**PATIENCE #1**

We can all work to develop more patience. An important idea here is that developing patience is just that. Developing a skill. We aren't born with it. Think of a hungry infant, shrieking with all its red-faced, rigid-bodied impatient demand for satisfaction.

After all, we can't just sit down at a piano and play it without ever learning to play, and without practicing, practicing, practicing. That practicing includes:

1) Paying attention to when we are not patient.

2) Being kind to ourselves, for not being "perfect".

3) Changing the automatic judgmental critical thoughts and feelings.

Most people who are patience "professionals", recommend that we train ourselves to work with little pains and irritations, so that when the big ones come, we will have developed the patience we need for adversity. Many themselves with experiences of bites and stings, rashes, heat, and cold, rain, waiting in line, driving in traffic — things that may aggravate, but are bearable go along with the interpretation that things are not going our way. Then, the storyline of thoughts appear, "I have never seen such incompetence…how could they ... don't they realize ... did they do it on purpose, or are they just ignorant ... blah, blah, blah", you know how the rants go, we all have them. We can grow beyond them.

**Realistic Expectations in Recovery**

Addiction can cause a great deal of havoc in a person’s life. Most of those who fall into substance abuse will not have a satisfying lifestyle to begin with, and their addiction will just make things a great deal worse. It can take many years before the addict reaches a point in their life, where they become willing to stop the substance abuse, and by this time their life may be a real mess. Giving up the addiction will be a great start, but it is unrealistic to expect that things will be put back right overnight. It can take a few years in recovery before the individual finds the peace and happiness they so desire.

**Dangers of Unrealistic Expectations in Recovery**

Unrealistic expectations for life recovery can be dangerous because:

* If people expect their life to become perfect as soon as they stop drinking they are going to be disappointed.
* When unrealistic expectations fail to be met, the individual may use this as an excuse to relapse back to their addiction.
* In order to build a successful recovery, it is necessary to put in a great deal of effort and time. Those who expect instant results will not be willing to put in enough energy into their recovery.
* Those who expect too much will be easily disheartened. There are good days and bad days in recovery, and people need to be able to tolerate both.
* Unmet expectations can lead to negative thinking and dissatisfaction. Even if the individual manages to stay away from alcohol and drugs, they could still develop dry drunk syndrome.
* When life does not live up to expectations, it can mean that people end up with symptoms of depression.
* It can zap away motivation so that the individual just gives up.

**In short, if we stay in the present it is difficult to be impatient about anything. I like the achievable notion that patience, for me, appears magically when there is a lack of impatience.**