

I'm Just not Ready Yet.

Refrain from Denial on This Matter

Who can, positively, describe the dynamics of alcoholic thinking? No one can, as it is as diverse as the number of alcoholics in the world. So how can anyone have the definite answers to any of the multitude of difficulties that we face? We do find different ideas of how to address, so called, problems that gives us a start towards reducing the effects that those problems have on us, until they are no longer interfering with our mental calmness. If we are diligent about it, we will eventually find a place of acceptance which is hard to describe. I hear stories all the time about people with long term sobriety, who have relapses, and that seems to contradict the first sentence in chapter five in the big book that says, "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path", and I have heard it said that the cofounders wanted to change the word "Rarely, to Never."

One of the reasons that may answer the question about the old timers that just decide to drink again after long term sobriety, may be the half measures approach to steps five. This is not to criticize them for being unable to take that risk, at the time, for we know how difficult it is to overcome the shame and embarrassment of our past behaviors. These fears are also symptoms of the disease of alcoholism, and no one can judge another for not being able to bring them to disclose these things too soon.

My first attempt at the inventory challenge happened right before my one-year anniversary, and I was doing the best I could, at the time, based on my shallow understanding of this process we are encouraged to be fearless and thorough about. Those tormenting ghosts of yesterday stood between me and the thoroughness clause. In desperation, I revisited step five and took that leap of faith and disclosed them to a dear and trusted friend, and I believe that doing it that way is the corner stone that governed all the remaining steps. In time I have addresses them all with as much courage and thoroughness as I could muster, and the results are an unshakable framework for life. If, however, I wasn't strong enough to revisit that step and had gone ahead with the original fourth and fifth steps I may have convinced myself that I had done it, and went on with a halfhearted effort, which would have amounted to a facade that could have lead me to be satisfied with the "Just not picking up today" approach and the only way, that I can see, to bridge the difference between the *half measures approach*, and the *fearless and thorough approach*, is to be *honest with myself* about being in fear concerning the things I'm not willing to disclose in steps 4 and 5. Denying them *slams the door* on the rest of the program. Admitting that they exist would be *leaving the door open* to getting back to it when you have a little more A.A. under your belt and allows you to go on with steps six and seven and so on in an honest way. If, on the other hand, you attempt to slip by with the half measures approach, you may never want to admit to it later and that would be tragic and could end in a relapse after some serious years of sobriety. Some of these things take time and we should not be made to rush into them at the expense of *self-honesty*. The simple term: "I KNOW I MUST, BUT I'M JUST NOT READY YET" allows you to move on to the rest of the steps and gives you time and one day you will run across someone that you feel you could trust with your life and be willing to take the risk. This is an approach that no one, who counts, will ever fault you for. It is important to keep it clean.