

RESENTMENT  
Thursday  
March 7, 2013

There are a number of steps in the 12-Step program that can serve the non-addict seeking to rehabilitate himself just as well as the addict. For example, the fourth step is all about performing a "searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." The level of honesty and dedication required to properly complete this step ensure that it's one of the most difficult, if not the most difficult. At the same time however, as you continue to make progress, you begin to understand just how deeply your actions have impacted those around you, and with that newfound understanding comes a strengthening resolve in the level of your determination to change the person you used to be.

The Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) book taught me that "[r]esentment is the 'number one' offender." That "[i]t destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have not been only mentally and physically ill, we have also been spiritually sick." The AA book goes on to instruct us that "[w]hen the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically..." and we were asked to list our resentments on paper. As I struggled to complete this step, I began to realize that the largest portion of my resentment wasn't towards others who'd wronged me, but was instead directed internally, towards myself, for how I'd reacted, or failed to react, towards these people.

All of a sudden, things became crystal clear. For as long as I could remember, things would be going great, and then, for no reason whatsoever, I'd self-destruct. It was like I wouldn't allow myself to be happy. If I was in a relationship, I'd start acting in a way that would cause them to want to leave, as if they were somehow at fault, and not me. The same thing went with employment or anything else good in my life. The better it was going, the more intent I seemed on creating a scenario in which it eventually destructed, either because people got tired of me and left, or because they didn't and I finally blew up in a blaze of glory.

Prior to beginning the fourth step, not only did I not realize that I secretly resented myself, I also didn't realize how deep this resentment went, or how many reasons I had for doing so. The further I progressed with this step though, the easier it became to look at myself in the mirror, to sleep at night, and even to stop the cycle of self-destruction. Strangely enough, despite my current incarceration, I'm happier than I've ever been, because I've finally started to deal with the underlying issues causing my self-hatred. I'm glad I embarked on this journey, and I'm truly looking forward to introducing people to the person I've become.