

The Most Excellent Way

“Scientific O.P.E.C. Analysis of My Alcohol Addiction”

Judy Wright ~ Spring, 2006

Science is defined as “knowledge.” I’ve always assumed scientists are smarter than I am, because they have university degrees and a bunch of letters after their names. I acknowledge that they must have higher intelligence quotients (IQs) than I do, but does that make them right about *everything*?

What can *uneducated* people do if they don’t agree with so-called scientific conclusions about a given topic or problem?

Research! Scientific study *is* research. I’m not a scientist, but I’m going to attempt to *scientifically analyze* my drinking *problem* using the basic procedure high-school science student’s are taught: O.P.E.C. (not the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Companies!).

The OPEC procedure is:

1. OBERVE – check out the question or problem
2. PREDICT – hypothesize (make a good guess)
3. EXPERIMENT – is my guess correct?
4. CONCLUDE – put the pieces together to figure out what’s really going on

By using the OPEC method, I can look back and record my experience *objectively* (treat or deal with the facts without distortion by my personal feelings or prejudices). I’ve realized that for most of my life I have made decisions based on how I feel. Because feelings change, I decided I needed to analyze my life — and my *alcoholism* — objectively. And because I don’t agree with the experts about alcoholism being a disease, I decided to be as *scientific* as possible.

OPEC ANALYSIS NO. 1 RECOVERY / REHABILITATION

THE PROBLEM

When I finally reached the point of being sick and tired of being sick and tired of hangovers, violent fights with my husband, loss of self-respect, and the lack of willpower to change my life, there was only one possible solution for me at the time — voluntarily enter in-patient rehab.

OBSERVATION:

- I’m addicted to alcohol — I’m a victim of my disease.
- The medical doctor’s diagnosis for my problem was “acute brain disorder.” The diagnosis was necessary for insurance coverage for my in-house treatment.

PREDICTION:

- I’m going to die an alcoholic if I don’t change my thinking and behavior — I must ABSTAIN from drinking!

EXPERIMENT:

- Stopped drinking after AA meeting.
- Craved alcohol; couldn’t go without it; too painful.
- Volunteered for in-patient treatment: dry-out, ingest mega doses of vitamin B-complex.
- Indoctrination and written exercises in 12-step “therapy” for my *disease*; and physical/recreational therapy (walked the hospital hallways and painted Christmas ornaments).
- Participated in daily group therapy sessions with psychologist and other *disease victims* to explore events of the past to determine the cause of my disease — talked, talked, talked about my feelings because someone was willing to listen.
- Voluntarily used prescription drug Antabuse (disulfiram) as insurance for not drinking.
- Attended AA regular weekly meetings to receive peer support for sobriety (30 meetings in 30 days upon release)
- Followed 12-steps to change my *thinking* (*spiritual awakening*) and worked to remove my character defects.
- Turned my life over to a *higher power* of my choice to obtain necessary strength to stay on path of recovery for the rest of my natural life.
- Was willing to engage in cognitive (thinking) psychotherapy (if necessary) to prevent relapse.

CONCLUSION:

- I am an alcoholic.
- I must abstain from alcohol to avoid instant relapse — reactivation of my addiction
My brain remembers when I had my last drink, and it's waiting to be triggered.
- Abstinence is only possible by attending AA meetings, and having a sponsor to guide and support my recovery by working the 12-steps.
- There is power in sobriety — I am master of my fate as long as I *follow* the AA way of sobriety.
- Morality is judged by sobriety; the longer I am sober the more morally superior I am — my self-esteem and self-respect levels increase.
- My recovery and sobriety must be at the center of all decisions I make for changes in my lifestyle. No major lifestyle changes should be made for the first year — I must first adjust to sobriety and train myself to live sober.
- If I slip or relapse, I must begin recovery again at square one.
- I will swallow Antabuse daily as insurance — I fear the severe physical side effects resulting from mixing alcohol with the drug.
- I miss my Myer's Rum — I crave the taste more than the high.
- Life is boring.
- I "recovered" my sobriety, but acquired a new *fear* that I would relapse.
- I will ultimately die an alcoholic — I have an incurable disease!

This OPEC analysis of my change from being a drunk to becoming sober by abstaining through AA indoctrination and practice is an accurate analysis from *my perspective* (all researchers and practitioners have their own way of analyzing problems).

I wasn't a good joiner, and didn't like going to AA meetings on a regular basis. My peers were sincere about *working* their program, but I wasn't comfortable being expected to rehash my past and personal experiences. And I soon tired of hearing the same old war stories over and over again. (I didn't much like the swearing either, but who was I to complain — I had a dirty mouth.)

My unwillingness to wholeheartedly participate in the structured, continuous *recovery* may be because of my *natural* independent *nature*. I followed the program *my* own way and in my

own time. (An OPEC analysis of my way of thinking would probably conclude that I had a rebellious attitude. Dah!)

Nonetheless, I remained sober for three months using Antabuse until ...

OPEC ANALYSIS NO. 2 HEALED BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

THE PROBLEM:

I'm sober, but I'm angry all the time. My marriage is still on the rocks. I fear relapse. My family is obsessed with Jesus! Life is dull and colorless. No pleasure! No fun! Is this all there is? I want more! I want peace! I...I...I!

OBSERVATION:

- God says I am a sinner, spiritually dead and eternally separated from Him.
- My addiction is a *symptom* of my sin nature.
- He has a plan for redeeming my life for His purpose.
- He promises more than "sobriety" — He promises *new* life!

PREDICTION:

- If I believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, as the complete payment for my sinful state, my life will change for forever ...
- My *disease* of sin will be healed if I surrender my life to Jesus.

EXPERIMENT:

- God *called* me by name and simply said: "Accept My Son."
- I *responded* reluctantly, obediently: "Okay, I accept Your Son!"
- Agreed to go to church with my husband two weeks later — *somehow* I knew I must "surrender" to the "urge"
- Heard and understood the pastor's message of God's love for me, and His plan of salvation, as though he was speaking directly to me
- Became emotionally overwhelmed by God's love, forgiveness and acceptance
- Left the building with profound hope and strong, irresistible desire for more of God's

Word; went directly to tape library to sign-up.

- Attended Sunday night service every week thereafter.
- Stopped ingesting Antabuse the next day — no craving or desire for rum.
- Attended Thursday night Bible studies.
- Listened to my pastor on the radio every day.
- Recorded/transcribed Bible lessons.
- Irresistible urge to tell everyone about salvation and freedom from addictions by faith in Jesus.

CONCLUSION:

- God was right!
- God IS right! I am a sinner saved by His mercy and grace
- I am forever a new, *spiritual* creation in Christ! The old is gone, the new has come! (And it still keeps coming and coming!)
- Perfect love casts out fear!
- God is Love!



Using the *scientific* OPEC method helped me to clarify the differences between recovery and sanctification.

Recovery is a medical term and is limited to the physical/material body (the flesh). Recovery is what we do for ourselves — working hard to abstain from addictive behavior.

Sanctification is what God (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) does for us — helping us to abstain from sin. God is preparing our *immortal souls* for eternity with Him.

- **Are you *in recovery* or *in Jesus*?**
- **Are you following the crowd or are you following Jesus?**
- **Are you being conformed into the image and likeness of Jesus?**

“Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all ... are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

2 CORINTHIANS 3:17-18 NKJV

May the Holy Spirit guide you into sanctification and transformation into the likeness of Jesus Christ!