

## FROM HEAD TO HEART

I have always struggled with feelings of inadequacy - I always had an ideal of who and what I was suppose to be and the sad fact was that I never came close to reconciling my inner and outer worlds. I fell short in thought, word, and deed. So I gave up trying and settled deeper into the bottle. As my disease took a greater hold and my life became a living hell, I reached out for some form of relief, namely AA and the Twelve Steps. The fog began to clear. I began to see the light at the end of a very long alcohol sodden tunnel. A fierce determination to be somebody, to be something, returned. My inner critic that I had locked up had sprung loose and began to wreak havoc. By then I had done a 4th and 5th Step and I saw how I fell short in all areas in my life. My selfishness was blatant and I was ruled by fear. I understood that it wasn't everyone else's fault; there was a part I played. I knew I didn't want to live like that anymore; I didn't want the consequences! I didn't want to drink so I said the Seventh Step prayer and moved on to my amends.

Life went on and I was wondering why I wasn't enjoying as much relief as the Big Book promised - I tried to live what I thought was a good life - I tried to behave kindly, (kill 'em with kindness) I faked it 'till I could make it every day. Something was missing. I still thought the same, I had this parallel thought process; on one hand I had the selfish, the fearful, resentful, and judgmental fighting with the patient, loving, tolerant thoughts, but that was as far as it went. I was still in so much pain. Torn between what I wanted and what I thought God wanted. My inner critic was kicking my butt. I had so many rules, standards, judgments and fears. I didn't outgrow fear. I converted it into a prison of politeness, superiority and judgment. While, deep down inside, I still felt inadequate, afraid and lonely.

The question is, "how did all of this change?" The fact that I am writing this proves that although I was closer to drinking that I had ever been, I didn't. By the grace and love of infinite God I sit here sober, happy and free. After four years of inner torture in recovery I am enjoying all of the promises of our book, and have been for a while. It started with one sentence in the Big Book; it changed my whole perception of the Steps. Recovery took on a whole new meaning. That fateful sentence can be found in WE AGNOSTICS:

Pp53:2 - *"When we became alcoholics, crushed by a self-imposed crisis we could not postpone or evade, we had to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or else He is nothing. God either is, or He isn't. What was our choice to be?"* I always took that to mean God was every thing - you know the trees, rocks, you, and me. One day I was listening in a meeting and it occurred to me that God has to be everything to me - He has to be involved in everything I do. My sponsor always says, "Get God involved, invite Him in". And I did. When I thought I couldn't handle something, I would say out loud, "Okay God, get involved " and things would be okay until next time. But I never offered ALL of me to ALL of God. I just offered what I couldn't do. What didn't occur to me was that I couldn't do anything relying on my own power (remember the miserable results?). My relationships with myself, God, you, everything, had to be totally in His care because they weren't mine anyway, they were His. HE IS EVERYTHING! So with this lightning bolt up my butt, I looked at the book again.

While reading "How It Works" with a protégé I had an epiphany, I saw a paragraph in a way I had never seen it before:

Pp62:2 - *"So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so. Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid. Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help."*

Then it occurred to me that I had been trying to moralize or philosophize myself into unselfishness. As I thought about it, I remembered that there were other places in the book that echoed such sentiments. My book just opened to them:

Pp66:4 - *"We saw that these resentments must be mastered, but how? We could not wish them away any more than alcohol."*

I never thought that I was just as powerless over resentment or self as I was over booze. I always just looked at it as a matter of character defects. And that if I knew what they were, I could work on them, with God's help of course. I saw that I was not in control of my emotional nature - that was God's job. I was under qualified. Next I turned to:

Pp44:4 and 45:0 - *"If a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome alcoholism, many of us would have recovered long ago. But we found that such codes and philosophies did not save us, no matter how much we tried. We could wish to be moral, we could wish to be philosophically comforted, in fact, we could will these things with all our might, but the needed power wasn't there. Our human resources, as marshaled by the will, were not sufficient; they failed utterly. Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power?"*

With all of these things running around my mind, I asked myself what they meant. My answer was rather profound to me. This may be something you guys have already grasped but to me it was news. I had always known it in my head but never integrated it as part of my soul. At that moment it became part of me. I knew that I couldn't control any relationship in my life; I was just borrowing God's love in these things. His loving hands and the invisible threads of His grace hold my life together. My life had been shot through with the evil and corroding thread of fear, which is now equally balanced with God's loving mesh. With that, I was able to go beyond human power, to grab a hold of something that truly allowed me to see myself as I am. After having finished an intense (long form) inventory I took my quiet hour, while reflecting on the first 5 steps and what I just learned, I got the idea of applying all of this to Step Seven. So instead of just saying the prayer, I thought about what I was asking for. I was asking God to have all of me, not just my character, my soul, my fate, but ALL that I am - a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a friend, an A.A., a human being, all of these things. To allow Him to guide and direct me, to truly be His agent, to offer all that I may be, along with everything that I once was, to a God who was with me every step of the way. So I made a list from my 4th Step of all the places that I had utterly failed under my own power (where I brought confusion) and asked Him to have it ALL. I placed this list in to my God box and knelt down to say the prayer with a deeper understanding of what I was doing. I was asking God to live in and through me, and for the first time I felt what I said. The results are apparent - I don't talk at meetings to sound good, I ask God to speak if I open my mouth, I don't give crap to protégés because I trust God to guide them as He has me, I don't try to manipulate to get what I think I need. Furthermore, I have found the grace to transcend years of abuse and fear in order to trust and love the members of the opposite sex without guile or fear. To communicate with fellow children of our infinite God on a level that I couldn't have dreamed of (I no longer fear being found out). Today I truly see myself and everyone else as a child of God. So for me, that change was pretty profound. I hope that this little story may help someone else to bridge the gap between his or her inner and outer world.

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