

Those Other People

I Am No Better or Worse

By Rick R.

My life before alcoholic drinking was nothing to write home about. With very little supervision I did just about anything I wanted to do, and the things I wanted to do were nothing to be proud of. I was always looking over my shoulder, hoping not to get caught, and lying and cheating became a way of life for me. I violated the trust of anybody that seemed to care about me. I laid awake nights with my head spinning trying to come up with answers to questions that I expected people to ask me, and I wanted to have alibis to cover up my arrant behavior, and I knew that they weren't buying it. From the time I was eight years old, I cannot remember a single night that I slept as a normal person sleeps. My brain was always spinning. Somewhere around the age of thirteen was the first time that I set out to get drunk and for the first time in years I experienced sound sleep. The effect that the alcohol had on me was incredible and from that day on I drank every chance I could, and the sleep issue was temporarily resolved except for those nights when I couldn't get anything to drink. That went on for the next fifteen years until the progression of alcoholism went through its course and I had lost more than I was willing to lose. I could no longer lie to myself that things were going to get better. I ran out of options, and I came to AA, at the young age of twenty-eight, (Oct. 15, 1969) desperate and defeated, and believe it or not, have not wanted a drink since that day. That didn't stop my brain from spinning, but I immediately saw the possibilities of working through the steps of the program on the damage I had caused. I was debating every issue, and I swear I could take either side of an argument and give you indisputable information on the subject. My Ego had me in competition with everyone. I needed to be right. I found that I was no better or worse than anyone else, and that started me on my way. On page 268 in *As Bill Sees It*, is the topic "Those Other People" and I realized that I was causing my own problems, even when I was pointing out the faults of others. I had to lay down my arms and give *everyone amnesty* without exception. We all have problems, and I cannot be selective about who I do or do not accept or forgive. I am nobody's victim nor anybody's perpetrator. I had to quit keeping score; it's not a competition anymore. In cases where a person crosses my boundaries and I see no way of rectifying the problem, I can quietly withdraw from that situation without being critical of that other person. I also concluded that I am not a mind reader (imagine that) and that nothing good can come from a mixture of my faulty thinking and their faulty thinking. I need only to be understanding and caring. It is not necessary that they reciprocate. I am no longer threatened by what other people think or say about me. That's in the hands of something much greater than me. The People that "know me well", know me well, and that's more than enough for me.

I could go on and on with these examples of how I've addressed each one of my past problems with my thinking when it involves others who have problems as well as I have. I will accept any idea that is consistent with acceptance and forgiveness, and as a result, my head no longer spins. I can truly say that I experience *peace of mind and a quiet heart* almost without limits and, as always, I wish the same for *Those Other People*