

## Why We Need Suppers for Sobriety

Relapse rates can be interpreted as an indication that as a culture, we are not making good matches between problems and solutions when we help alcoholics. There is currently no grassroots movement whose purpose it is to provide a forum for good match making. Rather, we offer recovering alcoholics packaged solutions that represent our biases -- not their needs -- concerning what good help is. If the package he or she tries is matched to the natural reality of the problem (like the right biological solution to the biological vulnerability), the alcoholic is more likely to remain sober. If the package they try is not matched to their natural reality (like the wrong biological solution or a social solution for a biological vulnerability), they are less likely to stay sober.

Our culture needs to fill the recovery void with a bottom up movement, offering recovering alcoholics an alternative that keeps the focus on their individuality, a safe forum for trying on possible solutions in the areas of body, mind, and spirit. We haven't had a program for alcoholics and their loved ones to help them navigate the issues of individual differences. If you think like we think, that's a dangerous oversight because *it's the active forces you don't know about that'll get you.*

### Food Matters

Food matters. Bodies and brains are made out of what you absorb from food. So good food is not optional if you want to feel well. Food is a powerful, much overlooked source of stability, or instability, in the case of a junk diet. Food can make the difference between feeling comfortable or uncomfortable in your own skin. To the extent that your environment promotes coffee, cigarettes, sweets or junk food, it is to that extent that it is a set up for relapse. At the Suppers tables, members learn how to eat heartily without sabotaging their sobriety. The Suppers family table is the core of every meeting.

People don't cook like they used to. There is no way around the point: somebody has to cook. If alcoholics are to tap into the sobering power of their own biology, our culture needs to provide what mothers have provided through the millennia. It doesn't have to be fancy fare, it just has to be real food, simply prepared. To stabilize a recovering alcoholic the menu includes whole, fresh foods, the foods that provide the building blocks for healthy bodies and happy brains.

Food preparation is not a Suzie homemaker solution to a serious problem. It's a serious solution that strikes to the core of the biological deficits that promote addiction. At Suppers, we think it's so important that we teach everybody to prepare basic, wholesome meals. It's not hard. If you can make a pot of coffee, you can make a pot of soup.

### Family Tables Matter

Our culture also needs Suppers for Sobriety as a means of restoring family tables. Families who dine at tables are a dying breed, particularly where addiction has a foothold in the household. Observations by social scientists suggest that the children and teenagers who frequently eat dinner at family tables are at half the risk for substance abuse compared with those who eat with their families infrequently. This makes sense. Think of all the things that happen besides just eating when families eat together: Children fill their parents in about their day. Values and family rules are passed from parents to children. Lessons are transmitted about health, manners, and communicating. Children learn that parents care, that someone is raising them, and that there are adults to be accountable to.

Some of us have happy memories from the tables of our childhood. Others are not so lucky. To those of you who need to create family tables rather than just restore the habit,

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you can learn what you need to know at Suppers for Sobriety: how to cook them; how to create healthy rituals; how to feel like a member. It is the string of seemingly small experiences at family tables and in the real settings of life that adds up to a healthy, well connected life.

### **Whose Bottom Line Does Your Recovery Support?**

Another reason our culture needs the Suppers community is to challenge the problem of perverse profit motives.

What does your community offer to support alcoholics in long term sobriety? Probably not much. Insurance companies don't have a way of making a profit on programs or treatments that support long term sobriety. Food manufacturers don't benefit when people prepare their own food from single, fresh, whole ingredients. Their bottom lines depend on processed, packaged foods. Treatment facilities don't typically offer long term support, who will pay? And most don't deal with the details of individual biology after the initial detox. Pharmaceutical companies have long struggled to capture the market and come up with a drug that would solve alcoholism. They came up with a pill that makes you vomit if you drink, but that's harsh and insufficient treatment for a problem that integrates the body, mind, and spirit of the sufferer.

Researchers, clinicians, and support groups – including this one -- each have their own biases about how to approach alcoholism. Which door you walk through seeking help determines which bias you'll be exposed to: behavior therapy, spiritual experience, medication, urge management, and so forth. And in the case of the treatment facilities, the bottom line of the person whose door you walk through relies on your needing the service that's offered. This works out well if the solution offered is a good match for your problem.

But what if it's not?

The Suppers Forum offers the possibility of establishing a sobriety-supportive lifestyle while learning about what the greater community offers. That way each alcoholic can seek out the specific help he needs instead of fitting himself into the mold of whatever is offered behind the door he enters through.

At Suppers for Sobriety you will never be asked to pay for anything related to group participation except your own food and the cost of the meeting location, if there is any. You have the choice of downloading Suppers literature from the internet for free. There will be the option of supporting our work by purchasing the literature in book form or purchasing promotional materials, but these things are not necessary for full participation in Suppers for Sobriety.