

The Update

D I S T R I C T 1 4

STEP ONE: WE ADMITTED WE WERE POWERLESS OVER ALCOHOL – THAT OUR LIVES HAD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE.

When I came to AA, it certainly seemed like the “*last house on the street*” a last ditch attempt for a way out of a life that I simply did not want. I did not have any ideas or plans left to try. Life was broken and I was finally starting to see that I could not *fix it on my own* --- *I needed a different and new plan – and at that point I was willing to give almost anything else a try.*

Step One has evolved for me in the time I have been coming to AA.

At first, all Step One said to me was that I was powerless over alcohol. I could not drink safely. I could not stop at one drink. I could not predict what would happen. I could not guarantee to myself that I would make good choices. I could not trust myself if I had a drink.

Soon I could see that my life was unmanageable *when I drank.*

Somewhere between then and now, my understanding of Step One has changed. Today I know that in order to get the full benefit out of any of the remaining steps, I need to do Step One 100%. The only way to do this is to take 100% of the step.

I am not alone.

We admitted all of us we all have the same disease ... none of us are any more affected none of us are any less affected none of us having it harder none of us has it easier. Our paths may be different and our pasts may be different, but the chaos and turmoil is the same. We all suffer from the same feelings and our inability to accept what life sends our way.

We have a disease. It is not our fault --- but it is our responsibility.

The *we* and the *our* remind me that I am no different that anyone else. Both remind me that I cannot get better by myself and **more importantly, I cannot stay better by myself.** I need everyone in AA, and AA itself. Tradition One tells me this too --- “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. Unity.”

For me, the largest part of Step One has been acknowledging that my life is unmanageable – that I do not manage my own life. I had always believed that I alone controlled my destiny. My choices, the work I did, and the effort that I put into life would reward me accordingly. If I was not satisfied, then I simply had to make better choices, do better work, or work harder.

Today ... finally at 46 years old, I finally understand that I am not in control. What a relief to not have all that responsibility of managing everything and everyone around me.

So Step One today

I cannot consume any alcohol. I involve other alcoholics in my life on a daily basis. I discuss my thoughts and issues with others and listen to their feedback. I involve AA in my life on a daily basis. I do my best to resist temptation to manage my life. I live my life as it happens.

Joe B
Freedom Group

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Step 1
- Tradition 1
- Birthdays

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W E L C O M E T O T H E N E W C O M E R

I would like to welcome all the newcomers of 2011.

You will hear a lot of great things at the tables of Alcoholics Anonymous in District 14.

Just remember that you have the rest of your life to comprehend most of these tidbits.

Keep coming to meetings till you come because you enjoy the meetings. The members of this fellowship will guide you on your journey if you are listening.

You will never know who has your message, so be sure to

listen. 3 important things to do

- Get a sponsor
- Get a home group
- Get active

Be part of **your** recovery.

Pam V.

Principles of the 12 Steps
These were written
by Bill P. an AA Historian, 1947-2007

In recovery, we try to take the opposite of our character defects/shortcomings and turn them into principles. For example, we work to change fear into faith, hate into love, egoism into humility, anxiety and worry into serenity, complacency into action, denial into acceptance, jealousy into trust, fantasizing into reality, selfishness into service, resentment into forgiveness, judgmentalism into tolerance, despair into hope, self-hate into self-respect, and loneliness into fellowship. Through this work we learn to understand the principles of our program. Such work may look like an overwhelming goal to an outsider, but those of us in AA know that our true goal is progress, not

perfection." As the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous tells us, we are not destined for sainthood and we should not be discouraged when we cannot "Maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. The point is that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles are guides to progress. But what, exactly, are these principles and where did they come from? Over the years a list of principles that correspond to each of the Twelve Steps has been printed in local area AA newsletters and on pocket cards. The origin of this list is unknown, although used by many Twelve step members:
Principles of the 12 Steps

STEP: -- (The steps are printed on pages 59 & 60 of the Big Book.)
Step 1. Surrender. (Capitulation to hopelessness.)
Step 2. Hope. (Step 2 is the mirror image or opposite of step 1. In step 1 we admit that alcohol is our higher power, and that our lives are unmanageable. In step 2, we find a different Higher Power who we hope will bring about a return to sanity in management of our lives.)
Step 3. Commitment. (The key word in step 3 is decision.)
Step 4. Honesty. (An inventory of self.)
Step 5. Truth. (Candid confession to God and another human being.)
Step 6. Willingness. (Choosing to abandon defects of character.)
Step 7. Humility. (Standing naked

before God, with nothing to hide, and asking that our flaws in His eyes be removed.)
Step 8. Reflection. (Who have we harmed? Are we ready to amend?)
Step 9. Amendment. (Making direct amends/restitution/correction, etc...)
Step 10. Vigilance. (Exercising self-discovery, honesty, abandonment, humility, reflection and amendment on a momentary, daily, and periodic basis.)
Step 11. Attunement. (Becoming as one with our Father.)
Step 12. Service. (Awakening into sober usefulness.)

A K R O N G U I D E T O S T E P 1

*So we finally
 came to the fork
 in the road.*

WITHOUT the first step there is no chance of recovery., It has been demonstrated over and over again that a person becomes sober and stays sober only when he is doing so for himself and himself alone. He may become sober temporarily for the sake of some person, fear of some sort, because of his job, but unless he is sincerely, genuinely determined to sober up for himself, his days of sobriety are numbered.

It is a difficult step to take. It is a step in which no assistance from an outside source is possible. the prospect must make it alone. It is not easy to admit

defeat. For years we have said, "I can stop drinking any time I want to." For years we have believed that sobriety was "just around the corner." tragically enough, we never rounded that corner; and we suddenly discovered, much to our dismay, that we could not quit. We were like rabid baseball fans who still hope for a miracle when the home team goes into the final inning trailing by half a dozen runs.

So we finally came to the fork in the road. We either honestly admitted that we had a problem or we continued sinking deeper and deeper into the

bog of alcoholism, resulting in loss of mind or death. Until the admission is made, to ourselves, that our alcoholic problem has gone our to control we have on inspiration to stop drinking. But once that admission has been made the was is cleared. It is at this point that Alcoholics Anonymous can step in and lend a helping hand in the remainder of the program. The remaining steps are automatically made easier.

The symptoms of alcoholism are clearly defined. There are scores of them, but among the major ones are:

The inability to stop drinking after taking one drink.

The necessity for a drink in the morning to "straighten up," that morning drink developing into another drunk.

Getting drunk at the wrong time. That is, getting drunk when every instinct tells us that the occasion is one calling for sobriety.

Inability to sleep without the use of alcohol.

Loss of memory during a drunk and the deadening of memory even when sober.

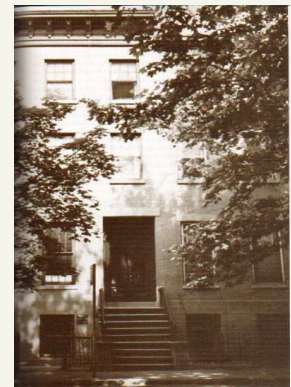
The prospect will doubtless recognize many symptoms as his own when he listens to the stories of members of the group. When he recognizes them, it is imperative to impress on him that even if he isn't an out and out alcoholic he is studying hard to be one, and the time when he will be in serious trouble is not too far away.

There is no known cure for alcoholism. Once a person becomes an alcoholic (he won't recognize it when he crosses the border line) he is an alcoholic for life. He may go years and years without touching intoxicants, yet when he does, he will be back in the same old squirrel cage again. Strangely enough, case histories

prove that he will be worse than he was before.

So it is not only important that we admit that we are powerless over alcohol, but that we *continue* bear in mind at all times that we are alcoholics. Only complete sobriety can make us and keep us normal.

If, as a newcomer, you can honestly say to your AA friend, "I have an alcoholic problem; I am certain that I am an alcoholic; I want to do something about it," half of the battle is won. You are then open to teaching. Your mind is prepared to receive instructions in the AA way of life



182 Clinton St, Burnham townhouse Bill and Lois's House and meeting place.

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

Checklist

1. Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other members inventories?
2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious preludes such as "just for the sake of discussion," plunge into argument?
3. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?
4. Do I make competitive AA remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?
5. Do I put down some AA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?
6. Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, AA as a whole, or just the parts I understand and approve of?
7. Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?
8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?
9. Do I go to enough AA meetings or read enough AA literature to really keep in touch?
10. Do I share with AA all of me, the bad and the good, accepting as well as giving the help of fellowship?

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

"Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward."

Our whole A.A. program is securely founded on the principle of humility--that is to say, perspective. Which implies, among other things, that we relate ourselves rightly to God and to our fellows; that we each see ourselves as we really are--

"But," some will argue, "if A.A. has no authority to govern its individual members or groups, how shall it ever be sure that the common welfare does come first? How is it possible to be governed without a government? If everyone can do as he pleases, how can you have aught but anarchy?"

The answer seems to be that we A.A.s cannot really do as we please, though there is no constituted human authority to restrain us. Actually, our common welfare is protected by powerful safeguards. The moment any action seriously threatens the common welfare, group opinion mobilizes to remind us; our conscience begins to complain. If one persists, he may be-

"a small part of a great whole." Seeing our fellows thus, we shall enjoy group harmony. That is why A.A. Tradition can confidently state, "Our common welfare comes first."

"Does this mean," some will ask, "that in A.A. the individual doesn't count too much? Is he to be swallowed up, dominated by the group?"

No, it doesn't seem to work out that way. Perhaps there is no soci-

ety on earth more solicitous of personal welfare, more careful to grant the individual the greatest possible liberty of belief and action. Alcoholics Anonymous has no "musts." Few A.A. groups impose penalties on anyone for non-conformity. We do suggest, but we don't discipline. Instead, compliance or non-compliance with any principle of A.A. is a matter for the conscience of the individual; he is the judge of his own conduct. Those words of old time, "Judge not," we observe most literally.

come so disturbed as to get drunk; alcohol gives him a beating. Group opinion shows him that he is off the beam, his own conscience tells him that he is dead wrong, and, if he goes too far, Barleycorn brings him real conviction.

So it is we learn that in matters deeply affecting the group as a whole, "our common welfare comes first." Rebellion ceases and cooperation begins because it must; we have disciplined ourselves.

Eventually, of course, we cooperate because we really wish to; we see that without substantial unity there can be no A.A., and that without A.A. there can be little lasting recovery for anyone. We gladly set

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aside personal ambitions whenever these might harm A.A. We humbly confess that we are but "a small part of a great whole."

Bill W.

The A.A. Grapevine, December, 1947

BIRTHDAYS

Highlighted birthdays are 1, 5, 10....

February

<u>Name</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Group</u>
Bob G.	3	2007	Happy Friday Group
Jan L.	5	1991	Forest Lakeside Group
Leo N	6	1983	Freedom Group
Bill M.	9	1997	St Georges Group
Tim B.	10	1988	Eastland Group
Scott L.	15	1998	Forest Lakeside Group
Bart S	15	1984	New Beginnings
Rob C.	16	1991	North End Group
Mike D.	22	1968	Murphy Road Group
Dorothy R.	24	1986	Murphy Road Group
Jerry H	25	2008	Hill St Blues
Ed B.	25	2007	Beginners/Reflections Group
Bob C.	26	2004	The Hub Group

March

<u>Name</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Group</u>
Leo T.	3	2008	Beginners/Reflections Group
Chipper R.	3	1994	Forest Lakeside Group
Jeremy B.	11	2010	Eastland Group
Tom J.	12	1988	Theford Workshop Group
Rick R.	16	2010	Eastland Group
Mike W.	14	1997	Beginners/Reflections Group
Patricia C.	14	2009	St Georges Group
Dave T.	15	1995	New Beginnings
Marie R.	17	2010	St Georges Group
Doug M.	27	1985	Murphy Road Group