

Catching Up with My Peers

When the Glass was Half Empty

By Rick R.

When newcomers arrive at their first few AA meetings it's hard for them to get too serious about the spiritual aspects of the program simply because they find themselves up to their necks in the wreckage of the final stages of their failed drinking adventure. If, in the beginning they can see the possibility of getting their life back on track like some of the people they hear discussing their experience with the program, they will eventually explore the path to the spiritual solutions that the rest of us find if we stay the course. This is a 12-step program and if we are dedicated to thoroughly following the path through all the steps, the spiritual approach will integrate with the material goals and open the door to a life of incredible possibilities. In the meetings we often use metaphors and analogies to express an idea, and those little stories seem to stay with us forever. We can talk about the anger we felt when someone cuts in front of us on the highway and everyone can identify with us and hear how we resolved that issue by changing our perception of the significance of that incident since it was only our EGO that was offended, and we could shake our heads, and put it behind us. To put the idea of spiritual solutions to all our material problems, I would like to use the example of my economic troubles before I entered AA, and how my perception changed.

From early childhood I was always insecure and never had the confidence in myself about being equal to others. I was always trying to *catch up* with my peers but that never seemed to happen. There was never enough, and I was always working from the half empty glass. When I had the good fortune to acquire some cash, I hurried up and spent it to make myself feel good. Material things meant more to me than peace of mind. It's not that way today. The solution to that material neediness came to me in the early 1970s when I looked at my credit union statement after not paying any attention to it for two or three years and there was a balance of over \$500.00 that I didn't even know I had. WOW! Where did it come from? Then I remembered that I was on a ship in the Navy and several years earlier and we were about to go on a seven-month cruise, and I wanted to party before we left so I borrowed \$200.00, and my payments were made by direct deposit from my pay check and I never missed it. I was sober about one year, at the time, and was just married. From that time until the present, we have never had a financial problem. I was receiving an average of two pay raises per year considering advancement in pay grade, annual cost of living increases, and longevity raises. Each time I received a raise, I went straight to the dispersing office and had it transferred into my savings. Out of sight, out of mind. I got ahead of the curve and have been there ever since. The glass has always been full.

The A.A. program works the same, as I understand it. Once we start to see the light at the end of the tunnel, it's no time to think we can run out and make decisions that put us back into that *mental distress*. We can *be satisfied with what we have* and not *what we want*, until we get ahead of the curve far enough to have a cushion between us and those problems of the past. We can be willing to continue to grow in the program, and to pace ourselves. Once we understand *the spirit of our needs* and *the spirit of our wants*, we can invest in *peace of mind*. If we can be patient and do this, our material problems will take care of them self in time.