



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 people who are the angriest
are the people who are
the most afraid."***

It took me a long time to make the connection between my anger and my fear. For years I drowned my fear in alcohol, and lived pretty detached from my feelings. Those times when I couldn't use, or any extended periods of abstinence, usually left me feeling agitated, edgy, longing for and needing a drink. I lived for the instant calm and sense of ease my alcoholism provided me with.

When I entered the program, I was unprepared for the shock of emotions that would grab me and try to pull me apart. Chief among these were my feelings of dread and fear, which manifested themselves as first anger, and then rage. It wasn't until I completed my fear inventory that I began to understand that the reason I was so angry was because I was so full of fear!

One of the gifts of my recovery today is that I am now quick to trace any discomfort, agitation or anger back to fear. If I'm complaining about a line being too long, or someone driving too slow, or if I'm angry at my boss or spouse, I stop and ask myself what I'm afraid of. When the answer comes, as it always does, I use the tools I've developed in the program to deal with it.

Today I have empathy for people who are angry because I know they are really just people who are afraid.

Michael Z.

***"You will not be punished for your anger;
you will be punished by your anger."***

- Gautama Buddha

STEP 4: CLEARING AWAY SOME CONFUSION

"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

("Alcoholics Anonymous", page 59)

If you have ever been in a treatment facility or attended very many meetings, you have likely heard a lot of confusion about Step Four. You may have heard it is painful or that it takes a long time and a lot of hard work on many pages while you "write your life story" or whatever...and we would like to clear such things up for you. Step Four is a simple "troubleshooting" process, a step in recovery where we uncover-and-discover "the flaws in our make-up which have caused our failure" (page 64)...and the heaviest or worst pain anyone might experience there could only come from resisting it. For example: Continued crashing would certainly be painful if a vehicle owner continued failing or refusing to accurately troubleshoot and repair his or her vehicle's bad brakes, but that pain would not have come from trying to do something about the actual problem at hand by taking the steps required to become free of the pre-existing pains caused by bad brakes.

How long does it take to take Step Four? In the earliest days of A.A., the Steps were often taken within just a few days. You might or might not get everything done that quickly unless working side-by-side with someone who has already done that, but ideas such as "one step per year" are completely mis-guided. So with just a reasonable amount of effort being made, we would guess you might easily accomplish something like "one list per week" over the course of two or three weeks while taking Step Four.

How many pages will you write while taking Step Four? That will depend upon the lengths of the two (or possibly three) lists you will make and how much you might wish to detail certain things along the way. But for sure, you will not have to "write a book"...and we actually suggest you do not! Step Four is about learning, listing and analyzing certain facts or truths about ourselves, not documenting our lives in an autobiographical format for others to later dissect and inventory.

One of the neatest things we happen to like about Step Four comes from our being shown "the key to the future" (page 66) before looking for even the first defect of character! You are not likely to find that factual experience shared anywhere other than in our A.A. "Big Book", however, so set aside any kind of "Step Guide" and even our own "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" (12 & 12) if you would like to experience Step Four as first passed along by the very-earliest of A.A. members.

1 2 3 **4** 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 STEP

"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves"

Step Four is our vigorous and painstaking effort to discover what these liabilities in each of us have been, and are. We want to find exactly how, when, and where our natural desires have warped us. We wish to look squarely at the unhappiness this has caused others and ourselves.

By discovering what our emotional deformities are, we can move toward their correction.

Without a willing and persistent effort to do this, there can be little sobriety or contentment for us. Without a searching and fearless moral inventory, most of us have found that the faith which really works in daily living is still out of reach.

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
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PRINCIPLE BEHIND STEP 4

Courage - "This step is really about courage to look honestly at ourselves. Take a look at how our behavior has become warped to justify our current behavior. We are here to take an honest assesment of ourselves. Looking at causes and conditions of our alcoholic behavior can be scary

TRADITION 4

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

CONCEPT IV

At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation", allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

1. Do I insist that there are only a few *right* ways to do things in A.A.
2. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of A.A.? Of nearby groups? Of Loners in Alaska? Of Internationalists miles from port? Of a group in Rome or El Salvador?
3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know that I am in A.A., I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths - his lengths, not mine - to stay sober?
6. Do I share my knowledge of A.A. tools with other members who may not have heard of them?

MY SPONSOR STILL WALKS WITH ME

I was celebrating forty-three years of sobriety at my home group and expressed regret that my first sponsor, Mac, couldn't be there because he had died thirty-four years earlier. Right away, a woman I sponsor broke in: "Your sponsor didn't die -- you've kept him alive. All I've heard, for years, is what Mac said and what Mac did."

She was right. As I thought about it, I realized that my last-ditch question, when facing a problem I didn't feel able to handle, was always, "What would Mac do or say?"

I began to think about all the things Mac had passed on to me that had stood the test of time. The first thing was that he exemplified what AA could be for those of us who needed a simple program right at the beginning. He was a very simple man -- a devout follower of Dr. Bob's "Keep It Simple" philosophy.

Our relationship didn't make much sense on the surface. Mac was much older than I was; our backgrounds and educational levels were different. But he had a solid, workable brand of sobriety that I wanted, and he was willing to spend all the time I needed in giving it away to me.

He never gave me advice; he would mostly listen, then tell me what he had done under similar circumstances. Certainly, he made firm "suggestions," but it was up to me whether to follow them or not. If I tried to show him where he was in error, he'd listen intently for a while, then when there was a break in the discussion, he'd smile and walk calmly away to get a cup of coffee.

Mac said that if I didn't have discipline in my AA program, I probably wouldn't have any in my life outside AA, so he suggested some basic disciplines. First: I knew what time the meeting started, so be there on time. Second: I should never leave a meeting till it was over and I had put something in the collection basket. Third: I should never let a week go by without attending at least one meeting. (He didn't say, Go to one meeting a week; he said, At least one meeting a week.) And last: I should never volunteer in a discussion meeting -- the chairperson would call on me if he wanted me to talk.

He added a couple of footnotes to these disciplines, and said that they applied to me only, and that I wasn't to impose them on anyone else. And if I ever had a legitimate reason for deviating from them, that was okay, I never have.

First, it wasn't necessary to understand the Twelve Steps before putting them into action--in fact, if I waited till I understood them, I'd probably never get around to working them.

Second, Mac suggested that I be able to explain a word or phrase -- or not use it. I liked to use clever phrases, often borrowed from others, because they seemed dramatic and attention-getting. His suggestion made sense, and I began to think before I spoke.

Third, Mac was adamant about the importance of having a home group, and so I never even considered not having one or being active in it. He felt it was necessary to stay active in group service and all local activities, regardless of the stature of the job. And when general service came into the picture, he wanted me to try that, too. (Mac was very active in prisons and institutions work, and the inmates all loved him because of his simplicity and lack of drama.) As a result of his prodding about responsibility, I did get active in general service, becoming a GSR, area chair, then delegate and trustee. If Mac had lived long enough to see it all happen, he would have told me not to get carried away. I can just hear him say, "Jim, all it means is that you're a lucky drunk."

Fourth, Mac believed that when we talk a lot but do little, we tie God's hands. He believed that God could, and would, make results happen in our sobriety only if we took actions.

Finally the most important suggestion he gave me was to point out that we all know the difference between right and wrong, for ourselves. But he cautioned that we don't know what is "best." Thus my guide for living today, oversimplified though it may be, is: "I do the right thing, not the best, because only God knows what is best. Then I leave the results up to God."

My sponsor still lives in my sobriety and in the lives of those I sponsor. I can almost feel him looking over my shoulder as I write these words. I can imagine his reaction. He would simply grunt a bit, then walk away to get a cup of coffee.

Jim M., Carmichael, CA
February, 1995

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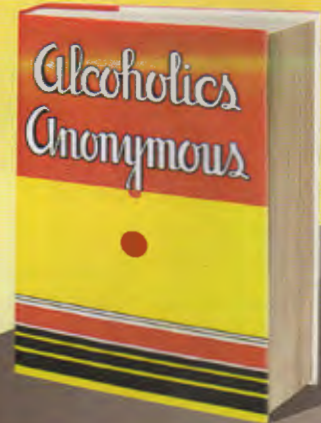
Central Office would like to thank all of the groups for their service commitments in helping with the Birthday Dinner.

Also, a special thanks to the many volunteers that stayed after to clean up and reset the room.

If you wish to purchase a CD recording of the speaker, they are available at Central Office for \$5.

75th 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.



AVAILABLE IN APRIL - INQUIRE AT INDIAN RIVER CENTRAL OFFICE

(or pre-order with form available online)

USED GRAPEVINES?

Please donate your used Grapevines to the **Public Information Committee**.

You can drop them off at Central Office. They will be distributed to various waiting rooms around the county. Thank you for your support.

MEETING CHANGE!

Vero Beach Men's Thursday Night

NEW TIME: 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

(NO MEETING ON THE 2ND THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH)

THE MEAT & POTATOES GROUP of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

*Invites you to join us for our
10th Group Anniversary Celebration*




Friday, April 25th at 6:00PM
at the Community Church of Vero Beach
Room 113/114
1901 23rd Street, Vero Beach

Open Speaker Meeting Format

POT LUCK DINNER after the Speaker

Beverages, coffee & cake provided by the group.



The Vero Beach Group

(located at St. Helen's Catholic Church, Vero Beach, FL)

of

Alcoholics Anonymous celebrates

66 years of being an AA Group!!

Come help us celebrate being the oldest
group in Indian River County!

Sunday, April 27, 2014

7:30pm: cake, various desserts, and
great fellowship

8:00 pm: double speaker meeting featuring

Don McC. ODAAT Group

Peggy R The Lakewood Park Group

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	12	42				42
General Info / Misc.	69	72	63	204				204
Purchases	111	81	75	367				367
Meeting Info	34	41	30	105				105
Alanon / NA	11	5	12	26				26
TOTAL	241	213	192	744				744

Gate Lodge

TUESDAY 8:30 pm	
4/8	ODAAT
4/15	A New Day
4/22	Easy Does It
4/29	Noontime
5/6	ODAAT
5/13	Easy Does It
5/20	Royal Palm

THURSDAY 8:30 pm	
4/10	Roseland
4/17	Candlelight
4/24	I Am Responsible
5/1	OSSABAW
5/8	Indian River Men's
5/15	Roseland
5/22	I Am Responsible

SATURDAY 8:30 pm	
4/12	South Vero
4/19	Early Risers
4/26	Vero Beach Men's
5/3	OSSABAW
5/10	Indian River Thursday
5/17	South Vero
5/24	Indian River Women'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

4/14	Lunch Bunch
4/21	Vero Beach Men's
4/28	Indian River Men's
5/5	South Vero
5/12	Lunch Bunch
5/19	Vero Beach Men's
5/26	Indian River Men's

BIRTHDAYS

April 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

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A New Day

Mark N.	1
Sue W.	9
John M.	41

Barefoot Bay

Lora D.	16
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Candlelight

Katie H.	1
Tom M.	18
Tom I "Toothpick Tom"	34
Rob B. (March)	1
Brian (March)	2
George D. (March)	22

Early Risers

Tony	1
Tammy P.	1

Easy Does It

.....

Free and Easy

Anita L.	15
Sue L.	27

Friday Night Young People

.....

I Am Responsible

Lisa N.	1
Tammy P.	1
Michael P.	2
Larry M.	3
Jenn M.	6
Trish F.	8
Alyce N.	32

Indian River Thursday Night

.....

Indian River Men's

Doug	4
Joe	10
John L.	10
Frank C.	32
Lou V.	33

Indian River Women's

Alicia H.	2
Kim P.	7
Paula H.	13
Cindy C.	21
Susan H.	24
Gay P.	46

King's Highway

Betty L.	51
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The Magnolia Group

.....

Man to Man

Jame R.	16
Paul C.	28

Meat & Potatoes Group

.....

Noontime

Phil	6
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ODAAAT

Pat D.	3
John R.	3
Hal O.	5
Mike S.	6
Jennifer M.	15
Cheri S.	18
Candy B.	30
Bob C.	40
Bill W.	43
Al C.	54

OSSABAW

.....

Royal Palm

Rich R.	19
Bob K.	28
Clell B.	32
Brian L.	41

Roseland Sebastian Speakers

Jack T.	29
Mickey R.	35
Annie M.	37
Frank M. (March)	30

Safe Harbor

.....

Sebastian 12 & 12

.....

Sebastian 5:32

Ray C.	5
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Sebastian Lunch Bunch

Kathy C.	5
John R.	43
Ducky O.	57

Sebastian Sundowners

Kathleen S.	1
Sue W.	9
Shelly	10
Linda W.	11
Kimberlee	28

Sebastian Stepsisters

Diane C.	9
Kandi	17
Sheila	35

South Vero

Lynda C.	1
Ron B.	1
Mike McM.	2
Tracy W.	4
Sandra G.	5
Dennis S.	6
Jamie K.	7
Mike M.	9
Donna M.	17
Jim R.	19
Skip M.	21

Surfside

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Vero Beach 12 & 12

.....

Vero Beach Group

.....

Vero Beach Men's

Chris	1
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Vero Beach Step & Tradition

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Indian River Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
 1600 26th Street, Suite 6
 P.O. Box 1776
 Vero Beach, FL 32961
 772-562-1114



www.indianriveraa.org • info@indianriveraa.org

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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 26th Street, Suite 6
 Vero Beach, FL 32961**

Phone 772-562-1114