

Words, as I Understand Them

A Practical Application That Works for Me

By Rick R.

As a practicing alcoholic, the last thing on my mind was the idea of going to Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) and getting their opinion as to how I should live my life. Just getting by on my own was satisfactory for me and escaping via the bottle was a temporary fix that seemed to relieve me of the need to face my issues. I was free to rationalize my actions in a very crafty way. (So, I thought) I clung to that fantasy right up to the end when I hit the wall of reality and desperation set in. Something told me to call Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) and for the first time in my life, I was listening, and I have been listening ever since. Before entering the A.A. program, I had no plan for living but I tried to act like I did. I came in with my ears wide open and started the relearning process. The first word that hit me in the face was the word "God". I was like the ones in step two of The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12&12) "that have tried faith and found it wanting". I liked the concept of a "Higher Power" because it gave me the option to take my time getting comfortable with a God of my own understanding that was acceptable with respect to the A. A. Program and it has served me well. I often use the word God to symbolize my understanding of my higher power. The word "Faith" is often thought to be a synonym for religion, and it may be for some, and I respect them and their path to enlightenment but, for me, the word faith came to mean "trust" and "reliance" and there was no fear of being drawn into some form of hidden agenda. I believe that I have as much faith as anyone that I know and in Step Two (12&12) it reads: "Whether agnostic, atheist, or former believers we can stand together on this step". (I hope I don't get kicked out. LOL) Being "Sober" to me Means "Soundness of mind," not unlike Sanity. I can accept that version and the longer I abstained from alcohol and give due diligence to the A.A. program the more soundness of mind I experience. The word "Love" has taken on a new meaning for me as I've explored the objectives of the program. They say something about having problems with People, Places, and Things. I personally have had very little trouble accepting Places and Things, but 90% of my difficulties came with accepting "Those Other People." The solution to that problem for me came as I was reading a book titled "The Road Less Traveled", By Scott Peck. In the chapter on Love, he describes love as an action and not as that feeling we get when we are infatuated by another person. He describes it as "Caring for and Nurturing another person's soul" and not that version that you see on the big screen. When I stopped judging other people and accepting them, just as they are, I started to have compassion and empathy and I wish the best for them. I can Care about and nurture all people even if they don't love me back. I want the best for every human being I know, and I never want to become a problem for them. To me, the program of Alcoholics Anonymous is a Spiritual program as it deals with our thinking, our fears, our motives, our faith, and many of the intangible mental issues as we travel the road of happy destiny. I am not in conflict with anyone's approach with regards to the words that I've mentioned for they are just my way of putting them into concepts that I can understand and employ, and I hope they help Someone.