

SLOWBRIETY

Most of us come into A.A, with our tails between our legs and with a multitude of problems that seem to be insurmountable. Physically, after a week or so, we get over the withdraws only to be faced with the mental, emotional and spiritual challenges and the wreckage of the past. It's a lot to contend with when the reality of it all falls into our laps. It's a lot like, as one guy said, driving a station wagon, and throwing years of trash into the back seat, then there comes a time when we slam on the breaks and all that trash ends up in the front seat with him. His head is spinning and keeping him up all hours of the night trying to process what he has to do to fix it all. He could put it off again by just taking a drink but if he is past using that option, he has a chance to, with the help of the program and the people in it, one by one, resolve each and every one of these issues.

I was in the Navy for twenty years and my last command was recruit training command where I was a company commander (drill instructor). Each morning a recruit was given a task of writing the plan of the day on the barracks chalkboard, which showed what the company would be doing throughout the day with the time and the place of each item. This would go on for about eight weeks. Sometimes the rigors of training and the disciplines and the pace of it all can be overwhelming to a new recruit. One day the company yeoman informed me that one of the recruits was crying and was having an emotional breakdown. I had him send him to my office

I heard a knock on my office door, I put on my game face and said ENTER. He entered and was emotionally a wreck. I had him close the door behind him and calmed him down and I asked him what was wrong. He replied, in tears, that he just couldn't do it, it was too overwhelming. I asked him what it was that he couldn't handle and he couldn't explain it, it was just too much. Next, I had him dry his tears and I took him out to the chalk board and had him read it, item by item. When he finished, I asked him, what is it on that list is it that he couldn't handle, he shrugged and said, " Well nothing." I took him back into my office and said, all you have to do is to take one item at a time and every day is about the same around here. He calmed down and started to smile. I put my game face on again and shouted "NOW GET YOUR BUTT BACK INTO TRAINING AND I DON'T TO SEE YOU BACK IN MY OFFICE AGAIN, DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME"? He snapped to attention and shouted " YES SIR" and ran out of my office with a wry smile on his face, and he finished training without any problems.(Of course this was the short version of what happened that day, but you get the message.)

It's natural to try to bite off more than we can chew, and if it was all that simple all we would need to do is to write it in a piece of paper, hand it to him, and send him on his way, but we know that doesn't get it done. It takes time and we need to have a profound change of perception about what is important in our lives. We didn't get that way overnight, and we will have to address all of our issues over a period of time. A friend of mine once used the word SLOWBRIETY when trying to put it in the proper perspective. The good news is that it gets better and better the longer we thoroughly follow this path.

Many of the issues that we deal with are hidden down deep inside of us and as we process them, we realize that other things come to the surface. I've heard it likened to the La Brea Tar Pits and as we come out of denial about them we can rid ourselves of the emotional damage and that we can't come out of

denial all at once or we would go off the deep end. These things reveal themselves to us slowly so that we can handle them one at time, (so to speak). The good news is that the load gets lighter day by day, and when we look back on our lives and compare them to the past the progress is so obvious to us that wait was soooo worth it. SLOBRIETY, That's it.

Rick R.