

## Step zero; Concede to our Innermost Self...

### Step One, Admitted We were Powerless....

By Rick R.

“We learned that we had to concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery.” (Big Book pg. 30) What does that mean to me? I thought I was doing it when I admitted that I was an alcoholic, but I soon learned better. Recently I heard a member referring to it as *step zero*, and I can see what he meant. There is a difference in *conceding* to my innermost self, and the act of *admitting* to others that I am an alcoholic. Without the *concession*, I could not really *admit* it to myself or to anyone else. Once I got it done on the inside, the outside part came much easier. When it became apparent that drinking was not working for me anymore and, in fact, it was going to lead to an early end, I showed up at the doors of AA wanting the pain to stop and I thought that I was addressing the problem of Alcoholism. As I look back on it now, I realize that I was only dealing with the *surface issues* and not the *root causes* of my problems. Even so, it was a beginning. It took quite a while for me to understand the importance of looking at the deeper-rooted flaws in my value system and to address them at that level. When I began to do this, it started to change the surface issues that are caused by those character flaws. At a meeting recently, I heard a young man share that “alcohol was not his problem, that alcohol was the treatment for his problem until it stopped working, then he had to stop drinking and learn to deal with those deeper problems if he were to get any relief at all. I found that to be very insightful for someone his age and time in the program. I believe that if I want to live a full and happy life, I must examine the *innermost motives* for what I do. That, I believe, is the source of my problems. If my motives are honest, unselfish, and based on sound principles, and if I am strong enough to do what I know to be right in each of these actions, I become more at peace with myself and I have fewer regrets. As it often happens, alcoholics resist complete surrendering until they have come to the point where they have lost more than they were willing to lose, or they are about to lose something they are unwilling to lose. Now the need to decide whether they want to continue to go down that road to destruction becomes more important. In AA we sometimes hear the term, “THE GIFT OF DESPERATION.” Painful as it sounds, the veterans of the program know the importance of reaching bottom if we have any chance of practicing the rest of the program at the level of our innermost selves, for that is where our problems reside, and that is also where real solutions dwell. If I do not understand this about myself, I will keep repeating the mistakes of the past and waste much of the precious time God gave me. I wish I could say that it was easy but, just knowing this was only the beginning. My EGO dogged my every step. It takes diligence and commitment to stay on the course. In the portion of Ch. 5 that we read at the beginning of each meeting, honesty is mentioned three times for without self-honesty, we have little chance of success. If, however, we can muster the strength to take that leap of faith, the rewards will be immeasurable.

In the words of Shakespeare, “This, above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, Thou, canst not then be false to any man.