
Carrying The Message

STEP I - We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.

Under the lash of alcoholism, we were driven to A.A., and there we discover the fatal nature of our situation. Then, and only then, do we become open-minded to conviction and as willing to listen as the dying can be. We stand ready to do anything which will lift the merciless obsession from us. (Twelve and Twelve page 24.)

How dark it is before the dawn! In reality that was the beginning of my last debauch. I was soon to be catapulted into what I like to call the fourth dimension of existence. I was to know happiness, peace, and usefulness, in a way of life that is incredibly more wonderful as time passes. (Bill W.)

Trustee Reflections

What significant event(s) occurred that convinced you that you were powerless over alcohol?

December is my anniversary month and as I get closer to the day thoughts come back to me about what the end of my drinking career was like. For the longest time I denied that I was powerless over alcohol. I didn't see a problem because I hung out with people that did the same things I did.

Two significant events that happened to me to change my mind about my drinking and powerlessness were as follows:

About three months prior to my unplanned sobriety date my mother was diagnosed with Stage 4 brain and lung cancer at the early age of 55. This news sent me on such a spree. My drinking significantly increased, and it was all that mattered to me anymore. One morning I came home from the night before and my mother was in the kitchen asking me if I was ready to go. I said "Where?" She said, "You told me yesterday you were going to take me to my chemo appointment this morning" In the drunken hungover haze that I was in, I told her, "Why do you need chemo anyways you're going to die soon? Besides I am too drunk to take you anywhere, I am going to bed." My mother was basically my best friend, and someone who I could confide in and it hurts so much when I remembered what I had said to her. This is how I usually dealt with tragedy in my life in general.

The last situation was the night of my last drink. The day started with the same thought as always, where and how will I get my next drink. I took my mother's car, while she lay on the couch suffering from her last chemo appointment and went to work at the pizza shop to deliver pizzas on Christmas Eve. I knew it would be busy and the tips would be great. I was restless and angry, and I couldn't wait for the first delivery so I could stop at the store. Finally, I got my first delivery three minutes after I got to work and the ease I got from that first drink came quickly. I was also supposed to save some delivery money to buy my girlfriend a present. She was going to pick me up after work to go to her house and spend time with her family. Unfortunately, once again, I lit the fire with that first drink and the flame kept roaring all day thru that night and finished the next day. I walked home on Christmas Day at 3pm and when I knocked on my mother's door, it opened and I did not get a Merry Christmas but instead I got grabbed and slammed up against the wall asking me where the car is. Fortunately, the situation worked itself out later that evening, but I was given the ultimatum GET HELP OR GET OUT!!! I realized then I could not stop on my own. I was so powerless, and I needed HELP!!! -Board of Trustee Member

January 2020

RAI Board of Trustees

What areas of your life were unacceptable to you and convinced you your life was unmanageable?

While I was in college, I used to believe that I was no different than any one of the other students who went out to the bars for a good time with friends. I would be amongst peers of my age and would be jovial in celebrating a camaraderie I thought was how college night life was meant to be lived, and considered myself to be a "social drinker". We would joke around about being alcoholics while ponying up to the bar for our next round of shots. All the while I would be thinking to myself, when is the next round as I started to feel the warming sensation of the drink I just took as it worked its way down to make me feel better about myself. I would relish in what would occur the next day... hearing what happened after the point in the evening when I "blacked out". It was truly a great feeling to know how free of a spirit I could be when I had reached that point, and how I suddenly felt socially accepted for the lively person that I was when I was drunk.

There was a point however, where the consequences from my drinking were mounting up, and the urge to drink became greater as a way for me to escape the feelings of guilt, shame, and remorse for a short moment until I would sober up and have that urge come back stronger and more fervently than before. It was all soon to come to an end... The night that would change my life forever. After ten years of drinking, I went into a black out, and till this very day I cannot remember exactly what occurred on that night. I was told that I ran a red light and drove into a car going through the intersection, nearly killing the woman in the car that I had hit. When I became aware of what I had done, a fear had entered my mind that I will be forever grateful for. I had become afraid of who I had become because of my alcoholism. I had never set out to hurt anyone, but in looking back at the wreckage of my alcoholism, I had hurt many. I could now admit that I was an alcoholic, I could admit that my life was unmanageable, but I had yet to take the First Step.

It wasn't until I was a month into serving my 3 year sentence when I had been caught for being under the influence in the correctional facility in which I was incarcerated in. I was sent to solitary confinement for my actions, and it was there that I had my spiritual awakening. For when I realized that I had been locked up, while already being locked up for my drinking, then I truly understood that I was powerless over alcohol, and that my life had become unmanageable. This was the point where I realized that there was no way that I could ever on my own accord, solve my problem with alcohol, without seeking the help of others like me and a higher power of my understanding that today I choose to call God. Today I am blessed to have been given the opportunity to have found the courage to take that First Step, and I am truly grateful that someone took the time out of their life to guide me the rest of the way.

-Ralph M. Intergroup Secretary

If you have any comments or would like to provide your reflections on Step I, please send to Central Office at office1@rochester-ny-aa.org