

BAR TALK

Written under the influence of incohol

By Gator



Am I An Alcoholic?

For a long time now, I've been meaning to take one of those alcoholic screening tests, if for no other reason than to determine whether I am a bona-fide alcoholic or just a fun-loving boozier who has it under control.

I guess the reason I never got around to taking the quiz is because I'm a little scared of what I might learn, and also because I'm usually too hungover to concentrate on exams.

Today, however, I finally decided to take the test. After a little research, I chose the John Hopkins University Hospital Alcohol Screening Quiz. The quiz asks a series of yes-or-no questions. Before proceeding, I made a pact to answer them honestly and completely. Here are the results:

Q: Do you drink to build self-confidence or because you are shy?

A: No. Shyness is the opposite of my problem.

Q: Is drinking making your home life unhappy?

A: No. Drinking makes my home life happier. For one reason, my wifey is a bit of a boozier herself. We host parties and consume booze. We have dinner and drink wine. We do shots together. While watching TV, we play drinking games like, Drink Entourage or Drink Hogan's Heroes. So much is better around our home because we both booze. Some might call this codependency; we call it a marriage heaven sent.

Q: Is drinking negatively affecting your reputation?

A: This is an ambiguous question. Affect my reputation with whom? Because certainly my reputation with the morality overlords has suffered over the years. But as far as the people who matter—family and friends-type people—my reputation remains as good as ever.

Q: Have you ever felt regret after drinking?

A: I regret that I must answer yes to this "trick" question. I must also point out however that I have also felt regret after shopping, sleeping, eating, and shopping.

Q: Is drinking jeopardizing your job? Do you lose time from work due to drinking?

A: No. I have not called into work drunk in a very long time.

Q: Have you had financial difficulties as a result of drinking?

A: Another ambiguous question. Are they asking if I spend too much money on booze? If so, then I am inclined to say yes. But if they mean, do I go on benders and squander the rent on gambling, strippers and weed, then the answer is absolutely not (I spend only what I can afford on gambling, strippers and weed).

Q: Does your drinking make you careless of your family's welfare?

A: Definitely not! I'd have my wife tell you that herself except she and my kids are on the road right now smuggling moonshine across the Louisiana state line for me.

Q: Do you crave a drink at a definite time every day?

A: Nope. I crave drinks at all different times of all different days and nights.

Q: Do you want a drink the next morning?

A: Ah, the old, "Hair of the Dog that Bit You" theory. I'll never understand this one. How on Earth does sucking on a larvae-infested clump of dog dander heal canine wounds? Still, I have always marveled at some of my friends who, after a long night of hard boozing, will wake up the next morning on the couch, rub their eyes, grab a half-empty can of warm beer sitting on the coffee table and guzzle it down

without even checking it for cigarette butts. Maybe it's a sign of alcoholism that I even have friends like that, but the answer is still no—after a bender, I would sooner drink a glass of Richard Simmons bath water than consume another alcoholic beverage.

Q: Do you have trouble sleeping when drinking?

A: How would I know? I'm usually passed out by then. I do know that anyone nearby has trouble sleeping when I've been drinking, what with my snoring and thrashing and yelling obscenities at myself, so I guess I should answer yes to this one.

Q: Do you drink to escape from worries?

A: No. Drinking booze to escape your troubles is like climbing Mt. Everest to escape the cold. I will, however, admit to embarking on an occasional binge to take a hiatus from a problem, but the only true way to escape a problem is to fix it, which drinking doesn't do, unless your problem is that you don't drink enough.

Q: Do you drink alone?

A: Hell yeah! I love drinking wine at my writing desk, or sitting alone on a balcony overlooking a sunset with a doobie in my mouth and a good drink in my hand. Drinking alone is often better than drinking with people and screw you guys for giving negative points for it. How is drinking wine alone in my office any more a sign of alcoholism than downing tequila shots with a group?

Q: Have you ever had a loss of memory as a result of drinking?

A: I can't remember if that ever happened or not, so in the interest of fairness I'll have to say yes to this one.

Results: According to Hopkins University Hospital, if you answer yes to three or more questions you are "definitely an alcoholic." Uh-oh. I scored four. Bummer.

Oh well—the good news is, it's out of my hands. All I have to do now is wait for the interventionists to come.

In the meantime, I'll just get drunk and ponder the many positive benefits of drinking:

For instance, many folks have discovered that drinking makes you dance "gooder". In fact, I've seen a few good slugs of likker turn a pathetic "white boy shuffle" into a goddam John Travolta extravaganza.

Also, drinking is a great beauty enhancer, and has the ability to transform almost any woman into a Princess, Cinderella-like, until midnight (or last call), when they may occasionally revert to gargoyles.

Alcohol is a form of fuel, a condensed energy source. Introducing it into your system fuels you up to do brave feats. Men have fought wars, written books, and subdued women while fueled up on the equivalent of booze. Hell, I joined the Navy under the influence, and served four years after that protecting America from the Russians in a similar state. During my time, I might point out, there were no Russian attacks on American soil. That's my legacy as a Navel guy...

Bitchslap: I ran into the sales rep and his manager from McCormick the other day. He said if I mentioned McCormick in my column, he'd send me a case of vodka. So I'm mentioning McCormick, please send the hooch, *muy pronto señor*. Even though I consider your product to be nothing more than a crude rotgut version of turpentine!

Merry Christmas to all... GATOR