

# Pride, as I Understand it.

Keeping Pride in Its Place

By Rick R.

Pride, as a word, is used by most of us in our daily lives and we don't necessarily think of it as a sin. What parent doesn't feel a little prideful when their child is performing on the stage in a school play? Are we committing a sin when we use terms such as, "Proud to be an American" and "Pride in the Marine Corp"? What does the term "False Pride" mean to me? Yes, there are many different uses of that word that do not imply that you are doing something wrong. Those of us in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) know that we have all, at one time or another, stepped outside of the line when it comes down to our past behavior and we are not proud of it. These things need to be addressed when we begin cleaning up the wreckage of the past. This is not easy to understand when we are first introduced into the program and are still being governed by an alcoholic mind. We need a *starting point* where we can look at different ways to address these things. I'm not a religious man but *I'm not threatened* when I see the example in the 12&12 that suggests that if you're not sure about what you should list, you might want to use the *seven deadly sins* to get started. In 1935 when the program got its start, much of the *culture of that time* revolved around the churches where we lived and as a result, they used a lot of *religious references in the Big Book and the 12&12 to make a point*. They also have lines from Shakespeare in the program, but no one seems to question them. The area that applies to me is when I go into the *negative applications* of the word pride, such as *arrogance, conceit, and self-importance*, and the like. Those forms of pride are the things that I must recognize in myself and start the practice of quietly removing them from my thoughts, my speech, and my actions as I start to apply the course of action suggested in steps six and seven. Words and terms that fall under the umbrella of pride, but are more acceptable are *dignity, self-respect, honor, and self-esteem*, and I personally don't think I would consider them *sinful*. (Even if I were Religious) We all have our own way of defining these things and we all know right from wrong and if our pride slams the door in our faces and prevents us from *cleaning house*, then we have a serious problem, and that is the type of pride that must be reined in if we want to have any success in A.A. I consider myself very fortunate to have been counseled by the successful members that came before me in the program, and when I ran across a word or expression that rubbed me the wrong way, I immediately started to ask questions of these men and women, and search for a solution that would neutralize it and not allow it to stunt my spiritual growth. As I see it, *excessive pride* is closely related to *my ego* and, as they say, "my ego is not my amigo". My EGO *thrives on excessive pride*, but my *Conscience has had the upper hand* in the recent past. After practicing the program for many years, I can look back on my progress and what stands out the most to me was the *thoroughness* of my fourth and fifth steps. I recognize that as *the cornerstone of the rest of the program*. After tackling those two steps I found it much easier to follow the intent of steps six and seven and keep my PRIDE and my EGO in check. To my way of thinking, *I'll never be finished growing*. I take no more credit for this than a drowning man takes credit for grabbing on to a life preserver. A.A. gets the credit for any success I may be having. When left to my own devices, I was a complete failure. Today I live by the *dictates of my conscience*, and life is good.