



▲ Love, Empathy & Compassion

No Criticism or Character Assassination, *By Rick R.*

Hanging on to resentments and criticizing the behavior of others is often a noticeable characteristic of some members of the program that never find the serenity and peace that is mentioned in the promises. For some people it seems impossible to let their guard down. I think that most of us can understand this, simply because we have all had to face this issue and deal with it as we went through the Twelve Step process.

One of the things that I learned

when I was faced with this matter was that I had a self-esteem issue and I overcorrected, by pointing the faults of others, to somehow make myself seem normal. This never worked for me as I could not fool my conscience. Things only got worse.

I still worked through the steps and did what I could at the time. No one gets it perfect the first time, but we can make a second effort at it when we have established a record of living by principles.

Family Bible Promise

September 1930



Bill W. wrote his fourth (and last) promise in the family Bible to quit drinking.

Several years later, on December 11, 1934, Bill took his last drink of alcohol.

And, in 1935, Alcoholics Anonymous was founded.



"I have hope for tomorrow!"

-Anonymous

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Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are a *training ground* for how we treat others and if we cannot accept the people there, it is a cinch we will not do it outside of the rooms.

Everyone that comes to A.A. brings with them, their own assortment of mental, emotional, spiritual, and material problems, and none of us are without these concerns. If we did not have them, we would not need this program. We all feel vulnerable and establish our own firewalls, with the help of our ego's, to protect ourselves from our perception of what those other people are doing, saying, and thinking.

We each might establish hard and fast protective reactions, mentally and verbally to protect our own turf. With so many different personalities brought together in one group, it is extremely hard to let down our guards. We all feel justified when pointing out the faults of others. This is what the alcoholic personality does.

With the understanding that most forms of criticism and character assassination stem from low self esteem, it occurred to me that I was just as guilty of the very things that I was accusing them of. I likened it to two old men in a convalescent home hitting each other with their canes because one was not walking fast enough for the other.

I had to step up to the plate and become strong enough to look deeper into their motives and understand what caused them to behave the way they did, and not be threatened by their outside behavior.

I cannot express in words the mental freedom that this principle has produced in me. When I see someone acting out, my first thought is not judgmental in nature but of empathy and compassion. My next thought is "what I can do to help him or her."

In time, I have come to terms with all the people that I interact with on a day-to-day basis and I conflict with no one. To me, they are all like kids just learning how to do life. They all have problems, and I am not going to be one of their problems.

I need to be strong enough to replace words like resentment, judgment, and criticism with empathy, understanding and compassion. Today I have no adversaries that I can think of, and peace of mind is the natural result of this approach.

I find no exceptions to this principle, and I cannot be selective about who I apply it to. Everyone gets amnesty in my book. All those mental gymnastics about "those other people" are a distant memory and I cannot think of a single time that practicing this principle did not serve me well. The only one that is sorry for this profound and life changing transition is my ego, but about that; who am I to criticize?

▲ Cheating a Little

Central Bulletin, September 1955

"There's nothing I hate more than a cheat," was the indignant observation of a caller the other day as he described the actions of one of his latest 'babies.' "What irritates me most, I guess, is that he's treating me like his wife and family, and has the conceited notion that he's outwitting me! ME, once one of the most expert in double-crossing my wife, my family, my boss and all my friends who foolishly trusted me-before AA."

How often we hear this complaint. How often we have voiced the same disgust and anger!

But let's first examine ourselves before we judge everyone else. Are we perfect? Are we absolutely honest and completely dependable? Unless we are, we must learn

to exercise more patience with the people who offend us than we do. A wise man once stated that the qualities we criticize most in other people are those we are often times guilty ourselves.

For example, let's take the fault people object to the most - the breaking of faith. Our entire society is based on faith. Business in general could collapse without faith in the honesty of people. Only a small percentage of persons, fortunately, try to outwit them and invariably are caught and punished.

Accordingly, many whose "track-record" is poor at home or at work, keep their promises to the banks and the merchants only because of fear of the punishment they might suffer.

What causes people to break faith with those close to them who are zealous in maintaining excellent credit (faith) in business relations? Is it conceit? Does the offender think he knows more than the person he offends and fears his decision to do what he wants to do might be questioned?

This fault often starts with just a little fabrication to cover a bit of carelessness. How easy it would be to swal-

low pride and admit the fault! But, cheating "just a little," he gets by with his breach of faith. It was so easy, without being conscious of it, he begins to lose respect for the person he fooled and, inevitably begins to develop a pattern. Getting by with little ones, he tries bigger ones until his luck runs out, and faith is destroyed.

Like the extravagant youngster who dipped into his father's box of rubber bands. The kid had no sense of value, so he stretched and stretched each band until it broke. So does the breaker of faith stretch and snap the trust of those near and dear to him.

We in AA know that pattern. The stories we manufactured, the bluffs we tried, the lies we told! The more we drank the more fantastic our tales were, and in our blurry condition it was impossible to see the hurt look of broken faith in the eyes of the people who loved us.

Just as inevitably as night follows day, unless we elevate our standards and are convinced that we can't cheat even a little, we won't find that serenity which seems so elusive to us and yet is possessed by seemingly so many in our ken.

It's a real challenge to all of us.

▲ Rule 62



▲ A Quote

FROM MY SPONSOR

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September 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 - 3 rd Annual Dice Run - Harvest of Hope
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16 Punderson Park 110 th Conference	17
18	19	20	21	22	23 68 th Annual Tri-State Assembly	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

For details or to add an event, call us at (216) 241-7387 or go online aacle.org/events. Deadline is the 15th of each month for next issue.