



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 12 STEPS OF AA - STEP 5

I completed my Step 4. I think I had 30 or 40 pages of writing. I’d been told to carry a notebook with the columns about with me and add to it till I had completed what I thought was the most important part of the process. This was something I was to do over a few weeks.

Alot of people I meet in AA haven’t completed Step 4. The disease of alcoholism is incomplection. Alcoholics are great starters but never was there a better group for shooting themselves in the foot just before completion.

And procrastination. Never was there a better group of procrastinators.

And promise makers. An alcoholic will make promises. They’re great promise makers but the worst promise keepers. Anything to put off actually doing something. That’s why recovery is not about thinking or talking. It’s about action. When I hear someone say “AA didn’t work for me” I translate that into “I didn’t work AA” and am usually closer to the truth. The birth control pill wouldn’t work if a woman didn’t take it by mouth orally and swallow it. That’s the same with AA. It’s a program of daily medicine. It doesn’t work if you miss the steps and rest on one’s laurel’s. It’s a daily program of recovery. One day at a time. It’s helped alot of people stay sober those days they practiced the program of AA. People relapse when they start the “stinking thinking”, return to their old ways, “slippery people, places and things”, and stop going to meetings and stop working the program on a daily basis, stop praying in the morning and saying thanks at night. It’s not rocket science. It’s a simple program that’s just not that simple.

Step 4 is pen and paper work. Step 5 is a meeting. I completed the Step 4 pen and paper assignment. I had the education system as one of my resentments and naturally I’ve resented “homework” but I wanted the gifts of recovery and that required work. I had to do the work if I expected to get the gifts of the

(continued on page 5)

ON STEPS 4, 5, 6 AND 7

From a 45 year old article on Going Through the Steps is a listing of 20 character defects we should ask ourselves about as we take our inventory.

In Step 4 as we take a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves, we must find out what we’ve got, what we need to get rid of, and what we need to acquire. The **“fearless”** is not about how we feel, but about what we write, **thoroughly, rigorously honest**. There are 20 character defects to ask about – **the individual wrongs we have done are not necessary to go over**, just the defects that caused them. The inventory is of our defects, **not our incidents**.

Going over the listing, we ask ourself have we honestly admitted our defects to ourself as we write out on paper how they have manifested in our lives and created the unmanageability we have known.

Here are the defects:

- *Resentment, Anger*
- *Fear, Cowardice*
- *Self pity*
- *Self justification*
- *Self importance, Egotism*
- *Self condemnation, Guilt*
- *Lying, Evasiveness, Dishonesty*
- *Impatience*
- *Hate*
- *False pride, Phoniness, Denial*
- *Jealousy*
- *Envy*

(continued on page 3)

IN THIS ISSUE:

2 Steps & Traditions

4 Upcoming Events Announcements

6 Office Activity Schedules

7 Birthdays

1 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 S T E P

“Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs”

AA experience has taught us we cannot live alone with our pressing problems and the character defects which cause or aggravate them. If we have swept the searchlight of Step Four back and forth over our careers, and it has revealed in stark relief those experiences we'd rather not remember, if we have come to know how wrong thinking and action have hurt us and others, then the need to quit living by ourselves with those tormenting ghosts of yesterday gets more urgent than ever. We have to talk to somebody about them.

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
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PRINCIPLE BEHIND STEP 5

Integrity - “If we have truly done a thorough job of introspection and evaluation of our assets and shortcomings, do we have the integrity to own up to it? It can be very difficult to be open and honest about our past behaviors. We begin to learn to do the right thing even though no one is watching.”

TRADITION 5

Each group has but one primary purpose-to carry its message to the alco-holic who still suffers.

CONCEPT V

Throughout our world service structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.

TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

1. Do I ever cop out by saying, “I’m not a group, so this or that tradition doesn’t apply to me?”
2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the *limitations* of AA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
3. Have I today im-posed on any AA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?
4. Am I willing to twelfth step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
5. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?
6. Do I remember that AA old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both help them and learn from them?

ON STEPS 4, 5, 6 AND 7 (continued from page 1)

- Laziness
- Procrastination
- Insincerity
- Negative Thinking
- Immoral thinking
- Perfectionism, Intolerance
- Criticizing, Loose Talk, Gossip
- Greed

Having admitted these defects to ourselves, having thoroughly inventoried them and written out how they have manifested and controlled our actions and reactions in life, we have completed Step 4.

Are we now willing to share them with another and with God? We must ask ourself if we are willing to go to any length to get rid of these same defects that caused our life to be unmanageable. Do we want to get rid of them, even those that were "fun"? Perhaps you will have some hesitancy sharing all this with another. I did. Not to worry, you haven't done anything that each of us hasn't done in one fashion or another. And you will hear someone in meetings tell your story, maybe not all of it, but a great portion of it.

(The way it was put to me, "Until someone in AA knows everything you know about yourself, you are nowhere. The result is nil until you tell it all and let go absolutely." So then I asked "How will I know when it is right for me to DO the 5th Step?" and his answer was just as blunt, "When you have to make a conscious decision between DOING the 5th Step or going out and getting drunk, that's when!")

In Step 5, we bring these things we have written out to the light of day, from out of the Shadows of Our Mind, by admitting them to another person, and the God of our understanding.. Having told someone else ALL our life story, we have completed Step 5. (Another Not To Worry - Even if something of importance has been left out or missed, I can guarantee you "MORE SHALL BE REVEALED")

How can we ask God to get rid of the THINGS we did in our past? WE CAN'T!! He cannot remove things that have already happened. We can ask to get rid of the defects, which caused us to act in the manner we did by

taking Step 6. (Steps 8 and 9 handle the restitution for things past, as WE set them right.)

Step 6 is the step that separates the men from the boys. If we can honestly say we are ENTIRELY ready (not almost, not just about, not partially) to have God remove ALL (not some) of these defects, even the ones that were fun, remembering that in step 3 we turned our will and our life over to God's care with complete abandon, then we have completed Step 6.

Step 7 asks us to come up with something we don't have, never had, and are unlikely to come up with anytime soon. But Step 7 is the beginning of acquiring it ... True Humility ... With a simple prayer to our Higher Power, as we ask that ALL our character defects which stand in the way of our usefulness to Him and our fellows be removed, we have completed step 7.

(For myself, I have had to repeat that prayer many, many times, sometimes moment by moment, as I have found that God does not remove a character defect if I am doing it... I have first had to stop from doing it, ask for His help to not do it, and then He removed the need for doing it. Same like with the need to drink, I had to stop first.)

And that is another story, the continuing saga of Steps 10, 11 and 12, as I remember that my spiritual awakening and continuing spiritual awareness is THE RESULT of working, DOING, and LIVING ALL of the 12 Steps! There is no message to carry unless I have done the first 9 Steps and am living the last three. I can't give what I don't have, even though I might want to. I must try to practice the principles of the Steps in ALL my affairs, every day, one day at a time. By that the message is given.

These are the Twelve Simple Principles by which one leads a truly Spiritual Life and completes the learning of the Lessons of Love.

Honesty, Hope, Faith, Courage, Integrity, Willingness, Humility, Brotherly Love, Justice, Perseverance, Spirituality, and Service to One Another. (Those are the character assets we need to acquire.)

NONE of these are possible without the development of TRUST! And that I learned from you!!

- "Barefoot" Bob H.



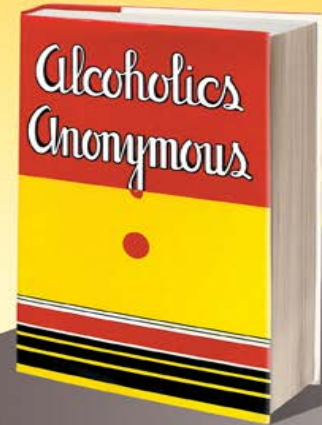
Central Office would like to thank all of the groups for their service commitments in helping with the Birthday Dinner.

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 AT THE INDIAN RIVER CENTRAL OFFICE

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 12 STEPS OF AA - STEP 5

program. I like gifts. I don't like work. Alcohol gave me false gifts and claimed to be for free. At least the cost was supposed to only be the bar tab. It almost cost me my life in reality.

We often joke in AA saying it's the most elite expensive and exclusive club tallying up how much it has cost the best of us to fill a chair in this group. Loss of friends. Loss of jobs. Loss of marriages. Alcohol is the great eraser. It's a country western song. It costs way too much. Alcoholism is said to be a country and western song of loss whereas recovery is a country and western song played backwards. I got my pick up truck and dog back eventually. Different pick up truck. I didn't want to go back out so I did the work. I'd paid my dues and didn't want to pay any more.

I met with my sponsor. I brought my papers. We had coffee and I talked with him using the notes to say what I'd learned and what was most important. Bernie listened. He was a great listener. He didn't judge me either. It took about an hour maybe 2. I think he was bored. My failings are a big deal to me but to another alcoholic they're rather common place. We're not nearly as unique as we think. "We're as sick as our secrets" but what I learned in a treatment centre is that our secrets aren't that bad and there's more like us and those with a whole lot worse. We just don't know that because we don't share and others don't share. As a psychiatrist I'd learned this in the office. In one small town I worked I seemed to have seen all the leading citizens and all the lowest citizens and they all had the same problems but no one talked about them. Even the gossip was pale compared to the racy reality I heard. Truth is worse than fiction yet the pretentiousness was really the worse. Everyone was holier than now. In fact the worst were those who presented as the best. They had more to cover up so they did their laundry twice and never in public. In private it was another matter. Some stains really stain. Some run. Best to get them out.

I'd even been through my own psychoanalytic therapy for years but that's not at all what Step 4 is about. It's more spiritual. Analysis is insightful and valid in a very different way.

Step 5 is more like a confession. Bernie was a great father confessor. He's a rogue really. A loving rogue and when it was over he said I was okay. He laughed to. And hugged me. And I felt whole in a way I'd not felt whole before.

I'd told him I'd planned to meet with my priest at St. John's Church Sardis, and that I was doing a dry run with him. He liked that, "a dry run."

The father I chose to hear my Step 5 "confession" had previously been the army base chaplain. My Christian friend who avoids 'confession' at all costs, laughed when I told him who I was going to for my Step 5. "That's cheating, isn't it? He will have heard the confessions of the soldiers and your's will be small potatoes in comparison." I didn't think so and wondered what my friend must have

(continued from page 1)

thought of soldiers and confession. Then again, he'd never dared to confess himself. He likes to keep his own sins close. I personally wanted to let mine go.

The good father saw me and listened just like Bernie. It was a different kind of talk. More sex than I'd talked about with Bernie. Bernie seemed to hear about the resentments whereas the Father seemed to get more sex. I cried too. Maybe I cried with Bernie. But I know I cried when I talked about fear. It's really hard being really tough and I'm a whole lot tougher than a lot of tough guys think they are. I'm that tough. Mean too. But I cried when I talked about the fears. In the end I think I bored him too. No lightning bolts struck either.

We prayed together when it was over. Again maybe an hour, at most two. Time kind of flew.

And when I left I was a whole lot lighter. I'd noticed that with Bernie. I kind of felt okay inside. No I felt a whole lot better inside. Something shifted. It was like a weight dropped. There's a whole lot of cliché expressions for this. I had the experience. It's not really describable. I just felt a whole lot better walking home. I was surprised by that too. One of my favourite C.S. Lewis' books is called "Surprised by Joy" and frankly I was surprised at the joy I felt. Spirituality is called "growing love inside". I think that's part of the feeling. I know it brought me closer to my fellow man and made God less an intellectual construct and more a part of me and my life. I felt less disconnected and less disjointed. Whole. Kind of at home too. Maybe not "at home in my own skin" but maybe like home on this planet. Less alien.

Each of the steps has a prayer attached to them. This is the 5th Step prayer. I confess I'd not known this prayer until now. Despite reading the Big Book over and over. There's much we miss until spiritually our eyes are opened. That's the way of spiritual texts. The Bible is constantly unfolding too. We need to be ready to receive the information. A lot of the 'esoteric' knowledge thought to be somehow very 'secret' is right out there in the open, plainly written and spoken, just not available to those who "have not the 'eyes to see'".

We say in AA, "right action leads to right thinking".

It's also true then with faith. With faith, we can see that which was not apparent to us. A light comes on. Sometimes it's "God's booklight", and sometimes in my life it's been "God's Strobelight".

A 5th Step Prayer

God I thank you from the bottom of my heart that I know you better. Help me become aware of anything I have omitted discussing with another person. Help me to do what is necessary to walk a free man at last. AMEN (p. 75 Big Book)

- William H.

2014 OFFICE ACTIVITY

Calls for Assistance & Walk-Ins Nature of Calls

	JAN	FEB	MAR	1st Q	APR	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q	TOTAL
12th Step Support	16	14	12	42	12				54
General Info / Misc.	69	72	63	204	86				290
Purchases	111	81	75	367	118				485
Meeting Info	34	41	30	105	25				130
Alanon / NA	11	5	12	26	4				30
TOTAL	241	213	192	744	245				989

Gate Lodge

TUESDAY 8:30 pm	
5/6	ODAAT
5/13	Easy Does It
5/20	Royal Palm
5/27	Noontime
6/3	ODAAT
6/10	Easy Does It
6/17	A New Day

THURSDAY 8:30 pm	
5/8	Indian River Men's
5/15	Roseland
5/22	I Am Responsible
5/29	Candlelight
6/5	Indian River Men
6/12	Roseland
6/19	I Am Responsible

SATURDAY 8:30 pm	
5/10	Indian River Thursday
5/17	South Vero
5/24	Indian River Women's
5/31	Vero Beach Men's
6/7	Early Risers
6/14	South Vero
6/21	Indian River Thursday

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

5/12	Lunch Bunch
5/19	Vero Beach Men's
5/26	Indian River Men's
6/2	South Vero
6/9	Lunch Bunch
6/16	Vero Beach Men's
6/23	Indian River Men's

BIRTHDAYS

May 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

Theresa S.	1
Joe	3
Ame	18
Gene	32

Barefoot Bay

John	1
Dennis H.	19
Warren D.	31
Eddie D.	45

Candlelight

Shannon S.	1
Kristin S.	4

Early Risers

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Easy Does It

Don F.	45
Megan B. (March)	7
Melissa D. (March)	25
Sandy S. (April)	16
Lynn H. (April)	22

Free and Easy

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Friday Night Young People

.....

I Am Responsible

.....

Indian River Thursday Night

Jill I.	2
Stephanie M.	10

Indian River Men's

Rick	1
Travis	4
Bob G.	16
Joseph J.	22

Indian River Women's

Wendy C.	1
Kristin S.	24

King's Highway

.....

The Magnolia Group

.....

Man to Man

Joe R.	3
Bob M.	34

Meat & Potatoes Group

.....

Noontime

Lee	4
Kathy	12
Kenny	15

ODAAAT

Mary Jeanne W.	2
Marlene F.	4
Sally H.	9
Patti R.	9
Carl C.	10
Bev M.	14
Jack D.	25
Peter T.	27
Pat B.	27
Tim Z.	27
Helen J.	30
Suzann H.	32
Dick D.	32
Tulio C.	36
Don Mc.	37
Sheila T.	38
Meave W.	42

OSSABAW

Brian	2
Mickey	12
Pete M.	26

Royal Palm

David H.	2
Katie H.	20
Steve S.	25
Susie K.	34

Roseland Sebastian Speakers

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Safe Harbor

Terri C.	2
Terri C.	4
Mary Ann E.	4

Jan D.	5
Ruth W.	32

Sebastian 12 & 12

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Sebastian 5:32

Pat S.	42
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Sebastian Lunch Bunch

Zinna L.	8
Pete M.	26
Gene A.	32
Bob M.	34
Pat S.	35

Sebastian Sundowners

Richard B.	1
Maureen M.	4
Lisa W.	5
Am'e B.	18
John K.	28

Sebastian Stepsisters

.....

South Vero

David D., Jr.	3
Greg E.	5
Patti R.	9
Liam O.	11
Todd R.	14
Warren W.	23

Surfside

Meave W.	42
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Vero Beach 12 & 12

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Vero Beach Group

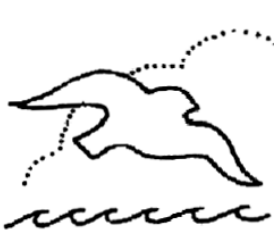
Cynthia G.	29
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Vero Beach Men's

Geoff K.	2
Randy	3
Clyde K.	23
Mike C.	41

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