

Peace of Mind and a Quiet Heart

What More Could a Person Want

By Rick R.

In my early days of sobriety, I was hearing a lot of words that were unfamiliar to me, and I did not pay much attention to them at the time since I had bigger fish to fry. I had a drinking problem and everything else took a back seat to that. I was overwhelmed by marital, legal, and economic problems. Words like love, patience, spirituality, and forgiveness were foreign to me and I did not see how they mattered when all I wanted to do was quit drinking. I stayed close to that group, and they started calling me *the fortunate one*. At the age of 28, I was the youngest one in that group. The rest of members in the group were over forty and it stayed that way for quite a while as drug problems had not evolved enough at the time (1969) to affect the influx of younger members. I felt like the elders of that group took a special interest in me and that endeared me to them in a special way.

I was always listening to the magical word that would inspire me and give me a purpose in life and one day it happened. Tears came to my eyes when I recall the memory of the gentle voice of *an old farmer named Harlan*. As he talked about all the trials and tribulations in the past that he had endured, he explained how he had stumbled into AA and that all the answers were there, but he did not understand it until he had a goal to reach for, and the next words that came out of his mouth changed my life forever. He said, "ALL I WANT FROM LIFE IS PEACE OF MIND AND A QUIET HEART." The next thought that came to me was, *what more could a person want?* To this day, I still quote Harlan and credit him with the inspiration. He passed away in 2007 and being sober 51 years.

I have been through the Big Book and the 12&12 many times and have made a slow but very purposeful attempt to rid my mind of all the tormenting memories and regrets of the past, and as I processed each one of them, the more I realize that *peace of mind* is the natural result of living by these principles. Clearing the wreckage of the past, and changing those behaviors that caused it, and practicing unselfish behaviors, with the help of seasoned veterans like Harlan, I move closer and closer to the promise: *We will comprehend the word serenity, and we will know peace.* My books are marked and hi-lighted over the years as I evolved through the Step Study meetings or checked out the references to the Big Book in the Daily Reflections. Recently I have been focusing on the word *peace* and underlining it, and it is amazing how often it is linked to other words that seem to get more attention. *Peace of mind encompasses the spirit of recovery in alcoholics anonymous* and I will be forever grateful that God saw fit to lead me to this wonderful program. *Harlan, rest in peace and thank you for your inspiration.*