

Discussion Questions
For
Horace

It's a sunny, winter day. The house is a mess with trash all around. Horace is drinking at home, alone, during the day. He's nodded off with the TV on. What types of behavior did you do? Does this seem familiar?

Horace doesn't want to answer the door. He lies, saying he's busy. When the knocking continues, he curses and mutters that he hates people. Do you identify with that type of desire to be left alone to do your drinking? Were you isolated?

Horace opens the door to find his son there. He treats him rudely and tells him it's a never good time for him to come by. Did you behave similarly with your children or friends? Were you treated in this way?

After Horace Jr. tells his dad that he needs to talk to him, Horace asks if the guy waiting in the car is his boyfriend. Horace Jr. tells him a second time he needs to talk to him. Horace asks if he "brought anything?" If not, he must "want something?" Do you see relationships that way, as expecting people to either want something or "have something," most likely drugs or booze?

Horace doesn't trust his son. He asks him if the guy in the car is a cop. Did you think people around you might have it in for you? Did you have paranoia?

Horace says his supply of bourbon is low. We discover later that he's got 4 or so full bottles of bourbon. Did you hide your booze and/or drugs? Did you lie about what you had? Were you worried when you felt your supply was low?

When Horace Jr. says that he's sober, Horace mocks him. How did you respond to people telling you they were clean or sober?

Horace scoffs when Jr. tells him he's sorry. He says "I thought it was important" and turns the TV back on. Did you respond in a similar way to people being sincere and direct?

Jr. brings up a bad memory of the time he stole his father's new Harley and crashed it. He said he did it on purpose because he hated his dad and he's here to apologize. Horace calls him a sonuvabitch and tells him he hated him too. Did you respond to feeling hurt by lashing out and hurting others?

When Jr. apologizes again, Horace asks - "is that it?" But when Jr. says he's going to pay for the bike, it gets Horace's attention. Horace immediately inflates how much he paid for the bike. He doesn't acknowledge what Jr. is doing, or accept it with any grace. Did alcohol affect your attitudes in a similar way?

Jr. is clearly hurt by his father's responses, but he takes a moment and sticks to his purpose. When his father says he'll drink up all the money, Jr. says he has to do it so that he can stay clean.

What do you think he means by that? Can you imagine how it would feel to set things right and to remove the guilt that you carry?

After Jr. leaves, Horace follows him outside and asks if that's his sponsor in the car. Maybe Horace learned that term from a stint of sobriety, or possibly somewhere else, but it shows some familiarity with 12-Step programs. Did you know about AA or NA? Have you been to a program before? What were your attitudes toward the program when you were drinking?

Horace never says thank you, or anything like that. He yells out to ask when Jr. will bring the rest of the money. Can you relate to that selfish behavior?

Horace goes back in and has a few big belts, then pours a tumbler and settles on the couch. Do you imagine this visit affected him in some way? Or do you think he's able to just ignore it and be glad to \$1000 in his pocket?