

That Little Boy was not a Jerk

What Went Wrong Between Then and Now

I was deeply touched by what I heard a young man at a meeting sharing about planning a party for his mother. He started to search through some old pictures and came up with photos of himself when he was 3 years old. Looking at them, he saw the innocence in his face at that young age and he said to himself: *"That little boy was not a jerk"*. His next question to himself was: "What went wrong between then and now"? I believe that everyone in the room could identify with him.

Most of us were perfect when we were born but something influences us in those formative years that set the tone for the direction that our thinking would take. The childlike innocence gave way to the *neediness and insecurity* that alcoholics seem to have in common. The unworthiness tapes run rampant in our heads telling us that we couldn't make it without cutting corners and doing things that brought on guilt and shame, then we were *plagued by our conscience*. That little child was damaged and scared on the inside in a way that nothing could bring him peace, until he discovered the *elixir in a bottle*. When that failed him, he showed up in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) trying to make sense of it all.

When I look around the room at an A.A. meeting, it seems like we all look about the same on the surface, with a few minor differences due to age and generational things. We're all made up of hair, eyeballs, elbows, and feet, and things like that. Most of us follow dress codes and courtesy standards. We're not that much different on the surface. Our real problems consume us on the inside and we spend years trying to convince the world around us that we are as good as they are while, inside, loathing what we had become. *It's hard to convince a drunk that the child that he was at 3 years old is still inside of him and can resurface if he desperately wants it.*

Suppose for a moment, that we all woke up this morning with amnesia. We would all be the same. The only thing that makes us different is what is going on *between our ears and we drag that with us everywhere we go*. I discovered years ago that my brain, with the aid of my ego, was lying to me, and that I wasn't that hopeless loser that I thought I was. I also discovered that most of that damage could be reversed, and that I could, over a period of time; develop an approach to a life far superior to anything I could have imagined. The hardest thing that stands in the way of this is my inability to surrender, and to *trust the process*. With the help of the group, slowly letting go of some of the old ideas, you can start seeing the results in a short period of time, and it will be exhilarating, however, we didn't get this way overnight, and it will be a slow journey, but a very exciting and happy experience. An old, departed friend used to say, *"Your hair will be a different color before you know who you are."* To me that means, with the help of the A.A. program, patiently changing some of those old habits that cause us grief and replacing them with unselfish deeds that start to heal our conscience. I've heard it said, "Try it for 90 days and if you don't like what we have to offer, we will gladly refund your misery". What have you got to lose? *Now, let's go find that kid and give him a second chance.*