

HOW

HONESTY

OPEN-MINDEDNESS

WILLINGNESS

Monthly Publication of the Indian River Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous

Volume 37 Issue 1

January 2018



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 airhow@yahoo.com

STEP 1

“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become

I opened the door and walked into the room, the first to arrive. Across from me, displayed on the wall were the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, and as I read that first step, it got my attention. It was the perfect description of my situation and my life at that moment, and just reading the words filled me with a sense of relief.

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.

My drinking had been out of control for several years and my life reached a point where it became not only impossible but frightening. I was twenty-five years old and since about the age of 19, I considered the possibility that I was an alcoholic, but I always dismissed the idea as ridiculous. I was too young or so I thought. Yet, when I read that step, the label “alcoholic” didn’t seem to matter any longer, because the statement at least in my case was true and very applicable. I was powerless over alcohol and my life was certainly unmanageable.

I really didn’t want to stop drinking. I loved it too much and couldn’t imagine life without alcohol. Drinking seemed to soothe the pervading sense of unease that I so often carried with me, but as the years went by, alcohol gradually took over my life and I often found myself burdened by fear, guilt and shame. The problems piling around me were almost impossible to endure, and in an effort to keep others from discovering the truth, I lied to almost everyone, but most damaging of all— I lied to myself.

The most outrageous lie was that I could control my drinking, that it wasn’t a problem, and sadly I convinced myself this was true. I wanted control over alcohol and my life, and I insisted that somehow I could find a way. Repeatedly I tried, and repeatedly I failed, until finally at long last, *I reluctantly surrendered—I gave up and admitted I am powerless over alcohol.*

Step One is simply an admission that I have a problem with alcohol, that I can’t control my drinking. I could no longer avoid the truth—I’m an alcoholic. I don’t know if I can remember the specific moment when I made that admission. It may have been the morning I walked out of that jail cell after my last drunk, or when I called Alcoholics Anonymous and asked for help, or that first AA meeting, or maybe it was a culmination of events that finally brought me to that moment of surrender. Regardless of when, where and how it occurred, the admission of powerlessness was not an act of courage on my part. It was complete and utter capitulation.

Though the hopelessness of surrender can be devastating, it need not be permanently debilitating. Having admitted defeat, I took the advice given at my first meeting to make ninety meetings in ninety days. Attending AA meetings on a regular basis connected me with others who supported me in my desire to stop drinking. The meetings also helped stamp into my consciousness the futility of continuing the fight. In time, I moved beyond simply admitting I had a problem to accepting it, and I think there’s a difference.

The admission of powerlessness was simply my reaction to a losing fight — I simply gave up. Acceptance on the other hand required some thought and action. Over a period of time attending meetings, reading the *Big Book* and *Twelve* by Twelve, and sharing my experience, I took into consideration the surrender terms, and I became convinced that if I were to live and have any kind of life at all, I would need to stop drinking. Sobriety was an offer of peace, and I consented to the very simple condition that I must stay away from the first drink, one day at a time.

The war was now over and I accepted the terms of surrender — complete abstinence.

Having admitted and accepted that I was powerless over alcohol, I was now in a position to acknowledge it. This would require an honest recognition of the facts, divorced from the emotion of the initial admission and the subsequent acceptance of the consequences. At long last, I could be honest with myself about my drinking, and though I agree with those early AA’s who warned that self-knowledge alone won’t keep us sober; the self-honesty I experienced from admitting, accepting and acknowledging that I was powerless over alcohol was essential to my recovery.

That was my experience, but having an experience is one thing, learning from it is something else altogether.

Is it ironic to say that “powerless” is a strong word? Not long ago, I was speaking with a young woman new to the program who was having a difficult time, and she told me that she didn’t like the idea of being powerless over anything. My response was that it’s okay, she doesn’t have to use that word, she can use her own words. In fact, from my perspective she may have already been experiencing Step One. After all, she was at an AA meeting, which I think indicates she must have made an admission that she has a problem, and she took the first step to getting better. Whether or not she uses the language of AA is immaterial. Taking the first step to recovery involves admitting that there’s a problem, and often it may be experienced before we even make it to our first AA meeting. That was certainly the case for me.

This young lady went on to explain she believes that to proclaim powerlessness was akin to giving up all personal responsibility, and she believes in taking personal responsibility for her recovery. I’m glad she feels that sense of personal responsibility because I do as well, and I believe that was exactly my experience. *Step One ultimately empowered me.* It was through admitting I was powerless over alcohol that I could finally do something about it. I once heard it put this way; “the surest way to end a war is to surrender”. That was sure true for me. My battles with alcohol came to an immediate end when I gave up and stopped fighting. I think sometimes it’s okay to give up, to surrender.

When it comes to an unmanageable life, in my case it was obvious. Three DUIs, getting fired from my job, losing my apartment, and the general insanity that surrounded me on a daily basis made it pretty easy to see that my life was a mess. It was in fact unmanageable. However, not everyone has such stark problems facing them when they reach that moment of surrender, yet they still feel their life was out of control. I completely understand because when I drank there was no control of my life. In fact when it came to my life, I wasn’t even bothering to show up. Powerlessness over alcohol and an unmanageable life just went hand in hand.

Today I believe my life is manageable, though I’ve had sponsors who tried to convince me otherwise. Even after many years of sobriety and a happy and fairly successful life, these sponsors looked at the lack of manageability as some sort of permanent condition, that to now claim my life as manageable was somehow not completely taking this step, the only step we must take 100%.

I understand where they were coming from, but I disagree and I think they were needlessly complicating things. I feel that as a result of not drinking twenty-four hours at a time, I regain a manageable life. Of course, I can’t control events, but I can manage how I react to them. I no longer go it alone, and I often rely on help and advice from other people which I think is all part of managing life. For an alcoholic, not drinking is a very big deal. It’s a whole new ball game. In fact it puts us in the game.

This is not to say that Step One was the entire solution. I had some serious emotional and mental problems before my drinking got bad, and certainly the chaotic life of active alcoholism only served to exacerbate those issues. I believe that I needed to change in some very fundamental ways if I were to fully recover, and the self-honesty I acquired in the First Step was absolutely essential, and would become a quality that I would further hone and develop as I proceeded through the remaining eleven steps.

As it turns out, the admission of powerlessness was most empowering indeed.

OUR THREE LEGACIES

STEP ONE (Recovery)

"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol— that our lives had become unmanageable."

PRINCIPLE: Honesty—Truthfulness, sincerity, or frankness. Freedom from deceit or fraud.

"Our admissions of personal powerlessness finally turn out to be firm bedrock upon which happy and purposeful lives may be built."

Twelve and Twelve p. 21

TRADITION ONE (Unity)

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.

"Our individual sobriety depends on the group. The group depends on us. We soon learn that unless we curb our individual desires and ambitions, we can damage the group..."

The Twelve Traditions Illustrated

CONCEPT ONE (Service)

Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

THE TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR WORLD SERVICES PAMPHLET

"A.A.'s Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole"

Twelve and Twelve

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Tuesday Night **I Am Responsible Group** will now be
a ***Big Book Study***

Time: 8pm

Where: Church of Christ, 33rd Ave & Rte 60

Bring your Big Book and a highlighter!

BHC Group Schedule

1/1 IRMG

2/5 IRMG

3/5 IRMG

1/8 Candlelight

2/12 Candlelight

3/12 Candlelight

1/15 Royal Palm

2/19 Royal Palm

3/19 Royal Palm

1/22 Early Risers

2/26 Early Risers

3/26 Early Risers

1/29 VBMG

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

A NEW DAY

Chris N.	2 years
Ray P.	3 years
Tammy B.	5 years
Priscilla G.	13 years
Kevin S.	16 years
Laura Y.	29 years
Tom D.	43 years
Bobby L.	4 years

SOUTH VERO

Chad F.	1 year
Michael P.	1 year
Robert P.	1 year
Jennifer H.	2 years
Barbara D.	4 years
Andrew W.	5 years
Chris W.	6 years
Dottie G.	7 years
Ken Z.	7 years
Scot G.	12 years
Tony B.	41 years

ODAAT

Denny R.	1 year
Raven T.	2 years
Kim K.	3 years
David S.	3 years
Rachel G.	3 years
Tracie A.	5 years
Barbara B.	6 years
Christine G.	6 years
Rick J.	6 years
Mike L.	6 years
Frank M.	7 years
Mike G.	7 years
Jeremiah G.	8 years
Debbie Z.	8 years
John V.	8 years
Debby H.	9 years
Mark G.	10 years
Mary K.	12 years
Tom W.	15 years
Judy D.	20 years
Lee R.	23 years
Louise B.	26 years
Timothy O.	27 years
Karen H.	28 years
Myra G.	29 years
David O.	30 years
Marc T.	33 years
Maureen S.	34 years
David J.	42 years

BAREFOOT BAY GROUP

Emma (December)	2 years
Carol S. (December)	33 years
Sandy A. (December)	35 years
Rich S.	14 years
Donna E.	42 years
Capt. Bob	52 years

LUNCH BUNCH

Ava W.	15 years
Bill W.	24 years
Bob W.	52 years
Priscilla	13 years
Fred	3 years
Judy W.	5 years

CANDLELIGHT

Bethany R.	1 year
Rick J.	6 years
Chris N.	21 years

MAGNOLIA GROUP

Sarah	49 years
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SEBASTIAN FREEDOM

John L.	42 years
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SEBASTIAN 5:32

Trent L.	24 years
Mark	10 years

SEBASTIAN 12 & 12

Vicki S.	29 years
Wally L.	28 years

VERO BEACH GROUP

Susan W.	14 years
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EARLY RISERS

Betsy	4 years
Doug	8 years
Emma	3 years
Seth	30 years
Tracy	5 years

ROYAL PALM GROUP

Ray F.	41 years
Steve D.	34 years
Tony M.	8 years

SEBASTIAN STEP SISTERS

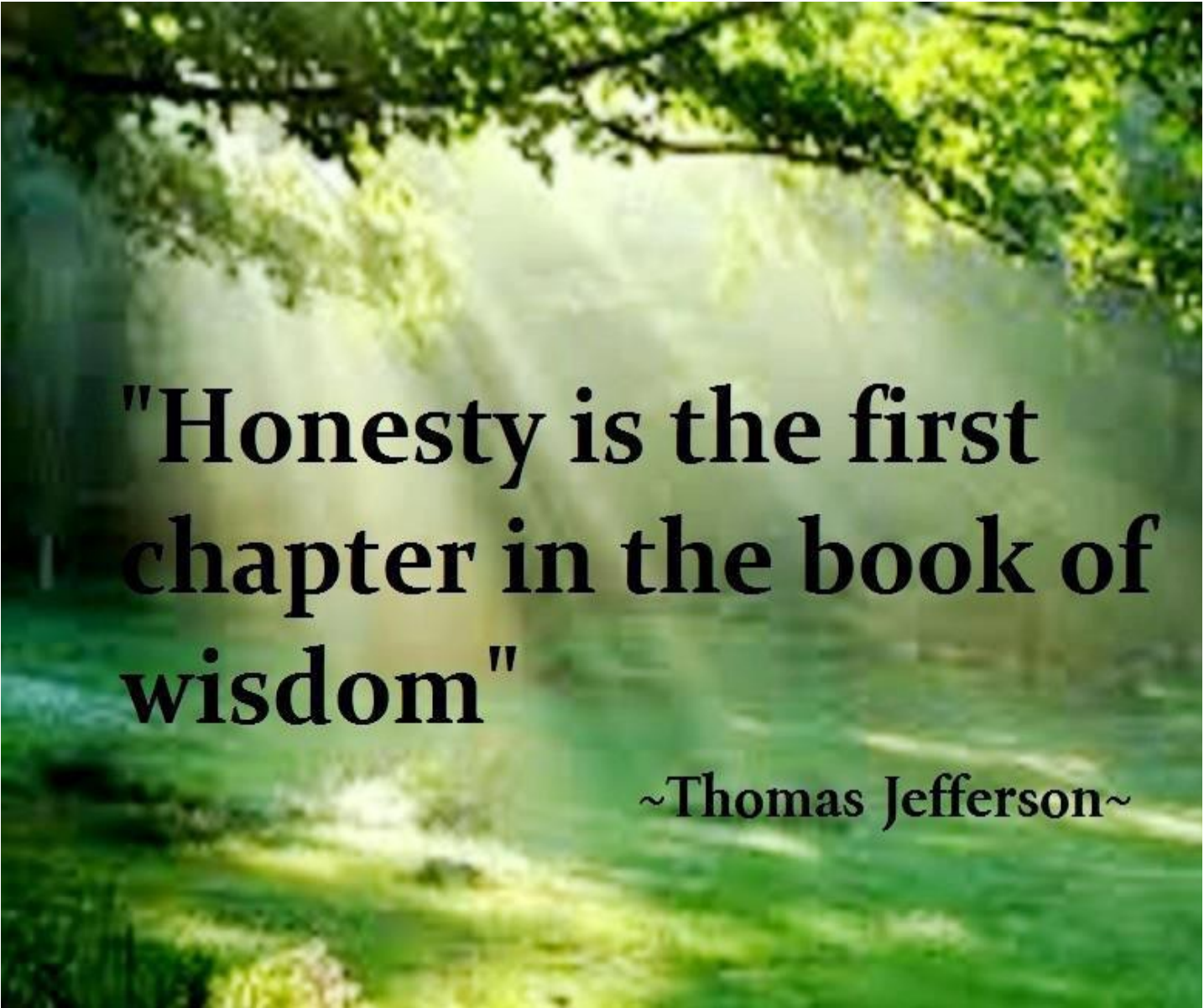
Dawn M.	24 years
Joanne J.	5 years
Tammy B.	5 years
Sandi R.	2 years
Debbie B.	1 year

UP AND OUT GROUP

John L. (Topeka)	30 years
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VERO BEACH MEN'S

Bill K.	16 years
Marty P.	53 years
Jsutin B.	11 years



**"Honesty is the first
chapter in the book of
wisdom"**

~Thomas Jefferson~



Step Prayers and Twelve Principles of AA—Feel free to cut out and laminate

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

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.

2016 STEERING COMMITTEE

Chair.....Steve S.
Co-Chair.....Joseph J.
Treasurer.....John H.
Secretary.....Trish H.

2016 STANDING COMMITTEES

Archives.....Glen B.
Birthday Dinner 2017..... Doug C.
Desk Coordinator.....Marty P.
Corrections—Women.....Open (Lorelei)
Corrections-Men..... Lane S.
Corporate Documents.....Vic S.
Public Information.....Rodney D.
Unity Committee.....Ray P.

Nominating Committee.....Marty P.
After Hours Phone..... Mindy S.
HOW EditorRick H.
Inventory Control.....DJ Irwin
Literature..... Dutch V.
Treatment..... Bobby Z/Clyde K.
Website.....Dutch V.
Where and When.....Susan M.
12 Step List Coordinator.....North: Trent L.
South: Billy VB
District 6 Liaison.....JoAnn H.
*One year minimum sobriety required

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

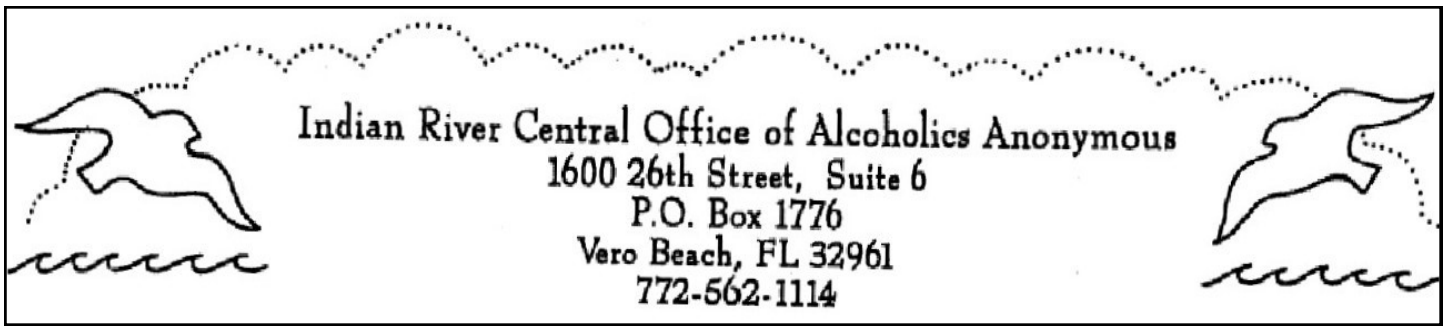
I AM WILLING TO: (PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

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 26th 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.