

The Unselfish Spirit

Accepting The World as It is

By Rick R.

Our primary purpose is to stay sober and to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. The degree that the individual carries out these two goals is not mandated by the AA body and the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. The AA program offers suggestions on how to overcome the difficulties brought about by the disease of alcoholism and not simply the act of drinking. These difficulties come in the form of *spiritual damage* and *material wreckage*. It seems that our spiritual damage lies in the unseen part of our makeup such as, our thinking, our motive, our fears, our conscience, our ego, guilt, shame, self-esteem, and the like. *Our material wreckage often comes as the result of our spiritual damage and is the residue of our spiritual condition.* Selfishness- self – Centeredness! That, we think is the root of our trouble. (pg. 62 BB.) That, being said, isn't it apparent that unselfishness would be the solution to our trouble? That seems to oversimplify the solution but, in my experience, it is so simple that it is usually overlooked. Most alcoholics have spent their lives taking advantage of everything and everyone around them and as the result, have been plagued by the guilt and shame that only a drink could mask. The AA program suggests that *we live by principles*, and I cannot find one selfish principle in the Big Book or the 12&12. I believe that most of the people that truly have a desire to stop drinking and embrace the AA program start to change the behaviors that they recognize as counterproductive simply because they can hear these things that we all share at meetings, and they change the most obvious shortcomings in their day-to-day activities. This is a good start and with time it starts to erode much of the shameful habits of past that had become commonplace. Talk of inventories and amends cause us to think at a different level about those material matters. That is usually the only thing that we are aware of in the beginning. *When we talk about spiritual matters, it seems that we all have different perceptions of exactly what we mean by" spiritual".* If, for the sake of simplicity, we think of it as our innermost self, such as *our ego, conscience, our mind, our heart, or soul, if you like, and realize that this is where our spirit resides and where our emotions live, and that is also where the pain of our past thrives.* If we want to achieve the peace of mind that is promised in step nine, we will have to come to terms with the process of acceptance of the world as it is and of the people in that world. If we want to be accepted and forgiven for our past mistakes, we must be willing to accept all the people that we find fault with and give them the same latitude that we are seeking. To accomplish this, we can *stop being judgmental and replace that with an understanding spirit.* We will have to *replace gossip and character assination with compassion and empathy.* If we can't do that, then how can we expect the world around us to accept us and forgive us for our past mistakes? This is no time to rest on our laurels, so to speak. It's time to begin cleaning out the attic. This is where we begin to free up that space in our minds that has been keeping us awake at night. This is truly the path to developing the *unselfish spirit*, and with it come a peace of mind that's hard to imagine while we were still playing God ourselves. It costs me nothing to be kind. *My wish for those other people is that they can someday find the same peace of mind for themselves that this process has provided for me.*
What more can I say