

COLOR BLIND

At a step study meeting, being on step nine at the time, the discussion got around to Making Amends and someone was questioned the need to make certain amends. My immediate response was that if he feels uncomfortable about his relationship with anybody, and if he had done steps Six and Seven, and had a change of behavior, why wouldn't he want to make things right? I sensed that he was trying to find a way around making that amend, due to guilt or shame, but I also knew that this is exactly the sort of thing that we need to put behind us. We cannot live well with those tormenting memories of the things in the past that we were ashamed of.

In the first paragraph in Step 8, it says "Having thus cleared away the debris of the past, we consider how, with our new-found knowledge of ourselves, we may develop the best possible relations with every human being we know". If we had not really changed our behavior and still acted the same old way, we could not very well, make sincere amends.

I recall, in my early days in AA I had a dear friend named Jim. Jim would show up at the meetings dressed in a variety of different colored clothes. We had a lot of good-hearted fun trying to guess what he would be wearing on any given day, and Jim never let us down. One day Jim surprised us all when he walked in dressed as sharp as anyone in the room. He was all color coordinated and we were floored. When asked what happened he excitedly replied, "I went to the doctor, and they said I was color blind" That explained everything. Once Jim found out what the problem was, he was able to take the necessary steps to correct it.

There is a difference between Responsibility, and Accountability. No one is responsible for being an alcoholic as we were not born deciding that we wanted to become a drunk. It happened despite all our efforts to be normal, however, we are Accountable for all our behaviors, and we must take responsibility for them once we recognize that they exist. We should not be ashamed for what we did when we were in the throes of our disease no more than Jim should be before he knew that he was COLOR BLIND, if we are willing to make it right.

I made a lot of changes, in my relations with other people, using steps six and seven as my guide, and the more I changed, the stronger I felt about myself. At last, I had become accountable for all my behavior. Most normal people do not change much in their lives, other than the usual growing up process. Alcoholics change because we need to in order to live a normal life, and if we are fortunate enough to be able to summon the courage to do this amends process, we will know peace of mind as few do. I will always be an Alcoholic, but like my old friend Jim, I know what to do about it thanks to this wonderful program.