

The Importance of Step Twelve

Freedom from all Unresolved Mental Issues

In chapter 11 in The Big Book (A VISION FOR YOU) it starts off by reminiscing about the early days of an alcoholic's drinking and how it gave us the feeling that life was good, but not so in the later times. It then talks about the hideous four horsemen, *Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, and Despair*, and then the next line is: *Unhappy drinkers who read this page will understand*. When I read that Chapter I knew that I was qualified, as it was the blueprint of my life, up to that moment. *What I didn't understand* was that drinking was but a symptom of a much deeper-rooted *emotional problem* and after many years of sobriety, I still had trouble articulating how one caused the other. In the first paragraph of *Step Twelve* in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12&12) it talks about finding *emotional sobriety*. What emotions are we talking about, that's what I wanted to know? As a child, I had very little supervision and I grew up in a dysfunctional environment. I did a lot of things that I was ashamed of, but I never knew how these things would come back to haunt me later in life. As I started drinking, it *immediately relieved me of the guilt and shame*, and it even gave me license to continue acting badly as long as I could rationalize and lie about my behavior. The only thing that I hadn't considered was that *I couldn't hide from my Conscience, and it plagued me* till I couldn't sleep at night without drinking myself into oblivion. *I had been a taker all my life*. I never got enough of what I thought I needed. I was insecure. I had no self-esteem. No one had any respect for me except for the (*want to be*) losers like myself. *Guilt and shame, brought on by a hundred forms of fear ruled my mind*. Not a happy way to live! When they ask me what freedom I cherish the most as the result of practicing the program, most of my fellow members would expect me to say freedom from Alcohol but, they would be mistaken. I would reply that the *freedom from all those unresolved mental issues that plagued me to the point that only a drink would quiet my mind*. The hope that I experienced the minute I embraced this program, at the level of my innermost self, removed the obsession to drink alcohol and it has never returned. I no longer have any fear of alcohol. Having cleaned up the wreckage of the past by thoroughly taking the steps and ridding myself of the selfish motives, my conscience is clear. My self-esteem is High, and the feeling of wellbeing is my constant companion. I'm so glad that I didn't fall into that category that become complacent and think that I could rest on my laurels (as they say) at any point as I understand the meaning of Step Twelve suggests, *Practicing These Principles in all our Affairs*. I try always to be an asset and never a liability. I am neither a victim nor perpetrator. I am always willing to make things right as best I can. I can be trusted and relied upon. I feel that I am on the positive side of the ledger. Peace of mind and a quiet heart have been my goal ever since I entered A. A. and I am happy to say that I haven't been disappointed. One of my favorite prayers is: *Thank You God; it's everything you promised it would be*.