

The A.A. Moon Shot

I Admired Her Courage

By Rick R.

I got sober on October 15, 1969, at a time when the Space programs were on the Television in black and white and I was up deep into the nights watching as it happened. About twenty years later I in a meeting when I heard a very young, very sincere, single mother of two, sharing that her first experience in the AA program was the thought of having to do all this stuff for the rest of her life and she didn't find it too comforting. (Her words) It sounded to me that, from her perspective, she knew that she had to do it, but it wasn't going to be easy or fun. I admired her for her courage and conviction, and I tried to encourage her by explaining things that I had experienced when I was faced with the life changing challenges of sobriety. I was a father of a boy, I was in the Navy at the time, and I was divorced. It was a difficult time, but I had to go through it, drinking or not. I likened it to the first Apollo Space Mission to the moon. It goes something like this.

When you first see the size of the spacecraft and consider the amount of energy it would take to put it into space, it is hard to fathom. After the countdown is complete, the engines fire and a tremendous amount of flames and smoke engulf the entire area and, in a few moments, it slowly starts to lift off. As it lumbers its first hundred feet, it is expending a tremendous amount of fuel. Slowly it starts to gain momentum and pick up speed, still shuddering along. Soon the booster tanks are depleted, and they are ejected, and the main tanks begin to propel it further along the flight path with even more thrust as it is reaching for orbit. Next, the main tank is depleted just before orbit and is ejected. What is left is a very small portion of what arose from the launchpad. Soon the craft leaves orbit and heads towards the moon and something else happens that sometimes goes unnoticed. Somewhere between the earth and the moon, the gravitational pull of the moon has more influence on the craft than the gravity of the earth's has, and it is gently drawn along its path. Very little energy is except for minor course corrections.

In Alcoholics Anonymous, when we first get started, it appears to be an insurmountable task that requires a tremendous amount of effort just to get off the launchpad. Not every launch is successful and some of us don't make it the first time, and we need to exert all that energy on each successful attempt. As we do get our way, it starts to get easier as we head for our objective. When we go through the twelve steps, we finally reach orbit.

After we are satisfied that everything is in order, we can now set out for the moon. If we stay on course, the spiritual gravity of values we have adopted in the AA program will far outweigh the negative gravity of the past as we eject all the dead weight that held us down. As we continue to adjust to the day-to-day mistakes that we make and adopt an unselfish approach to life, somewhere along the flight path, we will cross that line where we are drawn towards a life and serenity that is hard to imagine when we are setting on the launchpad. The most important part of the journey is the lift off. If we can get through that most difficult time, it does get easier, and then we need only to stay the course.