

# Trapped in an Environmental Graveyard

They Have No One to Talk to

By Rick R.

When I recall my state of mind before I entered the AA program and got sober, I can understand how difficult it must be for others who are less fortunate than myself, who are conditioned to repeat behaviors in their lives that lead to, loss of family, jobs, friends, freedom and, sometimes, life itself. I came from a family of ten children and seven of the ten siblings turned out to be heavy drinkers and approximately 4 out of 5 of my extended family did the same. Of the seven siblings that had the drinking problems, only my sister and I got sober in AA and we both have stayed that way for over 50 years. Two of my siblings were dead in their early 50s, one from cancer and one by suicide. I've also had a nephew and a niece commit suicide, one by hanging and one by gunshot to the head and I could do nothing to prevent any of these things from happening, mainly, due to the mindset that I'm so familiar with. They were in an environment where, if they admitted that they had a drinking problem, they would be emasculated and ostracized, most likely, because to do so would be outing the others that were as bad off as he was and couldn't seem to extract himself from that group of closely protective alcoholics. They have no one to talk to and they keep it locked up inside as the group circles the wagons. They ended up taking the easy way out, one at the age of 37, and two at the age of 51. I had a nephew who went to prison on drug charges and spent four years behind bars. After he was released, he came home and stayed with his dad and mom. (My sister) One day while talking on the phone to my sister, I asked how Bobby was doing. She said that he was doing well, that he does not do drugs anymore. Several months later, at a family get-together, the first thing I notices was Bobby sitting there with a beer in his hand. I did not say a thing about it then but on my home, I said to my wife, Bobby's probably going back prison. Four months later, he was back in prison. It is almost that predictable. When you take that first drink, you give up your choice about the second or the 4th fifth. Bobby also died in his early 50's as the result of alcohol related physical symptoms. From this side of the alcoholism/addiction issue it is tragic to watch the denial, in some people, that rules their lives to the degree that they would rather die than risk trusting a different approach to life which is free for the taking. Everything we do in our lives is a product of our thinking, and we are conditioned, by our environment, as we grow through our younger years and some of us are trapped in an environment that leads to tragic endings.

I wish there were a simple way to supplant this in the minds of those troubled individuals that they, themselves, are not running their own lives. They are up against the disease of alcoholism and they are going to lose that fight. Being one of those that became desperate enough to step across that chasm that blocks us from developing a way of life that is unbelievably happy and peaceful, I feel fortunate indeed. For, me it happened after waking up one morning from a black-out with a nasty hangover, and I knew that it was over, I called AA. and from that moment till now, I have not wanted a drink. You can call it a spiritual awakening or experience if you like, but I prefer to call it a profound **Change of Perception**. I have been dedicated to putting to good use, the only life, as I know it, that I will ever live. I do not want to waste one minute of it.