

# The Evolution of My Disease

Today I Am a Different Person

By Rick R.

I came from a family of ten siblings in the lower area of Pittsburgh, Pa, near the steel mills. I was born on Sept. 20, 1941, and was the third youngest child. Six Brothers and Four Sisters and of the ten of us, seven evolved into heavy drinkers. One male and two females were normal. My father was gone before I was old enough to remember him being there. My mother struggled to keep us fed as my father never paid alimony and, in those days, he got away with it, so as soon as we were able to get a job, we gave half of our earnings to our mother to keep us fed. As the older siblings were moved on through marriage or military service it left the rest of us to fend for ourselves. At the age of 7 or 8 I could earn a nickel or dime going to the store for a neighbor. As soon as I got old enough to carry a paper sack, I delivered newspapers and my mom got half of my earnings. This went on to setting up pins in a bowling alley, house painter helper, in my early teens and my boss would buy a six pack of beer and we would drink it on the way home. This was not a problem with my family since the siblings before me did the same thing at my age. There was drinking and partying going on in our kitchen much of the time and the beer cases of empty bottles were stacked to the top of the ice box till the beer man came to reclaim them. I was drinking with them at the age of 15 and thought that it was unusual, and I was now one of them. There were no role models in my life and at the age of seventeen I enlisted in the U.S. Navy and got away to a much more disciplined environment, but the drinking continued for me and didn't need to worry about food, housing, or money since that all came with my Navy service, but it also covered the evolution of my alcoholism, although I didn't know it at the time. In the next three years I had two DUI.s and had wrecked two cars that didn't involve the DUI's. At the age of twenty-five I was married, had a child, and was divorced within fourteen months. I cried in my beer for three years trying to convince her to take me back and she declined. I woke up in desperation on Oct.15, 1969, called Alcoholics Anonymous and attended my first meeting and I am extremely happy to say that I have never had, nor wanted, a drink from that very first day. I have been sober for fifty-four years. I've been married to my current wife on oct.31,1970 and are celebrating fifty-three years and she is the happiest wife I know. I can't leave the house or come home without a kiss. Alcoholics Anonymous has been an Education in the art of living. I am a completely different person than I was prior to entering the AA program. Practicing the principles based on what I have learned from the results of attending a Step-study and a Big-Book study weekly ever since I entered the program has been the answer to every question I have had since entering the program. I Highly recommend it. It has been said that you can count on, one hand, the number of true friends You have in a lifetime. I cannot count the number of true friends I have had, who have come and passed on over my fifty-four years in the AA, program, and for that, at the age of eighty-two, I am truly grateful, and Life is good.