

# Things Started Working When.

Desperation Outweighed My Denile

By Rick R.

My drinking habit started somewhere around the age of thirteen and ended at the age of twenty-eight. I was never a social drinker and every time I drank, I planned to get plastered. I was much too young to understand why I did what I did, but today it's as plain as the nose on my face. Drinking covered up all the sick feelings I had about myself, and if I could have maintained the tolerance for alcohol that I developed when I was at the peak of my adventure into absurdity I may still be drinking today. On Oct. 15, 1969, I arrived at the door of Alcoholics Anonymous hopeless and defeated at the age of 28, a very young age for an alcoholic who never used drugs. My teenage behavior was unsupervised as I drank and ran roughshod over anything or anyone that got in my way, and I paid dearly for my indiscretions. DUI's, drunk tanks, broken knuckles, stitched up wounds, wrecked cars, lost jobs, evictions, loss of friends, marriage and divorce, and parenthood didn't even slow me down.

At the age of 17, I quit high-school and joined the Navy and served 3 years and seemed to survive in a somewhat disciplined setting, and upon completion of my tour of duty, I went home to become my old self again. That lasted only three years when I reenlisted in the Navy where I seemed to do better despite my drinking. In a few years I advanced in rate rapidly and I was in charge of a deck division on a small Destroyer and my drinking never slowed down. Soon I was to a point where I couldn't remember what I did the night before and I had never heard of blackout drinking. My Navy career was the only thing that stood between me and the streets since nothing I had ever tried before had lasted very long.

On Oct. 15, 1969, I woke up at about 9AM. I was supposed to be onboard the ship at 7AM that morning, I was 40 miles away and this was the third time it had happened in 3 weeks. I was waking up in a blackout after drinking wine the night before and everything in my failed life was about to come to an end. I had run out of clever ideas to explain all this away. Desperation set in. I had no place to turn. I had to put an end to this, or I would not be long for this world. If I could have thought of one more escape plan, I would have used it but I had run out of options. I gave up. My Desperation far Outweighed My Denile and I called Alcoholics Anonymous, the last House on the Block, and arrived on the front lawn of a little yellow house in Los Angeles, and my 28-year nightmare was over.

We have people who surrender and arrive in AA and never have or want to drink again, and there are those who were sent here through Rehab programs in those days that have relapse after relapse and most of us can't explain the reason for this. I recognize several differences between these people. The one who has run out of options is much more likely to have success from the very start. For him/her it's the last house on the block. No more clever ideas. They are entirely ready. Those who still think that they have options left probably aren't entirely ready to surrender yet although they may think they are giving it a good effort, but an alcoholic cannot survive without enablers, and as long as they have any options left, they often have a pattern of relapsing. Unfortunately, suffering and desperation is usually the price of admission. As a friend of mine used to say, "Sometimes we pick the fruit before its ripe".