

# The Speed of Life

The Bad Days are But Distant Memories

By Rick R.

*I am seven years old* and every adult in my immediate environment is drinking daily and it is not hard for me to get a taste of beer, if I wanted, but I do not necessarily like the taste, so no problem. *I am ten years old*, and beer is beginning to taste better but still not my favorite, but a little sip of whiskey, now and then, tastes o.k. but it is harder to get the adults to give it up. *I am thirteen years old*, and my friend and I talk an old drunk into buying us a few quarts of beer, and we commence to get drunk for the first time in our lives, and *now I know why* all those adults drink this stuff every night. I was giddy, sloppy, stupid, sick, and eventually unconscious. I woke up the next morning and went off to school with a nasty hangover. I was in the eighth grade at that time. Still, it was no problem.

From that time on my mind was consumed with thoughts of how I was going to repeat *that wonderful experience*. As I started high-school I worked in a bowling alley from six pm till ten thirty pm, setting up pins (in the old days) and when we got off, we would go straight to a sleazy bar where we could get someone to buy beer for us. From there, we would go to an abandoned school building and drink till all the beer was gone, get into fist fights with each other, wake up the next morning with black eyes, skinned up knuckles and elbows, go back to school and come up with some ridicules' story about what had happened.

*I am sixteen years old*, and I am allowed to party with the adults and shortly after getting my driver's license, I am asked to drive someone home, and on the return trip, I missed a turn and smashed into a parked car. I continue to drink unabated. I quit school in May of my senior year with almost no resistance, Join the navy in August of that same year, locked up for gang fighting, have my second drunk driving accident when I drive into a gas station and hit a car at the pump.

I continue this kind of behavior for ten more years and am lucky to have survived after more trips to jail, failed marriage, broken bones, cuts and bruises and broken relations with everyone that means anything to me. *I am twenty-eight years old*, surrender and show up at A.A. coming out of a blackout. I am greeted on the front lawn of a little yellow house in the suburbs that is being used to hold meetings, by three people who welcome this stranger with opened arms as though they are expecting me. They began to listen patiently to my tales of woe, nodding as they seem to understand. Their eyes are soft and gentle, and I feel their compassion.

At the early age of twenty-eight, I believed my life is over but, one of them says "*life isn't passing you by near as fast as you think it is*" and they say, *come inside and have a cup of coffee*. They were right; I had a profound change of perception. From that moment on I have never wanted a drink and all those bad days are but distant memory. My hope is that all who arrive at the doors of A.A. can be accepted with the same love and kindness that I experienced. I have been sober Fifty-two years; *I am eighty years old* and on my way to *one hundred +* and life is good.