

# Being Honest with Myself

## The Denial Within Me Was Gone

By Rick R.

Years before I came to AA, I was aware that there was something dreadfully wrong with me but not one person ever suggested that I might be an alcoholic or that I should try AA. Perhaps that was due to the denial of the people around me that drank like I did. Suggesting that I had a problem with alcohol would mean outing themselves and others. Looking back on it now, I feel fortunate that I survived those last few years of failed attempts at life and when I ran out of options, I came to AA looking for answers. The denial within me was gone. My mind was open and for the first time in my life I was *desperate*, and I was *listening*. At my first AA meeting I was moved by what I heard. It was different than anything I had experienced before. The people were *being honest and candid about things that only brought shame and guilt to me in the past. I felt safe for the first time in my life* and could discuss those things openly, that had been taboo up until then. Prior to that, everything in my life was a façade. At that moment On October 15, 1969, my *perception* of the world had changed, and I have not wanted a drink since. Call it a *Spiritual Awakening* if you like, and it was for me, but it came in the form of a *Profound Change in Perception*. In appendices 2, in the Big Book, (Alcoholics Anonymous) it describes a man who had "*undergone a profound alteration in his reaction to life*". I began to question all the decisions I had made in the past, and how the residue of those decisions had tarnished and eroded any chance of a successful, happy life. I became aware that the *values system* that I had learned as a child, at church and at the Boy Scout meetings etc. was lost in the dust and was *replaced with guilt and shame*. I was in trouble when I violated *my own value system*. I now realize that I was not a bad kid, but I was a child that was not strong enough to do the things I knew to be right. The more I broke the rules, the easier it became, and *moral standards were meaningless*. Soon drinking was the only thing that eased my conscience. When that quit working for me, I found myself at the door of AA. Once I had that *change of perception*, I knew what to do. It may be as simple as "trying to stop doing the things that I regret" but the key to it all is "*Being honest with myself,*" and never going back to my old way of thinking. I said that I was fortunate to have survived those last few years of drinking and that I came to AA looking for answers. Being desperate enough to ask for help was the most important part of that experience. I do not believe that anyone could have convinced me to stop drinking against my will. I may have stayed dry long enough to get the heat off, but I doubt that I would have *surrendered to the degree necessary to have that change of perception and therefore no spiritual awakening*. Getting off in the right direction from the start was especially important to any success I have had in AA. I know that I only live once, and *I do not want to waste one moment of the precious life God gave me*. Today, as I continue to practice all the things I have learned in the Program, it has resulted in a peace of mind that was unimaginable when I first walked through the doors of AA and, for that, I am extremely grateful.