

At Six Years Old, The Die Was Cast

I Did Not Fit In.

By Rick R.

When I look back on my experience, after going through my pre drinking years, my drinking years, and my sober years, in the AA program it is not hard to see what a troubled individual I was. In my days from birth to the day I entered grammar school I was unaware of the dysfunction in my immediate environment and with the absence of supervision, discipline, and role models, I did anything I wanted to do, and my behavior became dishonest, selfish, and shameful, as I later learned. *On my first day of parochial school the world came apart for me* when I looked around the classroom and realized that I did not fit in. All the other kids were having fun and enjoying that experience and was terrified and knew that I could never live up to what was expected of me at that time. As a result, I developed fears and inhibitions that those other kids did not seem to have. I learned right from wrong in church but was much too insecure to do what was right. *I learned to cut corners, to lie, and cheat, since I had no confidence* that I could ever keep up with my peers. I began to overcompensate and to act out to make up for my short falls, but it never worked for me. Fist fighting became a regular event. This all went on till I turned thirteen and found the answer to all my problems. I had access to alcohol, and I did not recognize it at first, but it immediately removed all those fears and inhibitions and *for the first time in my life I felt normal* and that I was as good as anyone and better than most, so I thought. I continued to drink to feel good but when I awoke in the morning, I was more terrified than before and all I had to do was to take that first drink and everything was right with the world again. I continued this pattern until I was twenty-eight years old when I woke up one morning to face The Hideous Four Horsemen, Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration Despair (Big Book pg. 151) and I had a moment of clarity. I knew that I *had to do something about my drinking, or I would die a horrible death at the hands of others or by my own hand*. I called AA, struggled to find the location of the meeting place, arrived there two hours later, and was greeted by three members who were compassionate and understanding and as they listened, my sense of isolation slowly went away, as did the desire to drink. I have never wanted a drink from that moment (Oct.15, 1969) to the present. I have never had to struggle with the AA program and have embraced it to the best of my understanding. I came to understand that the things that I did as a child and as a practicing alcoholic were the ingredients of the disease of Alcoholism and that, *the die was cast at the age of six*, all the ingredients were there long before I ever took a drink and all I had to do was add the Alcohol. Once I removed the alcohol, all the ingredients were still there and that is what the program helped me to set right. I was not responsible for becoming an Alcoholic, I am, however, accountable for my behavior while I was drinking, and if I am willing to make restitution and clean up the wreckage of the past, I can free myself from all the guilt and shame and walk away with my dignity and self-respect. Today my life is better that it ever could have been, had I never become an Alcoholic in the first place, and, of that, I am convinced.