u6em>)

If you have found therapy beneficial in the past or have considered partnering with someone for a coaching experience, our moderation-friendly listing may be a good place to start.

Each therapist must be approved by Moderation Management in a vetting process before they are listed.

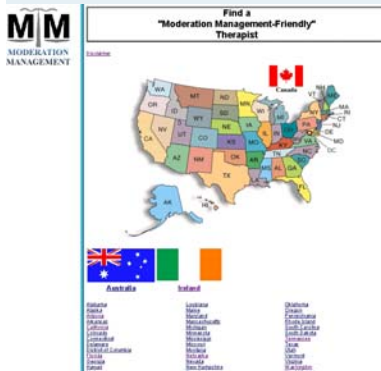
If you believe your therapist is moderation-friendly, and they would like to be listed, please send a request to:

therapists@moderation.org

Visit our Therapist Finder page:

http://www.moderation.org/therapist_finder.shtml

<http://tinyurl.com/4u6em>



Beer by the Numbers

I really love beer! I have ever since I was a teenager, many, many years ago. In fact, my first job at age 16 was at "The Festhaus" (a knockoff German beer hall) at Busch Gardens in Tampa. The late 70's, as a few of you might remember, was a different era when it came to drinking. Not only did they serve beer at Busch Gardens, they made a ton of it back then. They brewed so much that they were more than willing to supply beer free of charge to their guests and to their workers. When you left work at the end of your shift right before you got into your huge gas-guzzling boat of a car, management was happy to serve you three beers in the company break room as a token of their appreciation for a job well done. Nobody seemed to care that you weren't of legal drinking age or that you were about to get into a car. As I said, it was a different era.

Fast forward 30 plus years. The Festhaus is gone, Busch Gardens no longer brews beer on premises, and I'm pretty sure Anheuser-Busch's lawyers et al suggested to the powers that be that sending workers home with a buzz was not exactly the model of corporate responsibility. And I moved on too. Trading my goofy blue food food-line line-worker apron and bell-bottomed polyester costume for some equally goofy blue suits, I became a responsible lawyer. Well... a lawyer at least. What didn't change was my love of beer.

I loved beer and other alcoholic drinks so much, it eventually became an unhealthy relationship. In 2013, the calendar year before I joined Moderation Management, I resolved to drink 1,000 different beers. Do the math. That's an average of 2.74 different beers a day, every day, seven days a week. But being the champion I am, I not only reached, but exceeded, my goal. Add to that the beers I drank that I had already tried before, along with wine, bourbon, and everything else but scotch. It was a year of extreme indulgence to say the least.

Then I found MM, and it's changed my life. My drinking habits have changed radically, but my love of beer hasn't. So in order to live in both worlds, By the Book (BTB)* moderation and a still burning love of beer, I've had to make a few changes. What follows are a few observations, tips and opinions about moderate beer consumption.

- 1) Beer is a natural beverage for moderation. Your "average" beer has less alcohol by volume than "average" wines and spirits. One 12-ounce beer (at 5% ABV or "alcohol by volume") equals 5 ounces of 12% ABV wine or one shot of 80 80-proof liquor. Plain and simple, you can drink more of a malt beverage without getting drunk.
- 2) That being said, the alcoholic content of beer in today's world varies dramatically. In the craft beer-centric, micro brew world that we currently live in, it's not unusual to find beers that are 10-15% ABV. Some are even stronger. There are also beers commonly available that are 2.5% to 4.5 % ABV. So you really need to know your beer's alcohol content. It makes a huge difference. Two 15% beers are the equivalent of six standard drinks; two 2.5% beers equal one. Thus, the first thing to determine when you're drinking beer is its strength.
- 3) Specific information about alcohol content is not hard to find. It's on line, contained within many different apps,** and can even be located in very tiny print on most labels. But if you can't find the info, you often can get some guidance about a beer's strength by its style and name. Generally, and I stress generally, the following beers are on the less than 5% ABV side - — light beers, session beers, shandies, English light and dark milds, wheat beer, sweet stouts, Berliner Weisses, and English ordinary bitters. Conversely, any beer categorized as an imperial or double is likely stronger than your average beer. If the name of the beer evokes ferocious animals, demons or mental infirmity/illnesses (e.g. Serpent's Stout, Belzebuth, and Blithering Idiot), be forewarned. It's going to be strong.
- 4) Knowledge of your container size is crucial. Are you drinking a 12 ounce can, or is that a "tall boy" with one third more beer than standard? Glass sizes vary tremendously. 20 ounce mugs are common in many bars. Flight glasses can be anywhere between 3 and 6 ounces. Generally when you order a beer on tap, you're going to be served more than 12 ounces. If you take time to become familiar with how much beer different glasses hold, you can do a significantly better job accurately counting your drinks.
- 5) Keeping track of how many standard drinks you've had is not all that difficult. If you're drinking out of a 12 ounce can or bottle, it's easy. If it's 5% or lower ABV, each beer is one (or less) standard drink. 7.5 % is a drink and a half; 10% is two drinks.

- 6) Personally I like flights, but the math can get a little involved. Here's how I do it: First you find out the mini glass size. Let's say it's 5 ounces. I order 4 beers with respective alcohol contents of 4.5%, 6.3%, 7.2% and 10%. How many drinks is that? Multiply the ounces in the glass (5) by the respective ABV's. You get 22.5, 31.5, 37 and 50. Then add those figures - 141. Finally divide by 60. And wallah, your flight is 2.35 drinks. Time to savor slowly after working up a sweat doing all of that math!
- 7) While you're enjoying your flight, don't forget to cleanse your palette. Water between your little beers stretches that flight out over the course of your meal. Plus, water keeps you hydrated, which is incredibly important.
- 8) Before moderation, I avoided NA beers like the plague. What's the point of having a beer, if you don't get a buzz? And when I first started abstaining, I avoided NA beers for a different reason. I thought they were cheating. Now they are my go to drink for two reasons: A) I like the taste, and B) They contain roughly the same alcohol content as orange juice. At 0.5% ABV or less, it would take ten or more NA beers to equal one standard drink. Personally, I couldn't stand that much carbonation.

"Beer is a natural beverage for moderation. Your 'average' beer has less alcohol by volume than 'average' wines and spirits."

So, the bottom line is that beer can be enjoyed responsibly. But there are numerous variables that you have to take into consideration if you want an accurate drink count. Serving size and ABV information are crucial. When in doubt, overestimate. And don't forget to slowly sip whatever beer you're enjoying.

* By the Book moderation refers to moderate drinking guidelines outlined in the book, *Responsible Drinking: A Moderation Management Approach for Problem Drinkers* by Rotgers, Frederick; Kern, Marc F.; Hoeltzel, Rudy (September 2002).

** Three examples of mobile and online apps are:

- Alcohol Units Calculator on iTunes, which can be found at:
<http://tinyurl.com/pw2zzpu>
- Alcohol Unit Calculator from NHS Choices (UK), which can be found at:
<http://tinyurl.com/6e5lug3>
- Unit Calculator from Drink Smarter, which can be found at:
<http://tinyurl.com/pxx69pl>

Mike Davis, Moderation Management Member



Dan Ox-Creative Commons

The House Of Change

Foreword by Heidi McCloskey, Editor "Day Thirty-One"

For many people, entering the world of alcohol moderation is a frightening thing. Admitting that there might be something not quite right with binge drinking on the weekends and the vicious hangovers that follow, or experiencing the occasional black-outs, or not being able to remember a night when you didn't have at least one glass of wine is hard for more people than you imagine. When you're sitting at home or in your office and your worst hits are running through your head, you likely feel alone, broken, or at the very least severely bent, and defective. You might feel ashamed, vulnerable, angry, and afraid.

Being raised in an alcoholic household, I had no idea how to have a right relationship with alcohol. And when I began practicing Thai kickboxing, my new, healthy body didn't know how to cope with even small amounts of alcohol. Two glasses of wine could, and often did, cause hideous migraines. More than that and it was though my personality was taken over by an evil entity that caused me to say awful, mean things to people I cared about. I would close my eyes at night and beg for a roadmap, and, after reading and posting for a few months on the MM email list, I got one. It's rather like something from Raiders of the Lost Ark, cobbled together from the wisdom in Pierre's House of Change, from various MM tools, from MM members' experiences (their failures as well as their successes), and from the support of this wise, widely diverse community. A community that has your back as you make your own way. As one of our members is very fond of saying, "Your moderation may vary." I have found that approaches vary, but the human experience is surprisingly similar.

"Imagine you are there. You are blending seamlessly with this community, exchanging your impressions and experiences."

The House of Change

The House of Change is crowded, especially the cellar, which is damp, dark, and cold. But the House of Change has also a roof terrace where the sun is bright, and life is good. The way to change moves up from the cellar to the roof terrace by means of a huge staircase. Its steps may be of varying heights. The House of Change has also large floors where people can rest on their way to change.

Many people in the cellar are not yet at the point where they're considering change. They are unaware that far above them, there is a sunny, warm place where the view is beautiful, the air is pure, and the ambiance is soothing. They shiver from time to time in the cold and damp cellar. Sometimes they have a feeling that there must be a better place to be, but in the dark of the place they are in and the darkness of their mind they don't see a way out. They might not look for a change out of ignorance, well-established indolence, or sheer despair. In this place, they are stagnating in the **stage of pre-contemplation**.

There are those who stumble around in the dark, knowing that they need a change of scenery, likely driven and haunted by the memories of better days, groping about to find the latch of the exit door they know to be somewhere. Sometimes they are exhausted by the search. Some give it up for good, but most still struggle to change, and after a rest, resume the search for light and a better life. Here, they live and search in the **stage of contemplation**.

Then suddenly in the dark, they see a small, almost undetectable strip of pale yellow light. They stumble towards the light moved by a wild hope, reaching the doorknob, and opening the door where they are overwhelmed by the bright light of a staircase. Stuck on the wall is a poster informing them that they are now in the preparation stage, and that the staircase is a magic one, where they can program the height of the steps, depending on their mood and their current ability to

propel themselves forward. Now they plan the first steps to take; they move on driven by their determination to advance, fleeing the dark, damp and cold cellar, up to the light. They are in the **action stage**.

In the bright light of the large staircase, they can now see their fellow occupants, whose presence they only felt in the dark of the cellar of the House of Change. These fellow travelers are from all races, from all continents. They are small or tall, slim or big. There are males and females of all ages. Most go upstairs; some come downstairs. Imagine you are there. You are blending seamlessly with this community, exchanging your impressions and experiences. You are warned that you may slip downstairs, that there are a number of traps that can send you right down to the cellar again, but you are told that even in the cellar, there is always an open door and a staircase that ascends to the roof terrace.

And so you go up and down on your journey, but with experience, you find yourself moving up more than down, sometimes with ease, sometimes with pain. You are passing the floors, taking a rest or not, sometimes finding yourself back on a floor where you have already been. Oh, yes, this may be your fate in the action stage, but finally you reach the upper and last floor. On this floor there are club chairs, where you can take a rest and meditate before opening the door to the roof terrace. You look back at your struggle. You look over the railing, seeing the dark entrance to the cellar with great compassion, and you are proud of your journey. You are older and wiser than you were in the cellar, and oh, so happier. You are in the waiting room of the final **maintenance stage**.

Finally, you open the door to the roof terrace. You are in a beautiful garden, richly flowered, teeming with life. Bees are humming, the grass is greener than it was ever in your memories and dreams, and the sun streams so incredibly bright in a blue, blue sky. You are at the end of your cycle of change. You are in the **termination stage**.

“You look back at your struggle. ...seeing the dark entrance to the cellar with great compassion, and you are proud of your journey.”

And a last bit of information. When you have opened the door leading from the cellar to the staircase, don't look for the escalator. There is no escalator in the House of Change (LOL).

The stages are out of the great book:

Changing for Good: A Revolutionary Six-Stage Program for Overcoming Bad Habits and Moving Your Life Positively Forward. 1994. Prochaska, James O., Norcross, John C., DiClemente, Carlo C., PhD.

<http://www.moderation.org/books.shtml#changeforgood>

OR via Smile: <http://tinyurl.com/ouj5oqm>

This book changed my life.

Pierre, Moderation Management Member

Values of Moderation Management

Moderation Management (MM) is a behavioral change program and national support group network for people who are concerned about their drinking and who desire to make positive lifestyle changes. MM empowers individuals to accept personal responsibility for choosing and maintaining their own path, whether moderation or abstinence. MM promotes early self-recognition of risky drinking behavior, when moderate drinking is a more easily achievable goal.

MM is run by lay members who came to the organization to resolve personal issues and stayed to help others.

- Members take personal responsibility for their own recovery from a drinking problem.
- People helping people is the strength of the organization.
- People who help others to recover also help themselves.
- Self-esteem and self-management are essential to recovery.
- Members treat each other with respect and dignity.

Welcome from our Executive Director, Continued from Cover Page

In thinking about choice and change, I find myself in another seemingly paradoxical place, one of deep sorrow and profound gratitude. As many of you know, the founder of Moderation Management **Audrey Conn** (Kishline) died in December of last year. Her life was fraught with many of the same fears, tragedies, and struggles I've both faced myself and have seen our membership wrestle with. And yet, despite everything she faced, she stood up to every medical, political, and insurance authority of her day to give people a choice in creating their own healthier relationship with alcohol. To even suggest that a healthy relationship with an addictive substance was possible was pretty heretical, yet she did.

Audrey would never know the lasting positive impact she would have on the lives of thousands, even millions of people. She would never know true peace herself as she fought her own addiction until the end. I wish her that peace now, and I thank her for gifting us peace by showing us that one size doesn't always fit all. There are as many ways to be healthy as there are people who strive to be.

I wish you well in your moderation journey!

Warm Regards,

Jim Mergens

Executive Director, Moderation Management

“Excess in all things is the undoing of men.” - Aristotle



Kathleen Tyler Conklin -Creative Commons

Support our Research Program

MM has a long and important history of supporting research on issues with alcohol. Research is a core part of our mission. This has created a number of important projects, which are listed at:
http://www.moderation.org/about_mm/research.shtml
<http://tinyurl.com/koqo5nx>

Your support of MM continuing this research can include a willingness to be considered as a participant. We have a private Listserv service (low volume) where individuals can volunteer to receive appeals to participate in research programs. Read about this:
<http://www.moderation.org/research/>

(Note you have no obligation to respond to these appeals, only to agree to receive the messages.)

Sarah's Story *Continued from Page 5*

I practiced moderation for one and a half years. I have tracked every drink I have taken on Abstar. I posted every time I drank more-than-moderately. I posted when I was proud that I did drink moderately. I posted when I abs'ed successfully. I wrote back to others who needed support. I found friends, confidence and a new me.

Changing our problem drinking is one of the hardest things we can face, and one of the most rewarding as well. I have never put so much work into anything in my life, and I'm very proud of the changes I've made. But that's part of what changing this habit means—hard work. Very hard work. I discovered that this is a lifelong process. It isn't a few days of doing something different followed by a magical change. It's about falling down and getting back up; making plans; staying accountable; and self-forgiveness.

I was fairly successful at moderation, but still was having one to two binges a month. For me, the anxiety, guilt, illness, sleepless nights, and self-deprivation that followed a binge was just not worth it anymore. Through practicing abs days with MM, I knew what life could feel like without those hangovers. I had developed skills on how to abs in social situations and found activities I liked to do that didn't involve drinking during my time practicing moderation. Finally I decided that the right choice for me was to just stop drinking for a while. I knew that when I drank I felt bad some of the time (not all of the time), and when I didn't drink I didn't feel bad from alcohol. So I stopped drinking and joined MMabsers. I don't go to AA or other support groups. I just stopped drinking. Drinking (or trying to moderate) was just taking up too much of my brain space and time and I needed a break from that to focus on other life goals. The payoffs of not drinking have been so huge for me that until I can find a really great reason to start up again, I'm just not drinking anymore. This has improved my quality of life in ways I can't even measure.

I think back to when I first joined MM and feel sad that I hadn't joined earlier because I know how much my quality of life has improved since that day in March 2008. I am a problem drinker. It took me a really long time to admit that, but I am. And if it weren't for the help of MM and MMabsers, I would be far less happy and calm than I am today.

Read Sarah's Story on the Moderation Management Forum:

<http://tinyurl.com/olxec2d>

To Register for the MM Forum:

<http://forum.moderation.org/register.php>; "Secret Name" is Bill
Or email an Administrator at forum@moderation.org



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