

# HOW

HONESTY

OPEN-MINDEDNESS

WILLINGNESS

Monthly Publication of the Indian River Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous

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The HOW is published to improve communication between local AA groups and encourage the participation of AA members in service and activities. You can email anniversaries, meeting updates or changes, and announcements for the good of AA as a whole to [aairehow@yahoo.com](mailto:aairehow@yahoo.com)

## **Step 3 MADE A DECISION TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD, AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM.**

### **"Wait a minute! Your solution is God? That sucks!"**

I don't like any type of authority. I rebel against any type of authority. And, God sounds like an authority to me! I'll have nothing to do with that! I don't want some God, or some principle, telling me what to do and what not to do. I want to be independent. Self-reliant. Self-willed. And, above all else, self-seeking. I want to satisfy me.... not satisfy you, or anyone else, especially a God!

God might want me to do some stuff that I don't want to do. He might embarrass me. He might want me to stop doing some of the stuff that I really like to do.... stuff that brings me a lot of pleasure and soothes my pitiful and painful meager existence!

### **"Nope! You just keep this God stuff. I'll just go ahead and die an alcoholic death, thank you!"**

Wait a minute.... did I really say that? Yep. I said that. Uh-oh. Here comes a ton more of that painful crap in my life. And, the booze just isn't fixing it. Crap!!! That hurts like hell!!!!

God? Where are you, God? I can't see you! Can you help me?

Will you help me... even if I don't change? Will you help me if I don't do what you want me to do? Will you help me if I keep doing what you don't want me to do?

Come on God... I'm a real nice guy... I just can't seem to make myself believe in you, because if I believe in you it scares the holy-crap out of me!!!! You might be mean to me!!! Sucks. Doesn't it?

That's where my lifesaver came to the rescue. It was my A.A. sponsor. He told me that perhaps the reason I had a problem with God was that I was all screwed up in my thoughts and ideas about what God is and what God does and doesn't do.

He said, "Why don't you take a sheet of paper and write down what your idea of the perfect God would be like?"

I said, "Couldn't that be a little sacrilegious or something?"

He said, "Maybe. But it might also be sacrilegious to have the old thoughts about God that you already have. What do you have to lose?"

Grudgingly, I agreed to do it. It took me a while to do the writing, and over the years my conception of God has changed from what it was that I wrote down then. But here were the basics that I started with.

**1. God would be a good God. He wouldn't do anything bad or mean to me or anyone else.**

**2. God would help me.**

**3. God would not ask me to do anything that wasn't good for me.**

That's about all that I could come up with.

When I met up with my A.A. Sponsor to go over what I had written down we discussed my conception of the perfect God.

He said, "Hmmmm. That's interesting. Sounds kind of like the same God that I have. Are you sure you don't know Him?"

I said "Yeah. I don't know Him if He's that way."

He said, "Well why don't you just act as if God were like what you wrote down. Can you do that?"

I said, "No. I don't think so."

He said, "Why not?"

I said, "Because then I might have to change or something and I can't do that. I've tried changing before." He said "I didn't ask you to change." I said, "Yes you did. You said to act as if God were a good God." (Geez, the stuff Sponsors have to put up with!)

He said, "Do you want to die an alcoholic death?" And, I said "No." He said, "Then you're going to have to do something differently."

I said, "I don't believe that God cares about me."

He said, "Do you think A.A. cares about you?"

I said, "Yeah. You guys say you care about me. You keep telling me to come back. And, you haven't thrown me out — yet"

He tried to get me to become willing to turn my will and life over to the care of God as I newly understood Him. But, I just couldn't do that. So, he said, "Do you think you could make a decision to turn your will and your life over to the care of A.A. for a while, and see what happens? If your life gets better, you might keep doing it. And, if your life sucks more than it does now... you can always take back your pain and misery and do it how ever you want to do it."

So, I became willing to become willing to become willing to try it.

The basics of my conception of God are still the same as it was when I wrote the simple things on the paper, God is good, God cares about me, God wants to help me, and God would never do anything mean or bad to me or anyone else.

Today, my life is better than anything that I could have ever imagined or designed for myself. All the things that I had always wanted for my life have become a reality for me.

Today I am happy, I know peace, I feel loved, I love, I know what it's like to be wanted, to feel unique and at the same time to know that I was apart of, rather than separate from.

(Anonymous)

## SERVICE AND THE CENTRAL OFFICE – A LIFE GIVING COMBINATION

It's amazing to this alcoholic how few of all groups registered in Indian River County have representatives attending the Central Office business meeting, held monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, 7pm at the Newport Club Outside Room.

It's amazing because each and every one of us, whether or not we realize it, in many aspects of our individual recovery rely on the Central Office. How many of us, when traveling, end up calling Inter-group or Central Office telephone numbers to find out where there is a meeting? How many of us have called the Central Office for help or for a twelve-step call? How many of us have visited the Central Office to purchase literature, medallions, and birthday cards? I could go on and on. Yet, on the second Thursday of each month many groups are not represented at the Central Office business meeting.

Let's take a look at what the Central Office really is and how it inter-relates with the groups, and thereby the individual recovering alcoholic. Let's see what would happen if the Central Office just wasn't there. Let's look at hypothetical situation, that could just be a glimpse into the future if we don't take care of what we have.

Here goes:

*He was shuffling along, temporarily blinded by the snow that was whipped up by a sudden gust of wind as he turned the corner. Where is that stairway; he knew it was around here someplace.*

*He couldn't remember the last time he felt this cold, this abandoned, this lonely. No more money, his last vestige of self-worth evaporated when he was thrown out of the lowest dive he had ever been in. Brrr, it's cold, he needed a drink, badly. He didn't know if he was shaking from the cold or because he needed that drink. Where is that stairway, he was sure he was in the right place, or at least close to it.*

*Slipping and sliding he stumbled on, looking for the stairway leading to the only place that he remembered would not throw him out. But where is it? He was crying now, he couldn't stop; he wanted to die but didn't know how. Fear will do that to a man or a woman who has lost all hope. There it is, just a few more feet, the stairway. He stumbled forward and lunged for the railing alongside the steps leading down. He hung on for dear life as he traversed the icy steps downward to the place he knew would greet him and let him in. Ahh, there's the door. He grasped the door knob but couldn't turn it. Has he really grown that weak?*

*He tried again, this time with two hands, but he still couldn't turn it. He looked up and saw the faded sign, a circle surrounding a triangle. He knew this was it. Why won't they open the door? He fell to his knees and banged on the door, now crying uncontrollably. He was screaming as loud as he could, "HELP ME, HELP ME, OH GOD, PLEASE HELP ME." He tried to get up but couldn't. The snow kept falling, it looked pure, it looked beautiful, he laid down and was soon covered by a white fluffy blanket.*

*He was cold and not breathing when he was found the next day by a maintenance man coming to work. It had stopped snowing overnight and the sun shone brightly, making for a beautiful day as the ice and snow started to melt.*

*The maintenance man sighed and remembered a day not too long ago when this particular building was used by those AA people. He remembered the newspaper headlines that reported the demise of AA due to non-interest by its members. He remembered reading that the AAs had*

*gotten so comfortable and successful in their individual endeavors that no one was left available to answer the cries for help or to man the telephones or volunteer their time to sit in an office and greet people.*

*He remembered reading about these AAs in the paper: "After all," the article quoted one individual, "I didn't get sober to be taken advantage of." The article went on to say that this AA thing could have lasted forever, except for its members losing the willingness to give back what had been so freely given to them. AA just ceased to exist.*

If anyone reading this is foolish enough to think that it can't happen to us? Think again.

For instance, there are committees at our Indian River Central Office that may have to be terminated due to a lack of interest. Does that sound like we're healthy? You be the judge. It took until February to get someone to serve as secretary. Does this sound healthy?

This is scary stuff folks. It's easy to just sit back and say, "Well, if God wanted it to be, then it would be." To that I say#@\*!. Well, I can't say it in this publication, but I'm sure that those of you who know me get the idea.

As far as this alcoholic is concerned, God doesn't "do" for us, but rather God gives us the ability and the tools to perform His work, and when we don't the results are clear.

Where are the Washingtonians now? Where is the Oxford Group? And where is A.A.? Today we are healthy. Today we flourish--sort of. The truth of the matter is that more than just a handful of Inter-groups/Central Offices have had to shutter their doors. It's up to us to use the God given ability and tools to keep A.A. healthy for the still suffering alcoholic looking for a way out. Don't let him or her find a closed door, don't let him or her die!

Go ahead, prove me wrong, I know there are people out there ready, willing and able to serve on committees and positions for the Central Office, I know there are people out there whose lives would be enriched beyond their wildest dreams while in service to AA.

Be counted, give back, make sure your group has a Central Office Representative who attends the Central Office business meetings, make sure that your group has a GSR, be a "part of" instead of being "apart from." Make sure that AA will be here tomorrow.

At the 1965 International A.A. Conference in Toronto, the "*I AM RESPONSIBLE*" pledge was formally introduced and adopted by Alcoholics Anonymous. This same pledge was renewed at the 2005 International A.A. Conference, also held in Toronto. But, rather than "Pledge" why don't we just "Do"?

**I AM RESPONSIBLE  
IF ANYONE, ANYWHERE REACHES  
OUT FOR HELP, I WANT THE HAND  
OF AA ALWAYS TO BE THERE; AND  
FOR THAT – I AM RESPONSIBLE**

Dutch V.

# OUR THREE LEGACIES

## STEP THREE (Recovery)

**“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him.”**

**PRINCIPLE:** Faith: *firm belief in something for which there is no proof; complete trust*

“Step Three calls for affirmative action, for it is only by action that we can cut away the self-will which has always blocked the entry of God...”

Twelve and Twelve p. 34

## TRADITION THREE (Unity)

**“The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.”**

## CONCEPT THREE (Service)

**To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A. —the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional "Right of Decision."**

THE TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR WORLD SERVICES PAMPHLET

**Step Three** is like opening of a locked door. How shall we let God into our lives? Willingness is the key. Dependence as a means to independence. Dangers of self-sufficiency. Turning our will over to Higher Power. Misuse of willpower. Sustained and personal exertion necessary to conform to God's will.

# UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## BHC Group Schedule

3/5 IRMG	4/2	5/7
3/12 Candlelight	4/9	5/14
3/19 Royal Palm	4/16 South Vero	5/21 South Vero
3/26 Early Risers	4/23 VBMG	5/28 VBMG
	4/30 IRMG	

Today, we would like to announce the continued work and availability of the **CrossTalk Group**, a free telephone call-in meeting for all Alcoholics but designed especially for those AA's who may be homebound or unavailable to get to a conventional meeting.

The **CrossTalk Group** was started in 2015 and is recognized by both GSO and the Loaners International Homers Directory.

**CrossTalk Meetings** will be available Sunday through Thursday at Midnight Eastern (9pm on the West Coast).

To participate in this meeting, please call 712-451-0200 and enter the Participant Code of 979634#.

*Indian River Central Office presents*

*The 39th Annual Birthday Dinner*

*A NEW FREEDOM AND A NEW HAPPINESS*

*Saturday, March 17, 2018*

*6:30pm (Doors open at 5:30)*

*Speaker at 8pm*

*First Presbyterian Church*

*520 Royal Palm Blvd.*

*Vero Beach, FL 32960*

*Tickets \$15—Available at Central Office 772-562-1114*

*Please bring dessert to share*

You don't have to  
**have it all  
figured out to**  
move forward

# MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

## A NEW DAY

Dennis M.	1 year
Ken G.	4 years
Dee H.	5 years
Eddie R.	23 years

## INDIAN RIVER MEN'S

Tom P.	32 years
Dave D.	23 years
Bobby S.	9 years
Myron	9 years

## SAFE HARBOR WOMEN'S

Flo G.	42 years
Nancy K.	6 years
Shoshanna	12 years

## CANDLELIGHT

Mike B. (Boz from Feb)	10 years
Ryan S.	1 year

## LUNCH BUNCH

John O.	37 years
Rex P.	35 years
Patrick K.	38 years

## SEBASTIAN FREEDOM

Julia	27 years
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## EARLY RISERS

(From February)

Missy T.	2 years
Paul	4 years
Gordon	5 years
Bill	31 years
(March)	
Sharon	9 years
Beth	29 years

## SEBASTIAN 5:32

Diane K.	24 years
Eddie R.	23 years
Jeff G.	14 years

## MAN TO MAN

Butch S.	20 years
Eddie R.	23 years
Frank M.	34 years
Jason S.	29 years
Jim J.	38 years
Rex P.	35 years
Steve V.	11 years

## EASY DOES IT

Melissa D.	29 years
Megan B.	11 years
Sandy	12 years

## SEBASTIAN STEP SISTERS

Kathy N. (From February)	3 years
Nancy K.	6 years
Michelle M.	1 year
Linda MC	39 years
Julia D.	27 years
Dot C.	40 years
Dee H.	5 years

## ODAAT

Jack A.	1 year
Gary F.	1 year
Michelle M.	1 year
Kevin C.	2 years
William Mc.	5 years
Stephanie R.	5 years
Mary Ann R.	6 years
Rick H.	6 years
Rhett P.	8 years
Marlene M.	18 years
Walter C.	21 years
James K.	23 years
Jim M.	26 years
Wini M.	41 years

## SOUTH VERO

Alan W.	1 year
Bruce P.	3 years
Steve S.	30 years
Tracy W.	2 years

## I AM RESPONSIBLE

(From February)

Stephanie B.	6 years
Joel K.	12 years
Jesse W.	1 year
(March)	
Maria G.	1 year
Meghan V.	1 year
Mai N.	1 year
Leigh Ann Mc.	2 years
Glenn F.	2 years
Rick H.	6 years
Mark T.	11 years
Jim D.	17 years
Lisa D.	20 years
Jill H.	37 years

## VERO BEACH MEN'S

George M.	25 years
Bob G.	22 years
Joe M.	11 years

# SPIRITUAL TOOL KIT

*"There is a solution. Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for its successful consummation. But we saw that it really worked in others, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it.*

*When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the **simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet.**" (Alcoholics Anonymous pg. 25)*

So, what are these spiritual tools? Over the next few issues we will take a look at the various tools that are presented in our literature and how some of our members use those tools in their daily lives.

From one of our members:

When I came into A.A. I was told to follow suggestions. One of the suggestions was to get a list of numbers from people and call them—every day. This was the craziest suggestion I had ever heard of. But it was one of the most important tools in my recovery. You see, when we are out there drinking we become anti-social. The only thing that matters is drinking. We avoided people and became a recluse. We relied on ourselves and our booze. We were "free-thinkers" -- not needing to get advice or help from anyone. We could not allow anything to come between us and our alcoholism. We were not accountable to anything or anybody. The harsh reality was this: I could do what others had done to get and stay sober, or I could do what I wanted to do and go back to the hell that my life was. Page 73 of our book *Alcoholics Anonymous* states **"We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world."** So, I picked up the phone and called at least three people a day. I didn't have to say much. Only that I was checking in. If I had an idea that I thought was good—or bad, I would run it by my sponsor. I made a practice of "telling on myself".

I found out that sharing how I was feeling or what I was thinking with other alcoholics wasn't all that difficult. And I found out that many times, they felt the same way! Picking up the phone and doing what I didn't want to do was one of the best habits I could have formed. By doing this, I became a part of other people's lives. I could no longer hide in the shadows and let alcoholic thinking rule my mind. Four years later, I have a group of friends that I communicate with daily. I look forward to hearing from them and being a part of their lives every day. I suggest you pick up this important "tool" and use it to make your life better. One day at a time!

Rick H.

*"If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it -- then you are ready to take certain steps."*

# Step Prayers and Twelve Principles of AA Bookmarks

## 3rd Step Prayer

God, I offer myself to Thee to build with me & to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy love & Thy way of life.

AA Big Book, p63

## 7th Step Prayer

My Creator, I am now willing that You should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that You now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do Your bidding. Amen

AA Big Book p76

## 11th Step Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace!  
That where there is hatred, I may bring love.  
That where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness.  
That where there is discord, I may bring harmony.  
That where there is error, I may bring truth.  
That where there is doubt, I may bring faith.  
That where there is despair, I may bring hope.  
That where there are shadows, I may bring light.  
That where there is sadness, I may bring joy.  
Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort, than to be comforted.  
To understand, than to be understood.  
To love, than to be loved.  
For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.  
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.  
It is by dying that one awakens to eternal life. Amen

## The 12 Principles Behind The Steps

1. Honesty
2. Hope
3. Faith
4. Courage
5. Integrity
6. Willingness
7. Humility
8. Brotherly love
9. Justice
10. Perseverance
11. Spirituality
12. Service

Feel free to cut out and laminate



## Why does your group need an IRCO Delegate?

The IRCO has no authority of it's own but derives it from the participating groups. The representative that each group elects is the group's voice to IRCO—Your link to those who maintain and operate the IRCO.

### 2017 STEERING COMMITTEE

Chair.....Joseph J.  
Vice-Chair.....Rocky I.  
Treasurer.....John H.  
Secretary.....Tara C.  
Delegate.....Steve S.  
Delegate.....John B.

Corporate Documents.....Vic S.  
Public Information.....Rodney D.  
Unity Committee.....Ray P.  
Nominating Committee.....Marty P.  
After Hours Phone.....Mindy S.  
HOW Editor .....Rick H.  
Inventory Control.....Terri C.  
Literature.....Dutch V.  
Treatment.....Bobby Z/Clyde K.  
Website.....Dutch V.  
Where and When.....Trish H.  
12 Step List Coordinator.....North: Trent L.  
South: Billy VB  
District 6 Liaison.....JoAnn H.

### 2017 STANDING COMMITTEES

Archives.....Glen B.  
Birthday Dinner 2017.....Linda W./Sunshine  
Desk Coordinator.....Marty P.  
Corrections—Women.....Judy W.  
Corrections-Men.....Lane S.

## 12 STEP VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

AREA YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE

NORTH COUNTY \_\_Y\_\_N      SOUTH COUNTY \_\_Y\_\_N

AVAILABILITY \_\_MON—FRI\_\_WEEKENDS \_\_DAYS\_\_EVENINGS

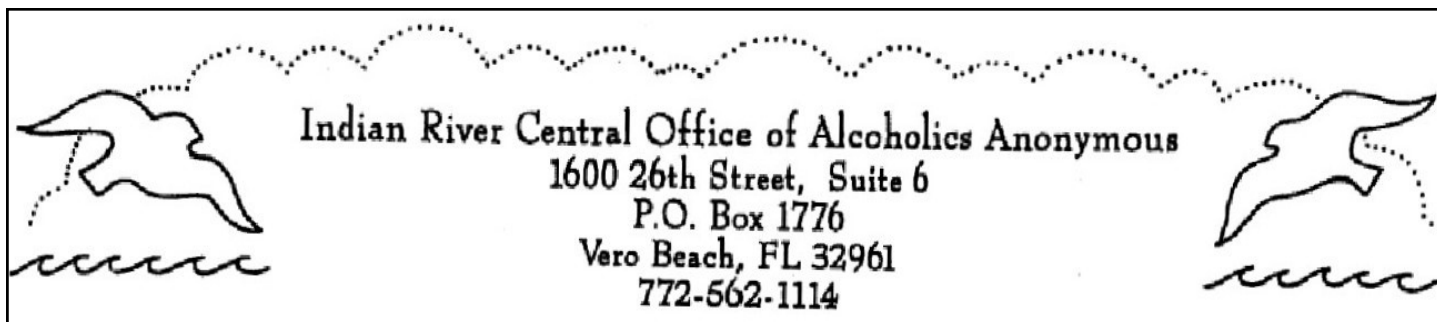
I AM WILLING TO: (PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

TALK TO SOMEONE OVER THE PHONE      TAKE SOMEONE TO DETOX\*

TALK TO SOMEONE AT THEIR HOME\*\*      GIVE RIDES TO AA MEETINGS

MEET SOMEONE AT A MEETING      OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

***\*\*IT IS SUGGESTED THAT A PERSON NOT GO ON A TWELFTH STEP CALL ALONE TO HELP AN ALCOHOLIC WHO IS STILL SUFFERING. ALSO YOU SHOULD NOT DRIVE A WET DRUNK TO A TREATMENT FACILITY (DETOX) WITHOUT HAVING ANOTHER A.A. MEMBER WITH YOU. IF YOU CIRCLED EITHER OF THESE ITEMS, PLEASE BE SURE THAT YOU HAVE ANOTHER MEMBER OF A.A. THAT IS WILLING TO GO ALONG WITH YOU.\*\****



**Indian River Central Office Birthday Plan**

This contribution on my # \_\_\_\_\_ A.A. Birthday is my way of saying *thank you* to Central Office for serving the A.A. community in Indian River County.

Contributor: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\* Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate whether you want your contribution credited to (a) your group\* or (b) anonymously: \_\_\_\_\_

Make check out to **Indian River Central Office of AA**. Drop off at the Central Office or mail to the address listed below.

**1600 26<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 6**

**Vero Beach, FL 32960** **Phone: 772-562-1114**

**Indian River Central Office**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The purpose of the Indian River Central Office (hereafter "IRCO") is to provide AA services within Indian River County, with the primary goal being to carry the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers. It is the mission of the IRCO to keep groups informed about AA activities by newsletter and by maintain a website, answer inquiries for help, provide AA meeting information, maintain an available supply of Conference Approved books and literature, and to provide guidance and support to the IRCO standing committees.

The IRCO shall function within the meaning and intent of the Twelve Traditions and the Guidelines for Intergroup and Central Offices and other guidelines as set forth by the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The IRCO is entirely accountable to the groups it serves and is entirely supported by the voluntary contributions of AA groups within Indian River County.