

# TURN IT OFF

There was a good reason why I was so obsessed with that first drink each day when I woke up, or came to, every morning and I was not alone in this. As I listen to thousands and thousands of fellow members share about this issue over the years it's very clear that it did something for us that it didn't do for the so called normal drinkers. Half way through my second drink, I was at peace with myself and everything was right with the world. Strangely enough, after being diligent about understanding and applying what I believe to be the spirit of the AA program to the best of my ability, I am at peace with myself and I am fine with the world around me. The booze gave me that temporary euphoria that convinced me that it was the answer to my mental problems but I didn't realize that it had a shelf life and that my tolerance for it would not be short-lived and that it would turn out to be my down-fall.

We all have what seems to be a cross-section of issues that trouble us and cause our brains to work overtime, night and day, on matters that we thought, needed our input. I thought it was perfectly normal to let you know what my political views were, or if someone was driving too fast, or too slow, I should let you know in one way or another. I had many of these types of matters spinning around in my busy mind during all of my waking hours. I believed that I could read minds and it was my responsibility to challenge all of these matters and I burned a tremendous amount of mental energy on things that I had absolutely no control over.

When I became aware of what the program suggests I started to try to single them out and try a different tact on them. About 20 years ago I removed one of my most troublesome habits, Talk Radio, from my daily life. I simply TURNED IT OFF. I then stopped entering into political debates. I am amazed at how much of a load off my mind that turned out to be, and the world got on without my input.

Worrying about what others were doing was another load off my mind. I just started to look a little deeper and realize that they are a lot like me and I began cutting them some slack. Empathy and compassion replaced the criticism and gossip and as a result, I have very few if any adversaries. On the highways, I just back off a little and let them in. I feel better about myself when I do these things.

Alcoholism is a disease of the mind; a disease of perception. Alcohol gave us a temporary vacation from reality but if we think that it still has promise for us, we will have to put the rest of the program aside until we recognize the absurdity of that way of thinking. If in fact, we are desperate enough to trust this process, we can quit wasting mental energy on things we have no ability to change. To me, peace of mind amounts to *the absence of unresolved mental issues*. If we can replace all of those EGO driven ideas, of what the rest of the world should be doing, and replace them with them with an understanding attitude, in time we can lessen our mental load and life gets much more peaceful. We can restrain our pen and tongue, we can remove the word blame from our speech and thought, we can control the knob on the radio and if it tries to draw us back in, we can simply, TURN IT OFF.

Rick R.