

17. *What is an alcoholic?*

If there is a pattern of problems which are related to alcohol or other drugs, there is usually cause for concern.

If a person cannot predict, with any degree of accuracy:

- When they will drink
- When they will not drink
- How much they will consume once they start drinking
- And what is going to happen to them, once they start drinking

Then the drinking may be out of control. If drinking is out of control, then, there is often alcoholism present. The same goes for any other “recreational” drugs, gambling, shopping, excessive internet usage or food struggles; loss of control is an indicator of addiction, powerlessness and unmanageability.

If a person is “trying to control” their drinking, then the drinking is out of control. Saying to others, or to oneself, that alcohol consumption will be decreased, or only consumed under certain conditions, is a sign that drinking is controlling the person, and the person has lost control of the alcohol. The battle is over, and alcohol has won.

After all, when was the last time anyone said to themselves, “Oh my goodness, I’ve just got to cut back on the amount of green beans that I’m eating”? There have been no clients who have come in for help in reducing the amount of green beans that they are consuming (yet).

