

SELF ACCEPTANCE

Last night I chaired the "beginners discussion" in my home group. "Just for Today" was the topic I had chosen, a topic I needed help on. Our meeting format begins with the chairperson asking if anyone felt like using today or has a topic they want to discuss. Tonight I was all set to bring up my topic, but first asked the customary question as a point of order. Wouldn't you know it? Someone had a topic they wished to discuss. I was amazed because this person rarely makes even a one line comment at meetings. The topic was self-acceptance. This person had been writing a fourth step inventory, using our Fourth Step Guide, came to self acceptance and wanted to know what it was. I am so grateful that I was at that meeting, discussing self acceptance, a problem I have been having lately in my recovery.

Before coming to N.A. I spent my whole life rejecting myself. I hated myself and tried every way I could to become someone different. I wanted to be anyone but me. Unable to accept myself, I tried to gain the acceptance of others. I wanted other people to give me the love and acceptance I could not give myself. I was a doormat, just

waiting to be walked on. I would do anything for anyone, just to gain their acceptance and approval, and then I would resent those who didn't respond the way I wanted them to. My love and friendship was always conditional. I would give myself fully if you behaved the way I felt you should.

Because I could not accept myself, I expected others to reject me also. I would not allow anyone close enough to know me for fear that if they really knew me that they would hate me too. To guard against intimacy, I would reject others before they had a chance to reject me.

Today the first step in accepting myself is honesty. I spent so many years hiding my feelings or denying their existence. To get honest with my feelings I must first recognize them for what they are. I have learned to do three things in order to change anything about myself. I must see my actions for what they are, accept myself as I am, and attempt to behave differently.

My defects are part of me and will only be removed when I practice living without expressing them. My assets are gifts of my Higher Power

and as I learn to live them fully my life improves. I often slide into the melodrama of wishing I could be what I think I should be. Self pity and pride begin to rule me and only renewed faith in my Higher Power brings me hope to change.

Self acceptance allows me to feel O.K. It permits balance in my recovery. I no longer need to be what I feel others want me to be. I am free to gratefully emphasize my assets and humbly move away from my defects, becoming the best me possible. Accepting me as I am means it's ok that I'm not perfect. I can improve. The love, acceptance, and tolerance of the N.A. fellowship helps me to keep on trying, the N.A. ways.

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