

Hello, my name is Billy and I am an alcoholic and "drug addict", for those of you who still don't believe our Higher Powers have a sense of humor – Well, here I stand.

It wasn't too long ago I stood up, right over there and just blasted AA, the people, the program and anything y'all had to offer. I did this in a class with AA members sitting all around me. Oh the things I said.

Each person there that day let me feel the way I felt, say what I had to say and we got on with our class. I mean why wouldn't they. Well I sure showed them, right Woody, Jag?

Honestly, they saw someone who was hurting, pissed off and scared as hell. I had a great resentment toward AA, carried over from the free world. I started going to a group in Plano, called the Ole Timer's Group. One day I was called upon to share, just as soon as I said my problem was heroin, I could handle booze, I was shown my chair. Again, I showed them, that night I got drunk. But of course, it was all their faults.

One day, I had just had it, had with God, My family and yes myself. In tears I cried out. If you really do exist this has to stop right now. After I stopped crying and feeling sorry for myself, a clear path opened up right before me. For a couple of days pride would not let me take that first step.

However, when all those feelings started crowding back in, I ran like hell as soon as those doors were rolled, straight to the Major's office I went. I asked this man for one chance at getting to West Building so I could find a sponsor and start to stop hurting.

Major Crowley looked at me then his computer screen and said, "McKenzie, you've got one chance with me, don't mess it up." When I got my move slip, I looked down and saw "B-Line", next came a spoonful of crow, but I was so relieved to be eating it, I didn't care. I knew there was only one person on b-Line who wouldn't put up with my crap, so I ran to him and asked if I could speak with him. I couldn't read his face, but when he came out and I asked him to be my sponsor, I knew right then this is exactly where I needed to be.

Since he was one of the ones who witnessed my tirade in the church that day, he asked if I'd be willing to attend one meeting a month. He knew exactly what he was doing. I don't believe, I think, I've missed a total of 5 in the two plus years coming to the Pathfinders.

Yet about 13 months into this, there was still a very bitter resentment that had been blasting me, I guess since 10th grade I started to resign to it. One afternoon at the close of a meeting one of our volunteers asked me straight out, what was wrong. So I shared what I was feeling and I didn't get the pass I was looking for. Instead, she looked me in the eye and said "Billy

God don't make junk". Being a little confused she asked me to read Nov. 11th in my Daily Reflections. This was June, and she even said she didn't usually skip ahead, but I needed to read it. So when I got back to my cell I turned to Nov. 11th and its title "Self-Acceptance", when I first entered the home of the Pathfinders group I believed many terrible things about myself. I was in such a struggle to let go of my old beliefs I was dying all over again. Like always, I wanted to quit. Then I read, "We know that God lovingly watches over us. We know that when we turn to him, all will be well with us, here and hereafter." 12 & 12 pg. 105. There was not one wrong word there. I cried out to God to stop the pain, he got me to West Building, a sponsor, this beautiful program, the only thing holding me back was me. And that day he put Belinda in my life, he was lovingly watching over me. I have had much work to do, but thanks to the Pathfinder's I now accept myself. I love myself now and I quit punishing myself, well except for the occasional pity party I throw.

I stopped being afraid of myself and stand up for what I believe in. It's kinda like what the basic text says in the Eighth Step "We can look the world in the eye with neither aggressiveness nor fear".

So every time I allow myself to feel unwelcome, I hold tighter to what our third traditions says "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking", this allows me to be who I am, I no longer have to lie to gain acceptance.

Knowing this has changed a great deal of my life. I've been able to draw from my passions, instead of running from my fear and desperation. It's brought me back from the brink of death and I've begun to see growth. I'm no longer motivated by pain.

No folks, last year at this time when I should have been doing this, I was in Lockup, even though I was cleared, the fallout from that experience showed me no matter what happens I don't have to drink, I was able to trust in my sponsor ever more. I became willing to challenge my assumptions about myself and started having faith in the process.

I get the feeling looking around here today that everything is going to be alright "As long as I stay atop this simple Truth". I have now begun to move toward what I want rather than just away from what I fear. It has become less of a struggle to become the man I knew I was and wanted to be. It's been harder than I want, It looks as though It's going to take longer than I expected, It's an ongoing process right? Thanks to each one of you, this beautiful group. I have started to become the man I knew I always was!

Thank you