

Running from Responsibilities and Maturity

A Distant and Mirthful Memory

In Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.), we often hear the word FEAR discussed when we share at meetings. After many of these discussions I came to understand that fear is not a weakness but it is a God given, natural instinct that often keeps us from engaging in reckless activities. Irrational fear, on the other hand, is not normal and, I believe, was the result of my feelings of inferiority and low self-esteem. I was small in physical stature but my reckless behavior seemed to keep most normal peoples at bay. I wasn't afraid to engage in physical altercations when I was drinking and I didn't feel much pain, even when I lost the fist fight, until I woke up the next morning, with the bruised knuckles and the black eyes. As a drunk, I often wondered if those behaviors were ever going to stop. It took a few years of repeating those activities before they, and many other failed adventures caused me to realized that I had ran out of options and I gave it up when I crawled through the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous and put an end to most of that ridiculous Immature conduct. Early in the program I could see and understand the most glaring defects of character as they were obvious and I did start the process of exposing them to my fellow members in the meetings and I made significant progress at that level. It's impossible to clean the slate completely in such a short period of time but it was a good beginning. In the early days of recovery I was attracted to the elder statesmen/stateswomen in my home group as they seemed to have a mature approach to just about every situation and conversation they were engaged in and that quality was absent in my immature world up to that point. That small cluster of men and women was like a magnet that attracted me and I tended to hover around the parameter as they discussed the various topics of the day but I was still afraid and my Ego wouldn't allow me to give anyone credit for the, slow but sure, changes in my immature state of mind. Today I relish the opportunity to quote them and give them the credit for the inspiration that they instilled in me in those early days and how it influenced me at the deepest levels of my consciousness. Overcoming the fear of responsibility and my accountability has been the byproduct of that experience and it all started when I dipped my toe in the waters of service commitments by becoming things as simple as, coffee maker, leading meetings, becoming group secretary, twelve step calls, and many other small commitments, that I feared doing until I was gently encouraged to take the risk and slowly I became aware that my fears of these things were unfounded and that was the beginning of the process of building self esteem; a quality that was missing in my life up to that point. Many of us in the program are reluctant, at first, to venture into the simplest commitments for fear that they will lead to deeper responsibilities that they are not ready for but to me, they are a microcosm of larger mature behaviors that any adult will face in the kindergarten of life. Every time I overcome a fear, it lays the foundation for the next challenge. If I hadn't taken the risk in those early days of sobriety, I would not have had the courage to move on to first grade and second grade and so on. Facing my fears at that level has opened the door to a full and useful life as the fear of responsibility, in all my affairs, is but a distant and mirthful memory and I ask myself. What was I afraid of?? Bring it on!!