

The Rocks, the Stones, and the Pebbles

My conscience would never let me rest.

Coming to Alcoholics Anonymous from a pit of despair was the best decision I have ever made. My life up to that point was in shambles and I was desperate enough to seek outside help. Understanding the part that alcohol played in my life, up to that point, was difficult but I knew that if I did not get a grip on reality, I was going to self-destruct, and the progression of the problem was like going ninety miles an hour down that dead end street. Hope was established immediately as I was introduced to the possibility that I could be restored to a life that was free of the mental torment that I had been experiencing since childhood. The answers to all my problems came in the form of a *Profound Change of Perception* concerning *how I perceived myself*. Without discipline or structure in my upbringing, I was insecure and afraid that I would never meet up with the standards of my peers and as the results of that way of thinking, I developed a dishonest and selfish lifestyle which eventually caught up with me in the form of a guilty conscience. My drinking solved that problem for a time but when the tolerance for alcohol wore off, I found myself back in that pit of despair. When I looked in the mirror, I hated what I saw, and I could no longer drink it away. Like everyone else, when introduced to the program, I first had to stop the (emotional) bleeding by dealing with the current issues that I had been neglecting such as: pay the rent, pay the traffic ticket, clear the beer cans off my dresser.... Then I could give the steps of the program the attention they would need if I wanted the relief that they promised. With a new attitude of willingness, I was already getting rid of many of the obvious habits of dishonesty, neglect, irresponsibility, and the like. Next, I was faced with my biggest challenge which came in the form of *The Wreckage of the Past* that many refer to as a *Sack of Rocks*. If we ever want to be free of the guilt and the shame CAUSED BY the regrettable memories that we have been harboring, in our conscience, we will have to address these issues *when we become strong enough*. My sack contained a few Rocks that were obvious, a handful of Stones, and an abundance of, less threatening, Pebbles that were not that obvious to me at the time. Addressing steps 4, 5, 8, and 9 concerning these issues became my greatest challenge and my first instinct was to skip over the most embarrassing memories. That Idea, I think, is common in many of us, when first faced with reparation process. I gave it my best shot at first but left out a few of the Rocks due to my ego, but my conscience would never let me rest. Later, when, as the result of the progress I had made in the program, I became stronger and had the determination to *revisit those more glaring issues* and clean the slate. Had I not done that, I believe the rest of the program would have been a shallow façade and I would never have attained the peace of mind that I enjoy today. The Stones were the things that got most of the attention as I did the steps initially. As I became stronger, I took that leap of faith and tackled the Rocks. After cleaning up those issues, the rest of the program became easy. No more denial and much more peace of mind. So, I am finished, right? Not so fast, Huckleberry! Now I become aware of the less threatening pebbles in the form of the selfish motives in my day-to-day decision making which I will gladly correct, one pebble at a time as I become aware of them and it is a Joy to rid myself of the things that used to plague me and today, life is good.