

Concede to Our Innermost Selves

To Thine Self be True

By Rick R'

“We learned that we had to *concede to our innermost selves* that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery.” (Big Book pg. 30) What does that mean to me? I thought I was doing it when I admitted that I was an alcoholic, but I soon learned better.

Like many of us, I came to Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) wanting the *pain* to stop and I thought that I was addressing the problem of alcoholism when I stopped drinking. As I look back on it now, I realize that I was only dealing with the *surface issues* and not the *root causes* of my problems. Even so, it was a beginning. It took quite a while for me to understand the importance of looking at the deeper flaws in my *value system* and to address them at *that* level. When I began to do this, I started to change the surface behaviors that are caused by those character flaws.

At a meeting recently, I heard a young man share that “Alcohol was not his *problem*, but it became a problem, that *alcohol* was the *treatment* for his problem until it stopped working”, then he had to stop drinking and learn to treat those *deeper-rooted* emotional problems if he were to get any relief at all. I found that to be very insightful for someone his age and time in the program.

I believe that if I want to live a full and happy life, I must examine my *motives* for all that I do, for *that* is the source of my problems. If my motives are *honest, unselfish*, and based on *sound principles*, and if I am *strong enough* to do what is right in each of these actions, I become more at peace with myself and I have *fewer regrets* as the result. That is where the healing begins. I find that happiness is directly proportionate to the unselfish spirit.

As it often happens, alcoholics resist complete surrendering until they have come to the point where they have *lost more than they were willing to lose*, or they are *about to lose something they are unwilling to lose*. Now they must decide what *form* the rest of their life shall take.

In AA we sometimes hear the term, “THE GIFT OF DESPERATION”. Painful as it sounds, the veterans of A.A. know the importance of reaching bottom if we have any chance of practicing the rest of the program at the depth of our core thinking for that is where our *problems lie*, and that is also where real *solutions lie*. If I don't understand this about myself, I will keep repeating the mistakes of the past and probably waste much of the precious time God gave me. If you have the capacity to be honest with yourself and embrace this program with all the enthusiasm you can muster, the results will be Freedom, Growth, and Happiness.

In the words of Shakespeare, “*This above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man*”. If, however, all you want to do is to stop drinking, all you need to do is to purchase a bushel basket full of Antabuse. They will keep you from drinking and you won't have to attend all those damned old meetings.