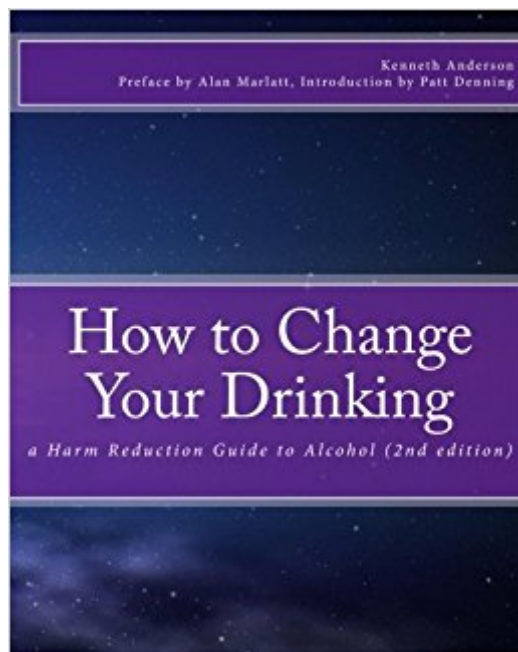




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# How To Change Your Drinking: A Harm Reduction Guide To Alcohol (2nd Edition)



## Synopsis

Harm reduction is the single most effective approach to drug and alcohol problems because harm reduction uses pragmatic, evidence-based strategies that work. This book is the first comprehensive compilation of harm reduction strategies aimed specifically at people who drink alcohol. Whether your goal is safer drinking, reduced drinking, or quitting alcohol altogether, this is the book for you. It contains a large and detailed selection of harm reduction tools and strategies which you can choose from to build your own individualized alcohol harm reduction program. There are many practical exercises to help people change their behaviors, including risk-ranking worksheets, drinking charts, goal choice worksheets, and many more. There are also innumerable practical tips from folks who "have been there" and have turned their drinking habits around for the better. This book exemplifies the harm reduction principles of "meeting people where they are at" and encouraging people to change in ways which they choose for themselves. This book can either be used as a self-help manual for people working on their own or by people who are participating in a harm reduction support group. BETTER IS BETTER!!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Kenneth Anderson is the founder and CEO of The HAMS Harm Reduction Network. HAMS is the first world-wide, harm reduction-based support group specifically for people who drink alcohol. HAMS is lay-led and free-of-charge. Mr. Anderson has worked in the field of harm reduction since 2002. His wide range of experience includes serving as Director of Online Services at Moderation Management, and working "in the trenches" of harm reduction doing needle exchange in

Minneapolis. He has presented at the National Harm Reduction Conference and has been a regular guest speaker at the Harlem Hospital Harm Reduction Program, The Lower East Side Harm Reduction Center, and many other venues. Mr. Anderson is a member of The International Center for Clinical Excellence, the Global Alcohol Harm Reduction Network, and the International Harm Reduction Association. He holds a masters degree in linguistics from the University of Minnesota and is currently pursuing a masters degree in psychology and substance abuse counseling at the New School for Social Research in New York City.

A fact-packed, sensible and compassionate guide for those concerned about alcohol use. This book addresses very practical questions - how do people affect change? What are the short & long-term effects of alcohol on the body and brain? How can people consider their own experiences and apply what demonstrably works, on their own, and/or with the right kind of support? It's rare to hear alcohol abuse considered in any context other than "abstain or die". This book objectively presents many surprising facts which strip away popular myths on how to approach an alcohol issue. Most of these myths are based on AA dogma, and widely promulgated by the American medical establishment, in spite of abundant evidence that AA is ineffective for most people. At the heart of this book is respect for human integrity and informed choice. Anderson recognizes that people have always and will continue to routinely engage in many different behaviors which can have harmful consequences. They also have choices in modifying these behaviors, and reducing the harm they could cause to themselves and others. Anderson makes a critical and unique contribution in synthesizing existing harm reduction (HR) research, CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy), RET (Rational Emotive Therapy) and other proven approaches, applying them to alcohol use, and creating very immediate and concrete tools that a person can engage to address their own patterns of alcohol use. While Anderson fully supports abstinence for those who choose it, he acknowledges and understands the practical reality that not everyone will. For those who find an "all or nothing" ultimatum triggers a seemingly perverse leap into "ALL", he offers alternatives - practical approaches toward life choices that better support one's health and goals. Drinkers can take responsibility, find ways to exercise choice "muscles", and find that "better is better" - and find encouragements to build on their own successes, rather than punishment for not complying with failing methods or rigid dogma. This book supports drinkers in making safer choices, while encouraging them to try out and practice "abs" (sobriety) days, and to plan for maximal safety if they choose to drink. Anderson presents a structured, but flexible approach, with sets of worksheets, and plenty of facts, empathy, inspiration and humor to encourage a person to apply these concepts practically, day to day, on an ongoing

basis. Each chapter is supported by extensive footnote references for further research. The web-site links included are another bonus. Ongoing on-line support links are provided, and purchase is not needed - on-line support is free to anyone at [...]. Anderson also freely admits he had a serious drinking problem, which adds to his credence with me. The good news is - if 12-step program approaches and their dire prognosis of progressive disease & death are anathema to you - this is only their story; you're not required to make it your story to get better. In fact, it appears most people are much more likely to get better when they exercise and build on strengths, rather than convince themselves they're "powerless". This book offers practical tools for that exercise, supported by well-organized, clearly summarized research results and sound medical information. For anyone concerned with an alcohol or any substance use problem (individuals, family, friends, or counselors), this is not just a "must read", but an essential toolkit and invaluable resource.

This book is excellent for anyone who really feels that excessive alcohol drinking is interfering with life. It is totally non-judgmental, and describes a very doable process in which someone can actually cut down on consumption while still being able to enjoy moderate drinking.

Ken Anderson's book *How to Change Your Drinking* does show you exactly that along with many facts about alcohol consumption and safe ways to detox. This book is written for people of all drinking levels. Ken's writing is like a coach telling you the game plan except he encourages you to go at your own pace and your own plan. You take the facts in the book and then apply them to your own goals. It's an easy read and it has definitely worked for me, first making me aware of my (over)consumption then giving me the tools to use in my plan. I am now drinking 5-7 glasses of wine/beer per week which is right where I want to be. Prior to reading the book I was about triple that.

This book together with the author's videos and support group has helped me go down to fractions of what I used to drink, and it has been a gradual process (small steps one by one) just as he describes in the book.

**THIS!!!** This is the REAL-DEAL. Esp for someone who struggles with the 12-step AA, such as myself...this is spot on. Realistic. Easy to read. INSPIRATIONAL. This book gets 5+ stars.

If you're concerned about your drinking, or any addictive habit, this book is worth reading. The tone

is friendly, the material is clear & well-organized, and it offers sane & sensible alternative approaches to the all-pervasive AA disease model. Look, if AA works for you, great -- but it doesn't work for everyone, actually only for a small percentage of people -- for a variety of reasons, primarily the emphasis on personal powerlessness & reliance on a higher power (a dubious notion for some of us), and the insistence on all-or-nothing abstinence. Ken Anderson's approach is far more flexible and scientifically supported -- he addresses readers as grown-ups, capable of making their own plans & decisions. His book is a breath of fresh air for anyone who thinks they have only two choices of identity -- diseased addict or tense teetotaler. It encourages you to make your own decisions about how much and how often you want to drink (if at all), and offers a variety of methods to get you to your goal. The title says it all -- not How to Stop Drinking, but How to Change Your Drinking. Grownups understand there's a wide spectrum of behavior between abstinence and abject drunkenness, and this is one of the very few books (the others are mostly by Stanton Peele, good complements to this book) that understands and expresses that. Highly recommended for anyone who, like I, may be wrestling with bad habits.

I need to read it again. I have had my ups and downs with trying to control my alcohol intake. This would be more for the person who feels like they can control their drinking to a certain extent. If you are a "full-blown" alcoholic--meaning once you start you just can't stop--this is not the book for you. If you are a person concerned about your drinking but have the ability to stop sometimes and other times get out of hand--there is value here. I need to read it again to really absorb all the information. If you are an AA advocate, you will hate this book. If you are kind of wavering in your program, it is worth a read.

Harm Reduction is growing in popularity. Many were harmed by AA and realized there is another way to deal with Alcohol abuse . Ken Anderson is a leading expert in this category. I read his book for research. Much good stuff for anyone suffering from too much drinking.

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