

## Adam Moskowitz, Founder & Managing Partner The Moskowitz Law Firm

IF I KNEW THEN... In this ongoing series, we ask executives, entrepreneurs and business leaders about mistakes that have shaped their business philosophy.

By [Hope Winsborough](#)

### **Background:**

One of the most successful class-action lawyers in the country, [Adam M. Moskowitz](#) founded Coral Gables, Florida-based [The Moskowitz Law Firm](#) in 2018 to focus on multi-state class action matters and complex commercial litigation.

He's served as lead and co-lead counsel in many high-profile, class-action cases and is an adjunct professor at the University of Miami School of Law, his alma mater.

### **The Mistake:**

Not getting healthy or doing something about my alcohol problem, when it's as clear as day. About 10 years ago, I found myself really [becoming] very unhealthy. I thought that I was drinking too much alcohol. I went to a few of my friends' funerals — some of whom had committed suicide. And I just decided just to take responsibility for my own health and to be a good dad — my kids are now 3, 6 and 8 — and to be a great husband, and to really focus in on my health.

***"I saw the road that I was going down, and it was leading toward disaster." — A. Moskowitz***

The legal profession is very stressful, because at the heart of it — especially in litigation — you're fighting your adversaries. And if you don't enjoy it, it could be horrible. I enjoy litigating, especially what I think is one of the most honorable [areas], class-action litigation — where I'm fighting for people who can't fight for themselves.

A lot of the personalities that become lawyers have those same traits, which make you a good lawyer [but] can keep your mind racing. I think for a lot of lawyers and a lot of professionals, it's hard to turn off your mind. And I found that alcohol in some instances would help me, at least temporarily. I just noticed that I was going a little bit too quickly to the alcohol. And while fortunately it never led me very far down the road, I saw where it was leading.

So I stopped drinking. I became much healthier. I started to run again and [to practice] mindfulness. It wasn't easy after 45 years: I was a casual drinker and a social drinker, and I never imagined stopping.

But the cost of losing my family and losing my profession, and just being so unhappy internally. Those are the problems that people don't see. It's easier if you just lose an arm or a leg. But when you have these issues that you're thinking about all the time, those can be the most powerful and the most devastating.

Somehow, I was able to do it without group therapy. It was not easy. It wasn't like I decided to do it one day and the next day I was fine. It was a very, very difficult process, to slowly transform your life, because alcohol is a part of everyday life. It's a part of happy hour. It's a part of football games. It's a part of going to sporting events. It's celebration — if something good happens you open a bottle of champagne.

Surprisingly, three or four years later now, I don't miss it. I don't yearn for a drink. I do yearn to relax or to calm down. But I don't miss the drinking. I am more in control of my life. I don't have the endless anxiety, fears, all of the terrible issues that I had before. I still have my stress, believe me. But I'm working on that. And I'm just blessed to have my health back.

Now I do yoga, I do running, but most importantly, I think I recognize the stress more. Everybody's kind of dealing with the same issues, and just talking about it [and] being more open with people, you notice it's not as bad as maybe you think.

### ***The Lesson:***

Eventually, you have to step up and take responsibility for yourself. It was easy [to not face the problem] because I had so much professional success. I was on the cover of the Wall Street Journal. I was on the cover of many national newspapers for my class-action successes, so it made it harder to have that come-to-Jesus talk with myself.

Because you could say, "If [I'm] having such success professionally, why would I need to fix something? Maybe I could just put it off." But I saw the road that I was going down, and it was leading toward disaster.

To the outside world, I was more successful than I had ever been, richer than in my wildest dreams I'd ever imagined. If you looked on paper, I was a great success. But inside, in my mind, I was hurting dreadfully. And I was in pain.

Four years later, I've never been happier — and last month I opened my own national class-action practice. After having overcome a problem such as being so unhealthy, many of these other life obstacles don't compare.

Now I'm a better lawyer for my clients because now I have a solid base. All of the great role models that I've seen in business, the best role models, are not the people who've made the most money, are not the people with the biggest planes or the biggest yachts. It's the people with the most solid base; they have a solid base of family and faith.