

No Time to Rest on Our Laurels

Playing Checkers or Playing Chess?

Let me preface this article by saying that I am not being critical of anyone for any reason concerning where a person is along the path of sobriety. My only motive for writing it is to give some prospective concerning the possibilities which lie ahead based on the thoroughness we apply to the steps as we put some distance between us and that last drink. I am one of the fortunate ones that showed up at the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous at the age of 28 and have never wanted a drink since that day. I was the youngest person in the room for my first couple of years as the drugs using population of the Sixties generation hadn't started showing up until the mid-seventies and they seemed to bottom out at a much earlier age than the common variety alcoholics who seldom came to us until they were in their forties. (midlife crisis) I was referred to as "The fortunate One." In my first two years, I was like everyone else when it came to the subject of thoroughness, and I was selective about what I would do with the program and about the things I would dismiss as being unnecessary since I had absolutely no desire to drink. I was slow and deliberate when it came to actually taking the steps and it was almost two years before I attempted to do the fourth step inventory and being in the Navy at the time, I was shipped out to an oil tanker in The Tonkin Gulf Yacht Club Where I spent four months hauling fuel to the fleet. I had many nights at sea thinking and longing to be back with my home group and contemplating what I had planned to do and when I got home I re-opened my fourth step inventory with a new attitude about the steps and realized that my original attempt was a very shallow scam so I burned it and started over and this time, I got it right. That, I think was the turning point in my attitude about thoroughness. I addressed those so called "Tormenting Ghosts of Yesterday." Shared them with another trusted member of the program and it just lifted the weight off my shoulders and that, I believe, made the rest of the program much easier. I have attended a weekly step study meeting ever since and it helps me to measure my growth as we cycle through the steps and traditions several times a year. There is a term on page 85 in the Big Book and, coincidentally, on Page 85 in the 12x12 that suggests "This is no time to rest on our laurels" and I take that very serious. Selfishness was the problem and today I live a life based on unselfish principles and motives. After many years of sobriety, I could very easily slack off and vegetate, but I would have no purpose in life and if I neglected responsibilities my self-worth would suffer. I also stopped being judgmental about the behaviors of others or I would be playing God myself. Scott Peck Defines Love as "Caring for and nurturing another person" and I can love everyone even if they can't return the gesture. It simply means wishing the best for them and meaning it. Happiness is a Biproduct of right living and living by unselfish principles is the key. These are just a few ideas but there many ways to continue to have a purpose and if you don't, you may be stronger now and you may want to re-visit the fourth thru the ninth steps and get a better perception on how to become a more useful member of society and be fulfilled or, you may be satisfied just not drinking one day at a time. That's your choice. I overheard a sportscaster describing the different head coaches of professional football teams and he said, "Some are playing Checkers, and a few are playing Chess." Life takes on a new meaning and it is way too precious to waste when you've come this far.