

Honesty begins with staying true to myself

Honesty, for me, has to begin with being true to myself, my perceptions, my beliefs, my values, and my reality.

Growing up in an alcoholic home, we would experience night rages followed by sunlight streaming in the kitchen window with breakfast cooking. I would wake up with the awful taste of the night before in my mouth—the fear, the anger, the hurt—and could not walk into that kitchen filled with warmth and pretense.

Somehow not addressing what had happened prevented me from being able to believe in the calm morning. I was torn between what I believed had happened, and the play that was performed before me. I bolted out the door, unwilling to join in the acting.

As much as I rebelled against the divergent extremes, I came to not trust what I saw or perceived—easily trading my reality for someone else's take on it. I had no way of knowing that I was dealing with alcoholism—with its thick, heavy blanket of denial.

It has been a long journey to restore my own personal integrity. I still want to excuse someone else's behavior, to wrap myself up in what I've come to see as "willful ignorance"—the ability to know something, yet suspend that knowledge rather than feel the deep feelings that knowing might invoke.

Today I can more easily hold on to my own personal truths. I am not swayed as easily by someone else's take on things. When someone else tells me the sky is green, and I see a brilliant blue, I can hold on to what I see and allow them to have their own choice of color; both can be real. I cannot stay true to myself if I give up my brilliant blue.

I am responsible for my own honesty before God, myself, and others. As I work these Steps of recovery, I am asked to be kind and tolerant of others. I do not have to force my honesty on anyone.

I can only trust God to reveal to me what I need to see and do to live an authentic life. I am no longer responsible for what others say or do.

By Marsha C., Oklahoma

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