

The Wreckage of the Past

Desperation Outweighed the Denial

By Rick R.

Coming from a life that was anything but normal to the life I live today was difficult to imagine at that point when I became desperate enough to consider the possibility that I could salvage what time I had left on this planet. The life I lead before I entered the A.A. program was like the ball in a pinball machine bouncing from one issue to another and trying to survive the endless pursuit of success but always ending in defeat and going down the drain only to wake up the next morning and starting the same game all over again. They say that insanity is doing the same thing over and over expecting a different result. Running from the realities of life was easy with the help of John Barleycorn as it gave me that brief feeling of peace that I got about half way through my second drink, which quickly lead to "oblivion and the awful awakening to face The hideous Four Horsemen-- Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration and Despair." (B.B. Ch. 11) Not understanding how the obsession to drink, and the relief that it gave me, had ruled out any kind of inquiry into the idea of quitting drinking until *desperation outweighed the denial* and I sought out Alcoholics Anonymous. As I look back on my journey through the A.A. program, and all of the *mental relearning* that has been involved, I can only say that if I could relive it all over again, one thing I would change is *the doubts I had at every level of development*. Arriving with a skeptical mind, I had a slow but determined attitude from the very start and I think that it has served me well, but in hind sight, it was *the unlearning of the ego driven habits* that had been the source of all of my misguided mentality and a failed, selfish way of life. If, however, I hadn't experienced it in the way it evolved for me, I would not be capable of passing it on to the next person that enters this process with all of the doubts that seem to be so common to the recovery process. The one thing that I can say for sure is that knowing what I know today, and what I have experienced, up to this point, if I had the opportunity to do it all over again, I would change, the speed at which I let go of all of my selfish, fearful and skeptical way of accepting the simplicity of the program and I would cut to the chase. In a nut shell I might explain it like this. Be accountable by doing the best I can to clean up the wreckage of the past and making restitution; adopting and applying unselfish principles and motives in all of the decision making process and, accepting every human being I know, exactly as they are with love and compassion. This understanding of life has evolved for me over the past forty nine years in the A.A. program and has provided a peace of mind that is well above anything that I could have contemplated and without peace of mind there can be little happiness. Today, there is very little conflict in my life and the only discomfort I feel is when I am in a situation that I cannot remove myself from but that is rare and completely resolved as the time comes when I can dethatch myself without being judgmental and critical as I move on. That pinball machine is quiet, as is my heart, and the principles I live by today make it so. Who could ask for more?