

A Simple Program for Complicated People

Living by the Dictates of my Conscience.

By Rick R.

“Desperation” has been the great *motivator* for me with respect to the thoroughness that I have applied since the day I surrendered and came to AA searching for solutions to my, out of control, drinking problem. Not everyone that comes to AA has that degree of desperation and that, I believe, is the difference in the various degrees of success we, as individuals, have when it comes to abstaining from alcohol. The reality is that not everyone gets it on their very first attempt. With time, comes understanding and once I got beyond the initial stages of recovery it became clear to me that alcohol did not cause my problems although it eventually became a problem. My mental and emotional troubles started surfacing long before I ever started drinking and I now realize that drinking masked most of my mental and emotional difficulties for a long time but, as it happens, my tolerance for alcohol started to dissipate and the heavy drinking became an obvious problem. I failed at marriage, jobs, friendships, parenthood, and trust with just about everyone that knew me. I burned so many bridges that, finally, I had no place to turn and by some miracle, I woke up one morning, and with no other options, I desperately called AA for help. I was finally ready and from that day on, over fifty-five years ago, I have never wanted a drink since then. The obsession to drink has never showed its face again but had I not recognized the reason that drinking seemed to work, in the early days, and that the mental and emotional problems would be exposed when I stopped drinking and would need to be addressed if I was ever going to be at peace with myself and with the world around me. I feel fortunate that, from that very first day, I have not been in denial about my condition and have embraced what I recognized to be the solution to my disease and the pathway to a future of the contentment that I enjoy today as the result of *that thoroughness* that I have applied to every facet of my life. I had to relearn how to be a husband, a father, a brother, a friend, an employee, a neighbor, a partner, and a citizen. I had to become an asset and not a liability. I had to question my motives for everything I did and assure that I stayed on the unselfish side of the ledger. I found it helpful to revisit the spirit of the things that I learned as a child in Church, in School, and in the Boy Scouts... and apply them where the selfish and dishonest habits had ruled my life. I came to understand how my Ego had taken over all my mental properties and I had to let my Conscience slowly regain control of my virtues. The AA program was there when I was ready to throw in the towel and it helped me to recognize all of these changes but it doesn't go into detail about how to meet these noble goals of how to be a good husband, father, friend,... so I had to learn from other experienced sources, the details of these neglected issues and go about reprogramming my inner self to incorporate all these components of right living. These things take time, and they do not happen overnight, but I could not let that stop me from beginning this new journey and giving me a purpose for living. I am extremely grateful that the AA program was established just in time to be available to save this broken spirit and turn it into the person that I am today as I *override my Ego and simply live by the dictates of my Conscience.*