

# Contempt Prior to Investigation

I Reversed My way of Thinking.

By Rick R.

“There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments, and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance—that principle is contempt prior to investigation.” -Herbert Spencer (B.B. Appendix 2)

Before I surrendered and came to Alcoholics Anonymous, I spent much of my time trying to impress the people around me with my own opinions on just about every topic that was on the table. I wasn't cured of that flaw immediately after surrendering and seeking answers in the AA program since I was still trying to protect my turf and it would take time to gain enough confidence to overcome all the insecurities that developed within me as an alcoholic. This continued long after I quit drinking until I finally started to get relief from all the mental gymnastics as I got deeper into solving the obvious surface problems.

When I first read the 2<sup>nd</sup> appendix in the Big Book, and was faced with the “Herbert Spencer” take, it made me look deeper into what it all meant to me. It brought me back to my own understanding of how I could misunderstand what was meant by the comments that other people make. Oftentimes I would assume that they had a hidden agenda, and how I could counter with my own *opinion* on the matter and point out that other person's agenda and what he had up his sleeve, especially when that other person was not present at the time. The principle that I found to quell this defiant approach to my superfluous resistance to logic was to get out of the debating society and stay out of it with the intent to establish my own credibility and integrity. My EGO dogged my every step, and I came to understand that lack of self esteem was the thing that I had to overcome, and I have found that it takes years to live down the old habits of the past but that I had to make a beginning, or it would never have happened. Patience and understanding of those that still harbor those characteristics becomes my motto and it seems to break down the competitive stances of the other person and as we have often heard, “It takes two to Tango.” Reigning in my EGO has never been easy for me, but I was convinced that it is the most important thing that I work on in my daily life. Today I simply replaced the Contempt and Competitiveness with Patience and Understanding and in time I hope to remove the ignorance from my resume. Today, as I listen, with an open mind, to others, as they share their experiences in the recovery process, I am gaining a better understanding of how each person views the effects that the disease of alcoholism in their lives and I often get a new perspective on many of the old ideas that might need improvement. In Scott Peck's book, *The Road Less Traveled*, he defines the word Love as “caring for and nurturing another person's soul” or words to that effect. When I approach it in those terms, I find that love is a verb and not a noun. Love is an action and not just a feeling. I can love someone even when they don't love me back simply because I truly want and hope for the best for them. Patience, compassion, and love have replaced the word Contempt from my vocabulary and hopefully the same goes for the word Ignorance.