



# HOW

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.”

“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.”

## THE ONLY REQUIREMENT A TIMELY REMINDER OF OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE

Are you a member of AA if you say you are? Not necessarily! Our Third Tradition states: “The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.” The last four words of this Tradition suggest that there is a definite requirement in that there must be problem drinking involved.

All of us know members who suffered from both alcoholism and drug addiction. These people have always been welcome as long as alcohol is the primary problem. Any reference to pills or other drugs, except as it relates to the alcoholic problem, has no place in AA meetings.

Many of our newer members coming from treatment centers to AA find our Third Tradition difficult to understand. They say that as patients of the centers they attended AA meetings along with people addicted to pills or other drugs, and that they were told by doctors and counselors that “a drug is a drug is a drug,” that alcohol was their “drug of choice,” and that they were “addicted to the drug alcohol.” For the most part, they seem sincere in their bewilderment and would probably accept a logical statement explaining why their nonalcoholic, drug- or pill-addicted friends are not accepted as members in AA.

About this time, however, some well-meaning but uninformed member will interrupt with a quotation from *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*: “When in doubt, ask yourself, ‘What would the Master do?’ “There be but one answer: The Master would have a program for the ills of all mankind; Alcoholics Anonymous has a program only for the ills of alcoholics!

*The Big Book* says we suffered from a disease known as alcoholism, not addiction to the drug alcohol.

*Our Preamble* makes it clear that “our primary purpose is to stay sober [abstain from alcohol] and help other alcoholics [non-alcoholics are not mentioned] to achieve sobriety.” AA is a fellowship that specializes in alcoholism - recovery assistance only, and if it should begin to lose its ability to specialize by branching out into other areas, it would thereby lose its effectiveness.

A.R., Clarkston, GA, October 1978  
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## STEP 3: “MADE A DECISION TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD, AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM”

*-An alcoholic shares his personal story of how he took Step Three, of AA’s 12 Steps*

When I was new in A.A., just thinking about Step 3 terrified me!

My fear of Step Three could have been a major reason that Step 1 and Step 2 were so difficult for me.

However, when I took a second look at Step 3, and read “turn my will and my life over” instead of “our will and our lives”..... It not only terrified me into ultra-shock, I knew that I was going to be facing an impossible challenge for me. It was beyond my human ability to do it.

The first half of Step 1 meant that I would have to admit complete defeat... over alcohol. That was difficult..... But eventually the bottle beat me into submission.

It meant that on my own, even with all my best resources, self-confidence, self-will, self-reliance, self-knowledge, self-discipline, self-control, all of my plans, ideas, methods and techniques that I had developed, and all the knowledge that I had discovered about alcoholism.... I was thoroughly doomed..... to die an alcoholic death.

I had to admit that it was a Problem Greater than myself. I couldn’t fix it. And, no other human being could fix it for me. I was absolutely, thoroughly defeated.

As I look back now, I can see that if I had not discovered that I was thoroughly defeated, I couldn’t have gone any further into recovery.

This is what our Big Book talks about in Chapter 3, More About Alcoholism, on page 30.

I just wouldn’t have been able to develop the willingness that it was going to take to continue the recovery process. If I had not been totally convinced in my innermost self, that there was any other way to survive..... I would have kept looking for the other way. (Other than the 12 Steps, and a Power Greater than myself).

I believe that this is what it means to “hit our bottom.” If we are fortunate enough to “hit our bottom”, (before dying an alcoholic death), hitting bottom means that “we stop digging.”

We stop lowering our living standards to meet our life’s pitiful and incomprehensible circumstances.

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**S T E P**

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

Like all the remaining Steps, 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 - or, if you like a Higher Power - into our lives. Faith, to be sure, is necessary, but faith alone can avail nothing. We can have faith, yet keep God out of our lives. Therefore our problem now becomes just how and by what specific means shall we be able to let Him in? Step Three represents our first attempt to do this. In fact, the effectiveness of the whole A.A. program will rest upon how well and how earnestly we have tried to come to “a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him”.

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 40  
Copyright © Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.*

**PRINCIPLE BEHIND STEP 3**

**Faith** - “The decision step to go on with the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous asks that we step out on faith. It is only a matter of being willing to believe. Through the process of the 12 steps, that belief turns into faith. We carry this faith into the rest of the steps by being willing to believe. We must begin to have faith that it will work.

**TRADITION 3**

The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

**CONCEPT III**

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”

**TRADITIONS CHECKLIST**

1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new A.A. members as losers?
2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately don't want in my A.A. group?
3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with carrying the message?
5. Am I over impressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, clergyman or ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
6. When someone turns up at A.A. needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud) does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he had been to A.A. before? What his other problems are?

### STEP 3: *(continued from page 1)*

We become sick and tired of being sick and tired, and we become willing to try something different.

And, until we're convinced that we've tried everything other than the 12 Steps and a Power Greater than ourselves.... we'll keep trying everything else.

For me, I had reached what our book talks about in Chapter 11, as being the "jumping off place." The realization that with or without alcohol I'm going to live and die a miserable death. I can't live with it and I can't live without it.

I had tried all my life to be happy, to know peace, to feel loved, to love, to be wanted, to feel unique but at the same time to feel that I was apart of, rather than separate from. To feel secure, to live without fear, to be recognized and have the recognition of my fellows. To know and enjoy success. To feel like I had something worthwhile, worth having.

I wanted those things long before I ever took my first drink. And, I tried very hard to obtain that sense of well-being that comes from the things that I thought would make me feel that I was having the things that I wanted.

Later, after I discovered what alcohol could do for me... that it could temporarily give me the "sense of ease and comfort" that it talks about in the Dr.'s Opinion, and alter my perception so that I could "feel that everything was alright.... or soon would be alright". I still didn't have what I wanted, but the alcohol helped me have the illusion that I either had it, or that I would soon get it.

When I would wake up the next morning sober... and realize that nothing had changed... I would have the delusion that alcohol could fix it. And, even if it couldn't fix it... it could ease the pain and loneliness that I felt.

It could help me drown out the feelings of guilt, remorse, resentment, anger, and fear, that was being generated as a result of my drinking behavior, and the fact that in all the "best management of my life" that I had previously exhibited, I still did not have what I wanted.

Sure, I had acquired material things, money, possessions, families, positions, and all the physical stuff that I thought would give me the feeling of "having arrived" or having achieved my goals.... but it still didn't fix the problem of how I felt inside... and it didn't give me the feelings of what I thought I wanted to feel.

Of course, this would mean that with or without alcohol, "I hadn't done such a great job of managing my life." Because, I still didn't have what I wanted. And, when I was sober enough to take an honest look at the results in my life... as a result of my "management plan for living"... it was obvious that something or someone else could have done a much better job than I was doing. I was really creating a mess of things, to say the least!

With that in mind... it wasn't hard to then conclude that "my life had become unmanageable" and that I just didn't have the ability to manage any differently.

Nor, would I ever be able to manage it on my own, any better than I had managed it before I became willing to let something

else manage my life... as a result of taking the 12 Steps.

That is what it meant to me, to take the other half of Step 1, to admit that my life had become unmanageable, and on my own, I was not going to be able to do anything about it, nor would I ever be able to manage it any better than I had already tried to manage it. Another defeat. I balked at admitting complete defeat, until I was sober enough to see the true results in my life..... and the results in my life were all a "result of me."

Could there be a reasonable and a logical solution?

When I came to A.A., I could see that many others had found a solution. Why couldn't I find it?

I couldn't find it because - I was willing to admit complete defeat! I would keep going back to my own old ideas, my old plans, methods and techniques to get what I wanted out of life. The same old ideas, plans, methods and techniques that didn't work. But, I figured that maybe I just wasn't working it right yet - maybe I was missing one key thing in my formula and strategy for success!

"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?

Geezzzz..... isn't there any other way out?

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

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**35th Annual  
Indian River Central Office  
BIRTHDAY DINNER**  
*Courage To Change*



**Saturday, March 15th, 2014**

Community Church of Vero Beach  
1901 23rd Street

Featured Speaker will be Karl M. from Covina, CA

DOORS OPEN at 6:00pm  
DINNER SERVED at 6:30pm  
SPEAKER at 8:00 pm

**TICKETS - \$18.00**

Available from Intergroup Representative  
and at the Central Office • 772.562.1114

**PLEASE BRING A COVERED DESSERT**

**DISTRICT 6  
Annual Spaghetti Dinner**

**Saturday, March 22, 2014**



Doors open at 6:00 pm – Dinner at 6:30 pm  
Speaker at 8:00 pm  
Please bring a dessert to share!

**Holy Family Catholic Church  
2230 Mariposa Ave, Port St Lucie**

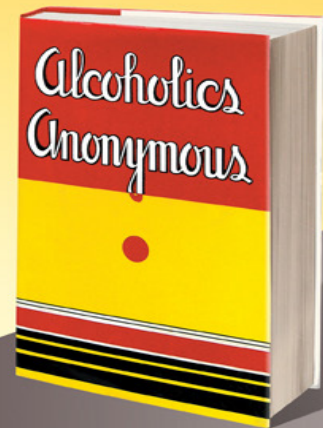
**Tickets are \$10 in advance  
or \$15 at the door!**



This is a District 6 Self Support event serving the counties of  
Port St. Lucie, Indian River, Martin and Okeechobee

**75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Commemorative Edition  
of A.A.'s Big Book**

This Conference-approved special edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* is a reproduction of the first printing of the first edition of the Big Book with bulky paper and the colorful "circus cover" as it was published in 1939. Available now to preorder for April 2014 publication.



**COMING IN APRIL - INQUIRE AT INDIAN RIVER CENTRAL OFFICE**  
*(or pre-order with form available online)*

**MEETING CHANGE!**

**The Vero Beach 12 & 12  
will move to the Community Church  
instead of Trinity Church**  
*As of March 4, 2014*

**NEW TIME: 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm**

**THIS IS YOUR HOW!**

Let the voice of Indian River AA be heard.  
Share your Experience, Strength and Hope  
with others through  
your stories of personal recovery from alcoholism.

Email to [irhow@yahoo.com](mailto:irhow@yahoo.com)  
or bring submissions to  
the Indian River Central Office

(continued from page 3)

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.

My understanding of Step 3 today is much different than it was when I first took Step 3. And, my conception of God is much different than when I started in A.A.

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.

What I learned from my experience was, that I was simply making a decision to turn my will, which is my thoughts, and my life, which is my actions, over to the care of the A.A. program of recovery, the 12 Steps, and whatever God that I thought that there was.

What I believe today, is that God cared about me enough to direct me to A.A. and to my A.A. Sponsor who could help me through the 12 Steps. After I took the 12 Steps, and continued to practice them in all my affairs, and to do the daily growth Steps, my life rapidly began to change. Others began to see the difference much sooner than I saw it.

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.

I feel secure. I don't live with fear. I get recognition of my fellows. I know and enjoy success.

I feel like I have something worthwhile, worth having. I have a new attitude and outlook on life.

When I have problems come up in my life, I have serenity that matches every situation and circumstance.

I have the most beautiful dog in the world (I think of her, as God's dog... I just get to take care of her for him).

I have the best A.A. Sponsor in the world... I am very blessed and fortunate. Life is easy. I don't struggle. I relax and take it easy. I get inspirational thoughts and intuitive answers and guidance when I face indecision. Life's a beach!!!! And, I'm on it!!!

It didn't happen overnight.

There were lots and lots and lots of more actions to take to get where I am. And, there are daily actions that I take so that I can keep reaching for higher ground.

The good news is... that you can get there too, (if you want), and you can go even further than I have already gone.... if you take the same actions that I took.

And, the best news is that the actions are written down in the book, Alcoholics Anonymous. It gives you precise instructions on how to take the actions. "Rarely have we seen a person fail.... who has thoroughly followed our path." — "May you join us now!" Thank you, for letting me share!

(Anonymous).

# 2014 OFFICE ACTIVITY

## Calls for Assistance & Walk-Ins Nature of Calls

	JAN	FEB	MAR	1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q	TOTAL
12th Step Support	16	14						30
General Info / Misc.	69	72						141
Purchases	111	81						192
Meeting Info	34	41						75
Alanon / NA	11	5						16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>213</b>						<b>454</b>

# Gate Lodge

TUESDAY 8:30 pm	
3/11	ODAAT
3/18	Easy Does It
3/25	Royal Palm
4/1	NOONTIME
4/8	ODAAT
4/15	A New Day
4/22	Easy Does It

THURSDAY 8:30 pm	
3/13	Roseland
3/20	I Am Responsible
3/27	Candlelight
4/3	Indian River Men's
4/10	Roseland
4/17	Candlelight
4/24	I Am Responsible

SATURDAY 8:30 pm	
3/15	South Vero
3/22	Indian River Thursday
3/29	Vero Beach Group
4/5	Vero Beach Group
4/12	South Vero
4/19	Early Risers
4/26	Vero Beach Men's

All meetings start at 8:30pm. Group members that are taking the commitment are asked to check in with the tech on duty upon arrival. Thank you to all the groups for participating.

We represent the fellowship and present the program.

**Please contact Samantha G. @ 772 584 9838**

# BHC\*\*

**MONDAYS @ 7:00 pm**

\*\* This facility requires 2 years of sobriety for visiting AA's

3/17	Lunch Bunch
3/24	Vero Beach Men's
3/31	Indian River Men's
4/7	South Vero
4/14	Lunch Bunch
4/21	Vero Beach Men's
4/28	Indian River Men's

# BIRTHDAYS

March 2014

Happy Birthday to All!



Please bring list of your group's celebrants' names and number of years to Central Office or submit via e-mail to irhow@yahoo.com by the last Friday of the preceding month (email submissions preferred)

Thank you.

## AA Only

.....

## A New Day

Frank .....	1
Rob .....	6
Pati .....	15
Edie .....	19

## Barefoot Bay

Denny B. ....	8
Trudi C. ....	9
John S. ....	23

## Candlelight

Rob B. ....	1
"Toothpick" Tom .....	34

## Early Risers

Jennie .....	3
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## Easy Does It

.....

## Free and Easy

Susan B. ....	7
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## Friday Night Young People

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## I Am Responsible

Kelly .....	1
Wesley R. ....	5
Jim D. ....	13
Lisa D. ....	16
Mark T. ....	17
Jill H. ....	33

## Indian River Thursday Night

Larry K. ....	8
Beth E. ....	25

## Indian River Men's

Myron .....	5
Bobby Z. ....	5
Dave D. ....	19
Jimmy J. ....	34
DJ (February) .....	13
George M. (February) .....	39

## Indian River Women's

Yvette .....	21
Gwen FV .....	33

## King's Highway

Colleen M. ....	2
George W. ....	30

## The Magnolia Group

.....

## Man to Man

.....

## Meat & Potatoes Group

.....

## Noontime

Tom L. ....	6
Stu .....	30

## ODAAT

Hunter B. ....	4
Lisa B. ....	4
Rhett P. ....	4
Marlene M. ....	14
Walter C. ....	17
James K. ....	19
Jim M. ....	22
Jack R. ....	22
Pat D. ....	24
Mike H. ....	32
Marguerite H. ....	53

## OSSABAW

Sheila R. ....	6
Dick T. ....	34

## Royal Palm

Tom S. ....	17
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## Roseland Sebastian Speakers

.....

## Safe Harbor

Joyce B. ....	7
Soshanna S. ....	8
Biancy M. ....	26
Flo G. ....	38

## Sebastian 12 & 12

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## Sebastian 5:32

Tom Y. ....	2
Eddie R. ....	19

## Sebastian Lunch Bunch

Carol Ann M. ....	23
Julia D. ....	23
Rex P. ....	31
John O. ....	33

## Sebastian Sundowners

Kim H. ....	2
Nicolas B. ....	2
Rosie C. ....	7
Diane K. ....	20
Marie B. ....	22

## Sebastian Stepsisters

.....

## South Vero

Mark N. ....	1
Dennis M. ....	29
Stuart L. ....	30

## Surfside

Crazy George .....	40
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## Vero Beach 12 & 12

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## Vero Beach Group

Rhett P. ....	4
Jack K. ....	22

## Vero Beach Men's

Joe M. ....	7
Bob G. ....	18

## Vero Beach Step & Tradition

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www.indianriveraa.org • info@indianriveraa.org

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Lane S.  
 Karen M.  
 Don Mc.

It is both a privilege and a responsibility for groups and members to insure that not only their group but also the Indian River Central Office remains self-supporting. It has been a tradition in Indian River County that individual members are encouraged to donate one dollar for each year of sobriety, during their Birthday or anniversary month. Below is a handy form for that purpose.



**Indian River Central Office Birthday Plan**

This contribution on my # \_\_\_\_\_ A.A. Birthday is my way of saying *thank you* to the 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 32961**

**Phone 772-562-1114**

