

Gray Area Drinking Quiz

1. Do you silently worry, regret or fret about your drinking?

You wake up in the early morning hours feeling remorseful recounting the night before, but you get up and function well during the day. You get your workout in, eat a balanced diet, or exhibit other “healthy” lifestyle choices. Other days, however, you experience wasted mornings and weekends, feeling hungover and angry over little things. Other people don’t often know about these days—they don’t see your sleepless nights, your self-loathing, your racing, anxious mind. What goes on internally regarding your drinking is different from what you present externally.

2. Are you somewhere between having a “have a celebratory drink” once or twice a year or complete rock bottom dependency?

You’re not an end-stage, lose-everything kind of drinker—you’re a long way from rock bottom. But you aren’t an every-now-and-again drinker, either, where you have one glass of champagne at a wedding a couple times a year. Most people don’t fall into either of those black-and-white drinking extremes; many people land somewhere between these extremes: in the gray area.

3. Are you able to stop drinking and been able to stay stopped for periods of time even weeks or months - but find it hard to stay stopped?

You’ve taken a break from drinking at different times in your life for various reasons—maybe you were doing a nutrition or fitness challenge or you swore off alcohol as one of your New Year’s resolutions. But then something comes up—a holiday, work event, or a stressful time—and it’s just too hard to keep turning down the drink forever. So back on the drinking carousel you go, and you quickly end up regretting how much you’re drinking.

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4. Does your drinking look problematic to those around you?

You drink like most people in your social and business circles—neighborhood block parties, book clubs, girls night out, work events. You probably know people who drink much more than you do. If you talk about it with others, they might say, “You don’t have a problem, why are you worrying so much about this?” So you tell yourself you’re not that bad.

5. Do you ricochet between ignoring the voice in your head that says you should stop drinking and the one that says “go on life’s too short, you need to live a little”?

Alcohol is your reward at the end of the day. It’s how you have fun, relax, unwind, connect, have sex, and fall asleep at night. Everything in moderation, right? Yet, you’ve lost count how many times you’ve woken up the day after “living a little” and said, “Never again. I can’t keep drinking like this.”

Gray area drinking can be a slippery slope, and the societal pull to keep drinking is strong. Friends and family would often say to me, “Can’t you just have one drink with us?” The answer was no, but they couldn’t see what was silently happening in my mind, body and life as a result of my drinking—they only saw my life from the outside, which looked ‘fine.’ Alcohol is your reward at the end of the day. It’s how you have fun, relax, unwind, connect, have sex, and fall asleep at night. Everything in moderation, right? Yet, you’ve lost count how many times you’ve woken up the day after “living a little” and said, “Never again. I can’t keep drinking like this.”

