

The Shopping Cart Mental Attitude

Correcting My Neglectful Mental Shortcomings

By Rick R.

Directionless and defeated, bankrupt in every department, ashamed of all my many failures, I drank myself into oblivion every day/night wondering if things were ever going to change and where it was all going to end. How I got to that state of decline was a mystery, after all, weren't my plans always noble. What went wrong? What went right is the question I should have been asking myself. I had painted myself into the corner of life, and the booze had come to the end of whatever comfort it had afforded me in the past. It was over for me and my flawed perception of life. Maybe I should try A.A., after all, what have I got to lose? (GOOD IDEA)

Amazed at what I heard in the meetings I was taking mental notes about how simple life was, and how my false vision of it in the past was my undoing. Maybe I should take a step back and not be in such a hurry to express my opinions, and to tell them how I do things. (GOOD START) Listening to the metaphors, similes, and clichés, was extremely helpful, in that it kept reminding me that I had to change my way of looking at things. In the past, I usually did just the opposite of the things they were suggesting. Trying to catch myself doing something that I knew to be wrong, and correcting it on the spot, became a mission for me. One day, about forty years ago, while trying to find a parking space in a crowded lot at the market, I found one, and as I pulled into it, I found that someone had pushed a shopping cart into the flower bed, and it impaired my access. I was a little perturbed at this when it occurred to me that this is what I would have done in the past myself. Next, I removed the cart, parked my car, and returned the cart to the rack, and went on about my business. I have been doing this little discipline ever since and now, when I get out of my car, I almost always find a stray cart and return it to the Rack. This is just one of my efforts that symbolize the unselfish mental attitudes that I should have had all along. I make my bed daily, I allow drivers in front of me on the highway, and I open doors for people when the opportunity presents itself. These actions cost me nothing. Today, my conscience is clear and I no longer loath myself. This is what is important to me these days. My old selfish way of thinking would have me take every advantage to get ahead in a material way, but I would suffer in a spiritual sense. I need to stay vigilant at that level or I may let my ego return to the driver's seat. Taking these disciplines into all my ventures of life has been a wonderful asset and I hope I never get complacent about these things.

Recently, I was handed an article from a sports newsletter written to instill character in the school sports programs and the writer commented that: "There are two kinds of people in the world, those that put the cart back in the rack, and those that make excuses for why they shouldn't have to do it." I mirthfully agree.