

# The Bridge to Freedom for Top Executives

(Proven solutions to overcome alcohol and drug problems)

*Why should we even worry about so-called “social” drinking? Everyone drinks and a large percentage of people use a combination of alcohol and recreational or prescription drugs, most of them without negative consequences. Many of us believe that social drinking is practically a requirement of the job. In some cultures it is a requirement. Another belief is that much of our success can be attributed to the creativity, freedom and boldness that we experience when we drink. There are other “beliefs” that many of us have that are too numerous to mention in this article. I’m sure you can add some of your own. Unfortunately, these beliefs categorically are not true.*

Alcoholism is a progressive disease; it always gets worse, it never gets better. Not everyone who drinks (even heavy drinkers) is an alcoholic. For those of us who are alcoholic, the progression can happen either slowly or rapidly.

A lot of you will not be interested in the “Why should I worry?” question. But ask yourself these questions:

- Do I think I may drink a little too much?
- Do I know I have a problem but not an addiction?
- Do I admit, at least to myself, that there is a problem?
- Can I imagine a life without alcohol and/or drugs?

If you answered “yes” to at least one of these questions AND you are open to the possibility of changing some things in your life, I

invite you to give yourself a great gift: suspend all judgment for a few minutes and read further. This time could be the beginning of your freedom.

*Matt W. (not his real name) was the CEO of a real estate development and holding company with investments in five states. Matt's drinking and drugging had led to bad investments, alienation of his investment partners, a broken family and rapidly declining health. He was 35 years old.*

*Matt made the decision to seek help after an intervention by his family and friends. He and his trusted advisor worked on his recovery first and then worked together on turning his business around. Twelve months after completing a 30-day discovery process, and a six-month implementation process, the \$240,000 annual negative cash flow was turned into a \$250,000 annual positive cash flow. Matt was now sole stockholder/owner of the properties we had traded for.*

*Matt received the \$20,000 a month positive cash flow and all of his partners' needs were met. He and his family were back together in a healthy way, walking a path to healing and success.*

Alcoholism is a subtle disease. It is the only disease that tells us we don't have it. Alcoholism destroys our competencies and robs us of our power. It destroys relationships in families, friendships and businesses.

If you are a top executive, chances are you pride yourself in always getting the job done. As alcoholism progresses some of the signs may be that you become less effective. You still show up on time (many of us are first in and the last to leave) but you just can't seem to get it all done anymore. The productivity of the staff decreases because the quality and quantity of your leadership diminishes. Much of the staff's time is spent covering for you,

which further reduces the time spent on their tasks. The culture of the staff starts a negative turn. The entire company can be affected if you, the leader, continue your downward spiral.

The best case business scenario is that the company's growth will stall; strategic implementation will slow down or stop. The "thinking" of the company will dull. The downward progression will cause great employees to leave the company or it will turn them into non-creative employees. Recruiting will be more difficult. Relationships with vendors, finance sources, and customers also may be impacted. In the worst case scenario the affected company can fail if the leader has enough autonomy.

On a personal level you will lose power, control, competitiveness and respect. The loss of your reputation can have a lifelong affect on your career.

### Solutions That Work

1. Determine if there is a problem by working with a trusted advisor, someone who has no affiliation or loyalty other than to you, who has expertise in this field. Confidentiality is paramount.
2. together, you and the trusted advisor determine the progression of the disease.
3. You work with your advisor to identify and eliminate personal problems caused by your drinking/drugging.
4. Together you co-author the best solution for your addiction.
5. Assess the current state of the company, your staff and relationships affecting the business.
6. Co-author solutions for the business with your advisor that can be implemented rapidly.

### How to Get Your Power Back

You already have paid a huge price emotionally, financially and perhaps spiritually. The loss of power, respect, control and freedom are the horrible, hidden gifts of your drinking and/or drugging. Without these losses you would not have wanted to effect changes in your life.

Now it's freedom time. You have the choice to continue as you are or to stop paying in further losses. Every one of the above steps will take you to a place totally unknown to you until now.

The Trusted Advisor is your bridge to freedom. The advisor knows what it's like to be where you are and how to build the bridge to get to the other side.

You will get your power back by partnering with your trusted advisor. Your new life will have an authenticity that emanates from you. With confidence restored and all of your skills, talents and leadership qualities in place, you will once again (or maybe for the first time) be the author of your future.

Now is the time to act. Call someone today. You may want to discuss your problem with your board of directors or the person to whom you report. The HR department is an option, as is an Employee Assistance Program. However, if you want more anonymity you can speak to your family physician or a therapist. There are also 12- step programs that will insure your anonymity.

The best solution may be an independent consultant or executive coach who has expertise in this field along with a business background.

There is a period of reconstruction ahead. A powerful, solution oriented partnership with a trusted advisor can be created in a very

short time because of your willingness and the advisor's expertise. It is the right thing to do. There is a solution. The two of you can do together what you cannot do alone.

You do not have to be alone anymore.



*Bill Corbett, Trusted Advisor to CEOs and Top Executives is the founder of Addiction CEO ([www.addictionceo.com](http://www.addictionceo.com)). He has successfully worked with hundreds of men and women in their recovery process. He can be reached at 970/481-5976*

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