

A Profound Sense of Gratitude

How Fortunate We Are Today

By Rick R.

AA came into existence in 1935 when Bill and Bob started carrying their message to fortunate souls who, up to that point, had little hope of ever overcoming the disease of alcoholism. Prior to that, there were attempts to overcome the disease that came close but failed when they let other issues distract them from their primary purpose. I'm sure they had some, but not all, of the answers, but it did give our co-founders some of the answers as to "what not to do" when they established the steps and traditions. The book, Alcoholics Anonymous was published in 1939 after the first 100 alcoholics had maintained their sobriety. I was born in 1941, just two years after the Big Book was published. I was 28 years old when I came to the program which, at that time, was only in existence for 34 years. They say that Alcohol has been around for about 10 thousand years. How fortunate we are today, to be among the first, to have been chosen at this time to have a solution laid at our feet and for them to have the wisdom to not allow the first 164 pages of the Big Book to be edited or changed. When I talk of the word Gratitude, I ponder the vast amount of time (10 thousand years) that there was no answer to this problem and the hopelessness of those unfortunate souls before 1935. As a child I watched my parents and grandparents, and many of the elders in my life hopelessly suffer through the pains of this disease and they didn't even consider it a disease. On October 15, I will celebrate 54 years of sobriety and no one could be more grateful for all the benefits I have received as the results of clinging to this wonderful program and all the principles and values that have given me the tools that separated me from the delusion of friends, the pain of the past and showed me a path of recovery that has influenced so many people, starting with my immediate family and spiraling outwards to my relatives, my friends and coworkers and all my A.A. associates. If A.A. had come into existence and the Big Book would have been published just 30 years later than it was, I, most likely, would have been included in those unfortunate souls of the past that had no hope. I showed up at the doors of AA on Oct. 15, 1969 and as I see it, the Program had evolved just enough to be ready for this Grateful recipient and I will always be amazed by the timing of it all. In the 88 or so, years of its existence, Alcoholics Anonymous has been the answer for millions and considering all the ten thousand years before the existence of A.A; I believe we are very fortunate to be on the cutting edge of one of most important and beneficial developments in the history of mankind and to think that it all started when two common variety drunks got together and triggered the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. Words cannot express the Gratitude I have for this program considering all the suffering that went on prior to 1935 when God saw fit to intervene and offer up a choice, and fortunately, Bill and Bob were listening and heard His loving voice. As I read the long form of the Twelve Traditions and all the pains it took when tackling all the points and counter points while formulating our program, I am amazed that all the pieces fell in place as they are today, and they seem to have gotten it right. I am extremely Grateful for those that came before me and handed me the wonderful life I live today.