

The End of My Veiled Hypocrisy Cutting off My Own Escape

From my early teen's right up to the present I have been to the extremes on both sides of the behavior scale, bad and good. I had two DUI's and totaled two cars while drunk, before the age of 19. I never drank like a gentleman; I drank for oblivion. I made up my own rules as I went along. As soon as I was old enough, I enlisted in the Navy and got out of Pittsburgh, in 1959 and went aboard a ship in Newport R.I. where I spent three years drinking and fighting. Aside from the night life, I did very well as a seaman and eventually a junior petty officer and I attribute that to the discipline and structure aboard ship. When my hitch was up, I got discharged and tried civilian life again. I flew right over Pittsburgh to Los Angeles where my siblings had relocated to and went right back to my old habits. After three years of that I was again circling the drain and remembered the success I had aboard ship and I missed the discipline and structure, so I reentered the Navy. My seamanship and rigging skills were excellent but my nightlife was atrocious, and it started catching up with me again. During that time, I got married, became a father, got divorced and was all over the pacific trying to deal with it all by correspondence. The last straw was when I started having problems getting back to the ship in the morning, and I was unwilling to lose my Navy career. On October 15, 1969 I showed up at an A.A. meeting and that put an end to my life as a drunk. As I look back on the way I integrated the A.A. program into my life I see many similarities in the way I applied the disciplines of my navy experience and more importantly, the attention to detail that compelled me to not overlook anything. Not only did I learn *what I was supposed to be doing*, but I learned *why I should be doing it*. Step ten suggests that we continue to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it. Understanding the spirit of this principle, and applying it at that deeper level, resulted in some profound behavioral changes and being honest with myself was the most essential part of it all. In a previous article, I explained that a year or so after being married to my current wife, of over fifty years, I made a statement to her that I should stop vilifying my first wife. Fifteen years later, at a meeting I offered \$100.00 to anyone that had ever heard me say one negative thing about my first wife and to this day, nobody can collect on it. I established a principle about that issue and then I cut off my own escape. Years later it occurred to me that, if I can shoot my mouth off about the "*first wife discipline*", and I am still gossiping and criticizing other people, then *am I not a hypocrite?* By sharing this revelation at an A.A. meeting, I am, once again, *cutting of my own escape at a deeper level*. Principles are not flexible. Today I cannot be judgmental about any other human being and still maintain my credibility. This example has been the most productive development that I have experienced in my later years in the program, and it results in a level of peace of mind that I never expected. Getting right with my conscience was the driving force and neutralizing my EGO was the unexpected result. *Decision making* is easy when a person develops the right principles and lives by them, absent of all *escape* clauses. Accepting the world and the people in it exactly the way they are, has removed from me, the responsibility to correct anyone but myself. All the criticism and character assassination has been replaced with empathy and compassion, surrounded by integrity and peace of mind.