

René Heinrichs

I don't know; somehow it didn't taste as good as it used to.

For many reasons I had lost all joy in life. I worried about my future. My life had not been easy in the past. Already as a small child and in my early youth I was burdened. I was aggressive and had fits of rage. It became so bad that I even hit my mother or tore up my clothes. My parents took me to a youth psychiatrist who treated me for two years. Until I was 16 I wet my bed. I was also anorexic for half a year.

Somehow my body got rid of all these ailments but I still suffered mentally.

When I was 17 I started an apprenticeship as a plumber/central heating fitter. But I was lazy at school, hardly ever paying attention to what the teacher said. In my spare time I was on the soccer field, playing from morning to evening. In trade school my marks were steadily getting worse. Sometimes on weekends I would drive with friends to soccer games in Dortmund. First this was a nice way of spending my spare time. But later we drove more often and the alcohol we drank increased from game to game. It came to the point where I had a permanent card for the BVB soccer club. Every time my club played out of town I also went. I spent

my annual leave to see the games of the Champions League abroad. Before the games started I got so drunk that I hardly saw how they played.

It was the same in trade school. In the morning my friends and I bought beer, drinking it even before school started. Even in classes we drank underneath the table. The teachers never seemed to notice or they never mentioned it. Now you can pretty well imagine what was going on at school. We sang songs, created a lot of nonsense and always provoked the teachers. During recess we continued drinking. As long as I drank alcohol everything seemed fine. All my anxieties and worries just disappeared. I was not even conscious of what I had gotten myself into. I thought it was completely normal to stand in the street with a full can of beer. But as soon as I was sober the anxieties and worries returned. When I woke up in the morning after a game I swore to myself never to touch alcohol again. I was constantly dissatisfied with myself and was more sick than before. But the minute I was fit again I got tempted and only remembered the funny things I did when I was drunk.

My mother and sister had belonged to the Circle of Friends for a number of years. I accepted this although I hardly noticed. But as time went by I became more and more dissatisfied with the life I was leading. I also started wondering what was so special about this Bruno Gröning. Could it really be true? I had my Introduction in October 1996. Now, don't believe that my life changed suddenly from one day to the next. No, not quite. At first, everything was the same as always. But 2 months later things began to change slowly. In trade school I drank less beer. I also drank less when I went to the soccer games. I cannot explain why, but for some reason or other it did not taste as good as it used to. I just had no desire to drink alcohol. I admit it was always fun when I went on the booze but everything was worse afterwards. That is how I sank deeper and deeper every time. Afterwards, more and more often I bought coke instead of beer.

By the end of the soccer season I was off alcohol altogether. My life made sense again. Without alcohol I felt much better and had no more anxieties. My life improved steadily. During sum-

mer recess I already looked forward to the beginning of the new soccer season. But then I woke up one morning with the thought, 'You are not going to another game.' First I wanted to suppress this thought. I was too scared

I might miss out on something. But then I took heed and never went to another game, from one day to the other, just like that. Would you believe it? Since then my life is orderly and really worth living. Be-

fore it was just soccer, day and night. Now I have time for much more. Instead of going to the soccer games I do a lot of other things with my buddies.

Today I enjoy living!



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