

A Deeper Look at Fear and Faith

I Thought that Fear was a Bad Thing

By Rick R.

I am amazed at how little I understood about life before I became an alcoholic desperate enough to inquire into the possibility that I just might have a drinking problem. I started to realize that I was going nowhere, in a hurry, expecting things to turn around and validate all my shallow ideas as I was circling the drain. Desperation drove me to the doors of AA where I discovered a completely different language concerning life issues and a new appreciation for many of the words that I had been using all my life. I could go on forever with words that I have a new understanding of but for now I will stick to just two: "FEAR AND FAITH". Before I entered the AA, I thought that fear was a bad thing but that was my egotistic alcoholic thinking at that time. I now find it to be a very good and necessary instinct for self-preservation and survival. If I had no fear, what would stop me from walking in front of a bus? When we in AA talk of fear, we are usually talking about *irrational fear*. In the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous pg. 65) is the example of how to lay out our inventories and as the result of our defects and shortcomings is the word Fear in every case, indicating that fear, of some kind, was the motivation for all our character defects. I concluded that in every instance, there was some form of threat to my EGO and If I was to have any chance at resolving these problems, I was not going to achieve it by relying on the Blind Faith, as it was described to me as a child, that had worked so well for many of my childhood peers. It was more a matter of trying new ideas that ran contrary to my selfish behaviors of the past and practicing them long enough to see the evidence that they worked better than those old habits of mine. Once I ran that sort of test on my initial challenges and found it to work exactly as promised, I became curious about testing it on my next problem concerning irrational fear and it worked, and so on, and so on... This was, and still is, my approach to anything that is described in the Big Book and 12&12 as fear. The program does not remove the healthy instinctive, God given fears, that protect us from harm, but it does work wonders on those irrational fears that have kept us in turmoil for years. It is often heard at A.A. meetings, that ninety percent of the things we were fearful of, never happen. In the beginning of my A.A. journey I thought that Faith was synonymous with Religion, and for some people, it may be, but for me, it is synonymous with trust. As I tackled my irrational fears, one by one, and as they were neutralized, I began to have absolute trust in the A.A. program and I believe that I have as much Faith as anyone I know, Religious or not. My prayers are addressed to a God of my own understanding, and I live by the inspiration I receive from various recourses consistent with unselfish principles of the A.A. program. Having worked the steps and continued to practice these (unselfish) principles in all my affairs to the best of my knowledge and understanding, irrational fear is in the distant past, held at bay due to the Faith and Trust that I have gained in Alcoholics Anonymous. That being said, I still believe that I won't be walking in front of any buses today.