Alice,

I keep on getting drunk and climbing buildings. Last week I nearly killed myself by accident. Any advice?

? Urban Climbing Idiot

Answer

Dear Urban Climbing Idiot,

As you suggest, bounding up buildings is probably not the safest idea, particularly when you've had a few drinks. So, short of doing your drinking in the middle of a nice, flat field, two ideas you might consider come to mind: (1) drink with trusted friends who will keep an eye on you, and (2) take a look at your drinking habits with an eye on what motivates your behavior. For safety's sake, you may want to take your friends with you on drinking occasions, and let them know ahead of time about your Spiderman tendencies. In addition, it may help to think about how to drink in a lower-risk manner and doing so with friends who would stop you from climbing, rather than ones who would encourage you in the name of high-flying entertainment.

It's commendable that you recognize your actions put you at risk of injury. That being said, you might want to ask yourself some reflective questions to get to the heart of the matter. For example, what are your motives for consuming alcohol? And, why do you tend to drink so much that you lose control? Might it help if you tried drinking in moderation or could it be a good idea to avoid alcohol all together to stay safe? Further exploring the why's and how's behind your alcohol use with a health educator, a mental health professional, a member of the clergy, or a trusted friend may help you get to some answers and keep your feet on the ground to boot. You might also consider engaging in fun activities that don't include alcohol.

As an aside, taking a rock-climbing class (while sober) might give you respect for the highly-skilled sport of scaling. Once you see what skills are required for climbing, it's possible that you might think twice about doing it drunk in the future. The highs that you can realize from climbing sans-alcohol may even diminish your desire to do it at the drop of a pint.

Here's to healthy climbing and safer drinking,

Alice!

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Student Health Service BASICS program (CUMC) [14]
Anonymous Alcohol Self-Assessment [15]

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