

THE EMPLOYER AFTER SOBRIETY

By Rick R.

After serving over twenty years in the navy, being sober in A.A. for the last thirteen of those years, and being schooled to assume the role as Collateral Duty Alcoholism Consultant (CODAC) I had the opportunity to observe the difficulties that an employer would have dealing with employees that had alcohol problems. One of the first and most common of these is the fact that the employer cannot label anyone as an alcoholic as that has legal ramifications and they won't risk it, so the only thing they can judge employees on is their work performance. A person that has a history of missing work on Mondays, or for having an unusually high number of extended lunch hours, where no one sees him/her for the rest of the afternoon (for, presumable work related issues) might be a clue.

I believe that anybody in, or out of, the A.A. program can identify with these behavioral dilemmas. Often times the fear of losing his/her job, or even worse, their career, can be the turning point in a person's willingness to take a good look at him/her self. Often times, when we look back on it, what we would have considered to be the worst day of our lives, turns out to be the best thing that could have happened to us at the time, because it brought us to the point of desperation where we became willing to look at ourselves and stop vilifying the employer for doing his job.. He or she may have been the straw that broke the camel's back.

After a person has been in A.A. for awhile, trying to reenter the work force may seem like a daunting venture, considering the fact that A.A. stresses Honesty in these matters. For years, in an effort to ease these fears, I have been encouraging unemployed members to try a softer, more sincere method and it seems to work, when considering all of the positive feedback I have received from the people who approached the job search using the following guidelines:

When afforded the opportunity to interview for a job, some young applicants think that they need to tell the employer all of their work experience and this could often be a negative factor if you have worked at a lot of places. It could in fact, only indicate that you don't stay at one job for long and He/She may consider you a bad risk. Usually, if you are in your late teens or early twenties, they pretty much know that you've been a student and not much more and they are more interested in your *potential* and your *ability to grasp* and perform the tasks involved, and just as important, in your *reliability*. They don't want to invest in someone who won't be around very long. The employer has questions in his mind that he probably won't ask, and if you have the insight to volunteer the answers, not having been asked those questions, you will separate yourself from the rest of field. They usually find it refreshing to hear these words coming out of an applicant's mouth. During the interview, when the opportunity presents itself, try to express these promises in the spirit that they are presented:

“Sir/Ma’am, I know how hard it is to take a risk on a person with my background, and I just want to relieve you of some of those concerns. If you do hire me, I promise, I won’t Lie to you, I won’t steal from you, I won’t come in late, I won’t sneak out early, I won’t watch the clock, I won’t call in sick, (unless I’m dying), I won’t bore you with lame excuses, I won’t Have problems with the other employees, I won’t drag my feet, and I won’t let you down. I understand my role is to help make this business a success and I will do my part to the best of my ability. I may not set the world on fire in the beginning but, in a year, I’ll be doing my job as good as any other employee in your company is doing his/hers. If, in thirty days, you are unsatisfied with my performance, all you need to say to me is, “this is not working out for us”. I will not question that decision. I will get a broom, sweep the floor, hand you the broom, thank you for the opportunity and be on my way. If you hire me, I will do my best to make sure you never regret your decision.”

HOW COULD HE NOT HIRE YOU?

You may have to use different wording depending upon the level of sophistication of the interview, but you get the picture. Give it a try, what have you got to lose? My question is, “*are you mature enough to keep these promised commitments*”?

RICK R.