Back in 2008, when I was 22 years old, I made a mistake. I decided to drive my car after a night out and got pulled over for driving under the influence. It was something I’ve always regretted and remember that night whenever I’m out and about with friends. When I decide to do anything with alcohol, ever since that time, I do my best to make sure I have a safe way of getting home.

Recently I attended the Alcohol & Drug Dependency Information/Family Workshop at Riverside Methodist Hospital. Over the course of these three sessions, I was enlightened with information that I previously had not considered and was made aware that even now, some of my actions could lead down a path that I’d rather not travel. I learned a few things about myself that I need to change in order to always have a safe and responsible time when consuming alcohol.

Over the years since my incident, I was always very conscious about my tolerance to alcohol and when I know I’ve had enough. Sometimes however, when I know I have a safe avenue home, I tend to consume a little too much – especially at family functions and celebrations – when the time calls for it. My consumption has never had a negative effect on those around me, and I consider myself someone who does not get upset, angry, or sad when I consume alcohol. Even so, I noticed that the morning after, I would end up being stuck to my bed not being able to get to the activities I had planned: working out or running early in the morning, getting that extra bit of work done before Monday, or even cleaning up around the house. Over the course of this workshop, I kept this in mind and have put together a plan for myself in order to avoid this repercussion and negative impact on my life.

I’ve decided to put together two sections of my plan. The first are a list of things that I currently do and will continue to do. The second is a set of new things I’ll do to ensure I do not find myself in the same situation as I had before.

Current Actions:

-Always have a safe avenue home:

-Do not consume more than 1-2 drinks if I am driving my car no matter the circumstances.

-If I plan to have a few more, 3-4 drinks over the course of the night, I always get a taxi cab or order an Uber car to take me home.

-Know my limits:

-Over the course of my years drinking, I’ve learned what my body can tolerate. Depending on what I’m drinking, I am always very self-aware and have the capacity to stop drinking when I need to.

-Be aware of those around me:

-When I do consume alcohol I do not have a negative effect on those around me. My attitude has always been one of happiness under any circumstances and have never been in any sort of spat with friends or family under the influence of alcohol.

New Actions:

-Celebration and family function awareness

-I’ve sometimes taken these opportunities to maybe have a few more drinks than I normally would. I need to follow the same principals as normal of when it’s smart to stop instead of continuing on.

-Workout plan

-I’ve been an avid runner over the past 4-5 years and am now currently training for a marathon. I have planned by long runs (between 10-15 miles) for weekends. This is a reminder to myself that I will need to always be in control, more than ever, and not consume past the point to where I am lazy and have a headache or feel sick the next morning. If I fail to do this, I will not meet my goal for the marathon.

-Repetition

-I need to make this a habit. Over the course of my training I am dedicating myself to avoid being lazy the following day after consuming alcohol. My training will last more than 3 months, which in turn will form my habit. Even though as I’ve gotten older my desire to consume alcohol has decreased, I cannot rely on this phenomenon. I need to make this habit last a lifetime.