

Irrational Fear

The Root of Our Troubles

By Rick R.

At a meeting recently, the topic was FEAR when one of the members commented, "*Can you imagine an alcoholic without fear?*" As I was thinking about his comment it occurred to me that, I can't imagine any human being without fear, or for that matter, I can't imagine any animal or even an insect without fear for without it, I don't see how any living creature could survive. Fear is a necessary instinct and without it we would be reckless, to a fault, and probably walk in front of a bus. All normal people have fear and sometimes it is a good motivator. What makes us abnormal is IRRATIONAL FEAR and I don't think I've ever met an alcoholic without it. On Page 62 in the Big Book it says, "Selfishness-self-centeredness! That we think is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity")... Selfishness may be the ROOT of our troubles, but FEAR seems to be in the driver's seat. Without irrational fear, we may never have become alcoholics in the first place. That seems to be the thing that makes us different from so-called, normal people. It seems that the alcoholic brain doesn't process information the same way that the normal person's brain does. We seem to have a deep rooted feeling of inadequacies. For some reason, we don't feel that we measure up to our peers, and as a result, we try to over compensate, and we sometimes step on the toes of others and they sometimes retaliate. This negative self impression (low self esteem) has been with us long before the bottle intervened and I don't see it going away without *a profound change of perception*. Our brain has been lying to us. Look at the people around you and you will see that we are basically the same. The only thing that makes us different is the perception that we have of ourselves as the result of our faulty thinking. Nothing that I've ever feared has killed me up to this point, and I can't even remember most of what I feared a month ago. No one has yet come up with a cure for this condition but Alcoholics Anonymous has discovered a method of treating it which, if practiced daily, can put it into remission indefinitely and lead to a life that is more satisfying and happier than you could have imagined. Most of the selfishness was caused by our perception of what we needed in order to feel safe and secure so we selfishly became takers, thinking that with enough material possessions we would have overcome our self doubts, but it never worked, because, *no matter how much we gained, it was never enough and it will never be enough*. Our problem was not of a material nature. *Our problem was in our perception*. In A.A. we are encouraged to do just the opposite of the ROOT cause of our troubles and to practice it on a daily basis. Since selfish-self-centeredness was the ROOT of our troubles, we needed to change our thoughts to unselfish deeds and to reach out to others. It does not suggest that you be generous, it simply encourages us to practice unselfish behaviors until they become a new way of life for us. When doing this, over any length of time, we eventually realize that we are way better off than we were before and this is incentive to want to do more. This unselfish approach to life is the path to *spiritual healing* as opposed to the material/selfish destruction. Once we understand and attain this new approach in our thinking, we never have to doubt ourselves again. Our faith will come as we experience the results of this *new perception* and it will remain as long as we practice it. Practice, Practice, Practice.