

## THE INVISIBLE BOAT AND THE ALCOHOLIC

I once heard someone speak about an invisible boat. It was a very interesting story and I will share it with you. Now, I don't remember it all, but it went something like this.

There was a drunk who was walking down a dock in a harbor somewhere. He was a mess but he wanted to get sober. Like all drunks he didn't really know just what sober was, he thought it was just not drinking, but he wanted to stop drinking - at least for awhile.

He'd heard about this place where he could become sober and life could be all his heart might desire. That place was on an island across a sea. He tried and tried to book passage on all the boats at the dock but none knew where it was and they could not take him there. All the money that he had could not get him to this mythical island that he'd heard about. In fact, most of the time he was laughed at when he spoke about it.

All of a sudden he heard a voice and the voice was speaking to him. He looked down and there were several people and they looked like they were sitting in an invisible boat. The voice invited him to join them and they would all row to the island together. They said they knew how to get that island. He looked at these people and they all looked weird. There was a couple of people who looked like they had it all together. He liked the looks of those two, but the others looked strange.

They invited him again to join them, but he said, "There's no boat, how are you sitting there?" They said the boat is invisible but it's seaworthy. Now, this guy wanted to get to that island very badly, so he gingerly lowered himself into the boat while holding onto the rope ladder for dear life. He was ready to run at the first sign of sinking. He found that there was a boat even though he couldn't see it.

So they handed him an oar and told him to start rowing and off they started together. So he and they headed across the sea. He found that the harder he rowed the higher off the ocean the boat got. When he got tired of rowing the lower into the sea the boat sank. It was the same with the other people in the invisible boat. As long as they all rowed everything went smoothly but when they got tired and stopped rowing the boat started to sink.

Now, remember of course those in the boat searching for that island where everything was perfect, were all alcoholics. So, being alcoholics, just what is that sea that constantly threatens to overwhelm us, when we get tired of rowing, made out of? Just what is overwhelming to most alcoholics? \*There is stuff like: fear, uncertainty, ego, negative ego, shame, guilt, doubt, depression, perfectionism, remorse, anger, loneliness, negative self-image, superiority, and inferiority.

These are the things that I and most alcoholics constantly have to be on guard from. We know that the solution is to work through the 12 steps, to keep going to the meetings that remind us that we are alcoholics, and to keep 'rowing,' to keep carrying this spiritual message to hope to other alcoholics. As long as we do this the boat will stay high in the water and whether we get to that island in this lifetime or not, the journey across that sea of fear, remorse, doubt, and etc, will be very exciting interesting, and rewarding, one day at a time.

I believe the truth of this story for my own sobriety as well as the concept that though it may be free at the beginning, it's not free forever. We have to work for our sobriety in order to keep it.

—Sober Cat, July 2012

*\*As heard from Frank M, IL, in 1997 regarding creating an alcoholic in the test tube of our mind.*