

# The Demolition Derby in My Head

## Peace of Mind is a Worthy Aspiration

Over the years I have heard numerous members trying to describe the turmoil in their minds before and after they were introduced to the AA program. Some describe it as a *bus full of terrorists*; others speak of *the committee*, and still others liken it to *a rat running loose in their head*. I can describe my own mental chaos as being like a *demolition derby*. It starts off with about twenty cars of all descriptions in a dirt field and when the gun goes off, they all start to scramble around running into each other. Some are going backwards, and some are trying to t-bone the others. It is so dusty that it's hard to tell which ones are still running and which ones are disabled. The main goal is that *I must be the last one standing*. Needless to say, and we all can agree that *we are way too busy up there in our heads* and if we are to sleep well, when our heads hit the pillow, something will have to be done about it.

I believe that this is one of *the main symptoms of alcoholism*, although I'm not sure that it exists in all alcoholics, it is very common from what I hear shared in the meetings. I had a hard time going to sleep at night even before I was in my teens. I spent much of my nights reviewing all of my interactions of the day and planning what I was going to do and say tomorrow to *fortify today*. The next night would be a continuation of the same ritual. *I was the facade that I had erected and I was never at peace* when I tried to sleep.

When I became old enough to con someone into buying me beer, and that wasn't hard at all, *I found a way to break that tape* that kept replaying in my mind. *Booze, that was the solution*. I soon was in the habit of drinking myself into oblivion every night. *The drinking masked the symptoms* for many years but *it had another side effect that I had never considered*. As I was avoiding the stresses of life, I was *retarding my emotional development and coping skills*, but what did I care, I was having fun. This all went on until I ran out of options and became desperate enough to come to AA and ask for help.

Most of the mental distress that I have been trying to describe is *no longer a problem for me*, not that it's gone completely, but, it only seems to exist when certain life problems arise, that need my attention, and I must address them without doing anyone harm. I think that is what would be considered *due diligence*. Most of the rethinking of things has diminished, and as I search for the reason why this has happened, I can only come up with *two main reasons*. First: since I joined AA, I have *become honest in all of my relationships* and I have *nothing to hide, and I don't have to posture anymore*. When you're *honest, you don't have to remember anything*, and second: *I live by principles* and I read something recently that said *when you live by principles, 90% of your decisions are already made for you*. I don't have to rehearse what I'm going to say tomorrow.

The *changing of old habits and replacing them with honest and sincere motives* has removed me from *the demolition derby in my mind* and it was so subtle that I hardly noticed the change setting in. *Peace of mind is a worthy aspiration* and I'll take all the peace and serenity I can get. There's been enough stress in my life and *this slow and quiet development has been a welcome respite*.