

A Disease of Perception

January 7

A point driven home for many in recovery is how different we are from “normal” people. We have what is known as a *disease of perception*, one based on contradictions and false assumptions. Those of us not addicted, consider addiction nothing more than weakness, something curable with a little self-control. This couldn’t be further from the truth.

Alcoholism is an all-encompassing *disease*, progressive and deadly. Alcoholism affects its victims spiritually, emotionally, and physically. In the throes of our disease, we are spiritually bankrupt, and have a psychological illness: a thinking-obsession combined with a physical compulsion to drink. We are sure that one drink is too many and a hundred is never enough.

Most of us thought we never fit in anywhere. We perceived ourselves as different long before we picked up that first drink. On the outside, we looked normal. Although respected and accepted by many, we saw ourselves as the odd-man-out. We were never comfortable in our own skins, even as we boasted an exaggerated ego that masked a deep lack of confidence and self-esteem.

We drank to escape, but our disease of perception, while under the influence, was accentuated tenfold.

The addiction cycle is predictable. First comes delusional thinking, followed by a change in personality and accompanied by a soul-sickness. Alcohol is seen as the solution—our confidante, lover, and friend. Stinking-thinking insists we deserve a drink, that we are normal and can stop at will, which is the greatest delusion of all. “If only they would just quit,” people say.

If only.

If arresting our disease were as simple as keeping the plug in the jug, there wouldn’t be any alcoholism!

Under the light of truth, we accept the effects and repercussions of our distorted perceptions, and we quit drinking, if just for today.

TODAY'S MEDITATION

Today, as I come to grips with the truth about my disease, I will work to change my attitude, beliefs, and strengthen my outlook.

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"...Even nature becomes your enemy and your perceptions and interpretations are governed by fear. The mental disease that we call paranoia is only a slightly more acute form of this normal but dysfunctional state of consciousness...—Eckhart Tolle