

The Heart of Spirituality

Unselfish Motives

By Rick R.

What a difficult time we have making the transition, *in our thinking*, from the conditioning we have received in a largely materialistic world, to a life based on spiritual principles. Most of the people around us have an easy time of it, mainly because they are not burdened with the disease of alcoholism. They have a life *perspective* that is *closer to the centerline* when it comes to the fears, insecurities, inferiorities, guilt, etc. that the alcoholic faces every day of his/her life. The level of discomfort caused by these defects seldom changes without a continuous effort to replace them with thoughts and actions that keep this faulty perception in check. It is well known among AA members who have tried to go it alone, based on their knowledge, and have failed, that we may have to *change our whole approach to life*. The transition I referred to is the most difficult leap to make mainly because of the defiant thinking that we alcoholics have relied upon to protect us from the various authority/ religious/establishment figures, and *our perception* of what THEY were trying to get us to think and do. Normal people do not resist these things to the degree that we do, only because *their perception* of these things is not nearly as threatening to them as it is to us. For us, it should be simple to go from a material/practical line of thought to a spiritual/unselfish way of thinking, but it seems that we need to go all the way around the world to settle into this simple transition. Why is this so difficult for us? I believe that the word SPIRITUAL often throws a monkey wrench into the works. I believe that our *preconceived ideas*, based on our conditioning, of what is meant by the word spiritual, is what many of us struggle with or, we *simply dismiss it as, more religious dogma*, and if we can find a way to bridge that gap, we can get on with a life that is unimaginably good. The things we come to understand in Alcoholics Anonymous is that, to live a happy and contented life, we need to overcome all the fear, insecurities, low self-esteem, guilt..., by starting the practice of doing unselfish things to overcome our neediness. If we do these things long enough, we find that we are better off than before. (Our perception changes) Things seem to be less threatening and this inspires, (in-spirits) us to reach out even further and see where it takes us.

In the beginning of our AA journey, we are encouraged to take on service responsibilities. Sometimes this is the first time that *we step out of character* and do something for others with no expectation of material reward, but we do end up with an unexpected reward. It lifts our spirit, and we finally feel that we are a part of something. Oh! There's that word spirit again. *If, for the purpose of AA, we just replaced the word spiritual with selflessness*, I think it would take all the difficult transitional roadblocks out of the way. I personally cannot see much difference between the two, for my way of thinking.

The action that we take when reaching out to others, is the first step in understanding unselfish/spiritual principles. When we do these things in the spirit of brightening the life of another, and not for the recognition we are going to receive, we heal both ourselves and the recipient. I believe that THE UNSELFISH MOTIVE (regarding what we do for, and how we treat others), is THE HEART OF SPIRITUALITY. It would be hard to fault a person for what they do when their motive is PURE AND UNSELFISH. This, I believe, is living in the spirit of all our principles. That warm feeling in my heart is all the reward I will ever need.