

The Gift

by Harry Zirkelbach 12-20-2010

Hi, I am Bill, and I am an alcoholic.

I was given the gift of sobriety which to me was of incredible value. I knew it then, have been asked to tell you this.

Sometime before WW II I became an alcoholic. Had good jobs, drank, hung on, Lost them. Then inducted into the United States Army. There I was at home Many G.I.s drank to excess, where buddies covered for one another.

Nothing good came of those battles. I did escape injury in the war years in Europe, was discharged, returned to Colorado, still an unemployable alcoholic.

I had been in newspapers, radio before the war. A trio of fiends from that community introduced me to Alcoholics Anonymous in 1947, kept me attending, became my sponsors, and arranged employment interviews. And finally a job with a fine title, Director of Traffic Safety for Colorado. I did what was easy for me, writing, gathering Clubs and Community Leaders, to jointly encourage Coloradans to drive sensibly.

I continued this employment when Governor's changed. Then moved into the same work in California, as western Regional Director. A few years later I became President Kennedy's National Traffic Safety Director.

Why this story? Singly, because of those who insisted that I consider Alcoholics Anonymous. And now, give thanks for those remarkable friendships.

Not just then, but eternally.

Those friends made all the difference to my enjoyable life.

I attended weekly AA meeting in every city I called home. And believe there were moments where my example mirrored that of those three friends who prodded me those many years ago.

Imagine, every morning, rising sober, reminding the individual in the mirror, "I am an alcoholic" then avoiding alcohol, just for today, and repeating this over and over, 50 years.

I need to tell this. It is actually a repeat of the Thank You I was pleased to give at that final separate farewells for those three men of 1947.
I own them this thanks, every day of my life, and beyond.

There is an obscene secret to this tale. I have been dead twenty years.

Just had to tell one more group what a difference a friend can make, when reminding another that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity, another keystone of that wonderful coffee Army, Alcoholics Anonymous.