

REMOVE THE RATS

We alcoholic come to AA with more than our share of mental problems and it becomes apparent when the symptoms of alcoholism become exposed. We all have them to one degree or another, for example: fear. Some people are so fearless that they might recklessly walk in front of a train while others are so fearful that they may be considered paranoid. All of us fall somewhere in between those two extremes, and that is true of all of our other instincts. Being close to the center line between those extremes would be considered normal. We all have our own combination of these types of problems and no two people are exactly alike.

Not everyone that comes to A.A. actually has a desire to stop drinking. If asked what brought them to A.A. they might say, "I had a D.U.I." or I got arrested for getting in a bar fight, I seriously doubt that they have a desire to stop drinking, but it may be the beginning of coming out of denial for them. Those of us who come here desperately searching for answers are very receptive to what those in the program have to offer. If there is no desperation, it is unlikely that that person will look deeply into his problems.

He may become one of the educational variety, as they say, and in those seemingly rare cases, they do eventually deal with deeper issues. Those who think that not drinking is the goal of the A.A. program are unfortunate indeed. They talk more of their material, surface troubles and how the world has treated them and don't seem to understand that most of our problems stem from our faulty thinking and until we understand that, they will keep repeating the mistakes of the past.

Suppose you were to purchase your first home and after living in it for a short period of time you notices a rat run across the kitchen floor and disappear into a wall behind a cabinet. You run to the hardware store and purchase a rat trap, set it in the kitchen, and wake up the next morning and the rat is in the trap. You are proud of yourself at the fact that you solved that problem. In a few days you start so smell the rat decomposing so you run out and purchase a spray can of air freshener. That should do it. Then flies begin swarming around in the kitchen. Oh no, I better run out and buy a fly swatter, that should solve the problem. Next, to your surprise, you see evidence of other rats and you try the same tactics to solve it one rat at a time.

Masking the symptoms of a problem is typical of alcoholic thinking and it usually revolves around the fact that our ego is still running the show. When we become willing to surrender to the fact that our ideas haven't worked for us up to this point and that they are not likely to work for us in the future, we become teachable and things start to improve. When we become aware of the rats in the traps and start removing them from the home, one rat at a time, eventually that new home becomes a wonderful place to live. Identifying the root cause of our faulty thinking and dropping the resistance that our EGO continues to put between us and sane thinking, is the solution to this dilemma and the sooner we cross over to that way of thinking, the sooner we resolve these issues.