

## District 12 Dispatch

District 12's General Service philosophy, as derived from "A.A.'s Legacy of Service" (Bill W., 1951), is to assist its GSRs to help ensure that their groups carry the message. *"Our Twelfth Step — carrying the message — is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence.*

*Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die.*

*Hence, an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer..."*



District 12 General Service is supported by the voluntary contributions of the groups it serves and is guided and directed by the Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service, the guiding principles by which A.A. members recover and by which our Society functions through the principles of A.A.'s **Twelve Steps**, **Twelve Traditions** and **Twelve Concepts**.

District 12's General Service primary purpose is to stimulate A.A. members interest in general service by relying on good communication as the primary means to show that *"service can add a rich dimension to their sober lives and Twelfth Step work, and that participation is vital to the future of A.A."* (S23)

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| About District ..... | 1 |
| Step One .....       | 2 |
| Tradition One .....  | 3 |
| Concept One .....    | 4 |
| Events .....         | 5 |
| Books & Grapevine .. | 6 |

## Step 1

**“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.”**

**Principle of this Step:  
Honesty**

The One Thing I Need To Know About Step 1:

### **Alcohol Isn't My Problem**



Step One of Alcoholics Anonymous states: *“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.”* This step is the foundation of recovery, and it begins with honesty. For many, acknowledging the truth about their drinking is the hardest part. Denial and rationalization often cloud the reality of alcoholism, but Step One calls for a clear-eyed admission of powerlessness. Honesty here is not about shame, but about courage—the willingness to face reality without excuses or self-deception.

Humility naturally follows honesty in Step One. To admit powerlessness is to recognize that self-will alone cannot overcome alcoholism. Humility is not humiliation; it is the acceptance of our human limitations and the openness to seek help beyond ourselves. This humility allows us to let go of pride and the illusion of control, creating space for spiritual growth and connection with others who share the same journey.

Together, honesty and humility form the bedrock of recovery. Honesty breaks through denial, while humility opens the door to transformation. By embracing these principles in Step One, members of AA begin a process of healing that is both personal and communal. It is in this surrender—honest acknowledgment of



### **What Can I Surrender in this Step?**

- 1.) The delusion that in and of myself I have power, and
- 2.) The belief that alcohol is my problem

## **MYTHS ABOUT THIS STEP**

### **POWERLESSNESS MEANS YOU'RE WEAK.**

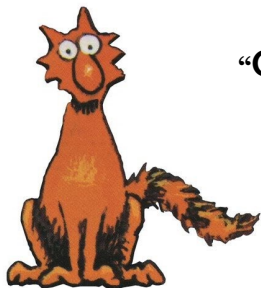
Admitting powerlessness is a crucial step on the path to freedom and strength. It takes honesty and courage to accept that alcohol has taken over your life.

### **YOU HAVE TO TAKE THIS STEP OVER AND OVER.**

Step One is the only step we ever take 100% and once taken, we don't have to ever take it again. Once you admit to your inner most self that you're an alcoholic – you can't “un-admit” that. Once you get completely honest and tell the truth – that truth never changes. Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic.

## **Step Checklist**

1. Have I ever tried to prove unsuccessfully that I can drink (think) like normal drinkers (thinkers)?
2. Is my life unmanageable as a result of my drinking (thinking)?
3. As a result of my drinking (thinking), have I ever felt “pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization?”
4. Have I tried various ways to stop to no avail?
5. Do I understand that recovery can't be done alone, and do I acknowledge that I need help?
6. Does/did life ever get so unbearable I think/thought the only way to deal with it is to get drunk?  
Do/did you have the phenomenon of craving?
7. Have I ever thought, “I just don't know how to deal with life?”
8. Do I have consequences from my drinking (thinking)?
9. Am I willing to accept that something is wrong in my life and that I no longer have control?
10. Have I admitted to my inner most self that I am an alcoholic?



## Tradition 1 Short Form

**“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”**

### Overriding Idea of Tradition 1:

“We” before “Me”

### Principle:

“Unity”



## UNDERSTANDING UNITY

Unity is the spiritual foundation of Alcoholics Anonymous. It reminds members that the strength of the Fellowship lies in collective support. Personal recovery is safeguarded when the group remains united.

## WHY UNITY MATTERS

AA exists to help alcoholics achieve sobriety. Unity ensures this mission remains clear and undivided. A united fellowship provides encouragement and accountability. Unity prevents personal agendas or conflicts from overshadowing AA's primary purpose.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Members practice patience, tolerance, and respect in meetings to maintain group harmony. Group conscience guides decisions, ensuring inclusivity and fairness. Placing common welfare above personal desires strengthens recovery for all.

## CLOSING THOUGHT

Tradition One calls each member to remember that sobriety is best protected when the Fellowship stands together. Unity is not uniformity—it is the shared commitment to AA's primary purpose: carrying the message of recovery to those who still suffer.

## Step-Tradition Parallel

Each tradition answers the question raised by the parallel step. The connection between the First Step and the First Tradition is that I am powerless over alcohol and have an unmanageable life, so I am dependent upon uniting myself with A.A. for my personal recovery. The Step states the problem and the Tradition states the solution. What do I do about my powerlessness and unmanageability? I join A.A. and place our common welfare first, since my personal recovery depends upon doing this.

## Tradition One 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?

## Concept 1

**“Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.”**

### ONE THING YOU NEED TO KNOW:

### PRINCIPLE OF THE CONCEPT

#### RESPONSIBILITY

### **The Groups have the “Ultimate Authority”**

### **Alcoholics Anonymous Concept One and Tradition Two: A Shared Foundation of Unity**

Alcoholics Anonymous Concept One states: *“Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.”* This principle emphasizes that the true authority in AA rests not in individuals or committees, but in the collective voice of the membership. It ensures that decisions affecting AA as a whole are grounded in the shared experience, wisdom, and conscience of the Fellowship. Concept One reminds us that AA’s strength lies in its unity, and that the responsibility for safeguarding its future belongs to all members together.

AA Tradition Two echoes this same spirit of collective guidance: *“For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”* This Tradition applies the principle of collective conscience at the group level, ensuring that no single person dominates or dictates the direction of an AA meeting. Instead, decisions are made through prayerful reflection and group discussion, trusting that a Higher Power works through the collective voice of the members. Tradition Two protects AA groups from authoritarianism and keeps them rooted in humility and service.

When we place Concept One alongside Tradition Two, the connection becomes clear: both affirm that AA’s authority flows from the group conscience, not from individuals. Tradition Two applies this principle locally, within each group, while Concept One extends it globally, to the Fellowship’s world services. Together, they form a seamless framework that ensures AA remains democratic, spiritually guided, and accountable. Whether in a small meeting or at the level of the General Service Conference, the same principle holds true—AA is led by conscience, not by command.

For members engaged in service, these principles are deeply practical. Concept One reminds us that our voice matters in shaping AA’s future, while Tradition Two teaches us to listen humbly and respect the group conscience. In practice, this means participating in business meetings, service assemblies, and conferences with a spirit of unity and trust. It means recognizing that our leaders are servants, not rulers, and that authority rests in the collective conscience guided by a Higher Power. By living out Concept One and Tradition Two together, AA members safeguard both the spiritual integrity and democratic structure of the Fellowship.

### **Concepts Checklist**

1. Does our group have a general service representative (G.S.R.)? Do we feel that our home group is part of A.A. as a whole and do our group’s decisions and actions reflect that?
2. Do we hold regular group conscience meetings encouraging everyone to participate? Do we pass that conscience on to the district, area, or the local intergroup meetings?
3. Is the “collective conscience” of Alcoholics Anonymous at work in my home group? In my area?
4. Where do we fit in the upside-down triangle of A.A.?
5. Are we willing to do what it takes to insure that our democracy of world service will work under all conditions?

**“Old Behavior isn’t Old Behavior If We’re Still Doing It”**





## Contribute to the Newsletter

- Your personnel story
- Anniversary or pot luck at your Home Group—Flyers are needed
- Events for the web site
- [ahlgrenscott@yahoo.com](mailto:ahlgrenscott@yahoo.com)

All these events can be found on “[twinportsaa.org](http://twinportsaa.org)”  
with flyers and directions

- 12-18-2025: District 12 meeting—Duluth
- 12-31-2025: New Years Eve Gala —Duluth Alano
- 1-16-2026: Area 36 Recovery, Unity, & Service Conference—Mankato
- 1-17-2026: Area 35 Winter Workshop—Hibbing
- 2-1-2026: Intergroup Gratitude Party—Duluth
- 2-13-2026: Wils Rice Roundup—Mahnomen MN
- 2-27-2026: West Central Regional Service Conference—Cedar Rapids IA

## The Twelve Concepts OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.
2. The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole society in its world affairs.
3. To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional “Right of Decision.”
4. 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.
5. Throughout our structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.
6. The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.
7. The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.
8. The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of over-all policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.
9. Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.
10. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.
11. The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.
12. The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government; that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

## TWIN PORTS INTERGROUP

- Reading library stocked with all AA books and literature
- Flyers and announcements for events
- Volunteer opportunities galore
- Meeting directories

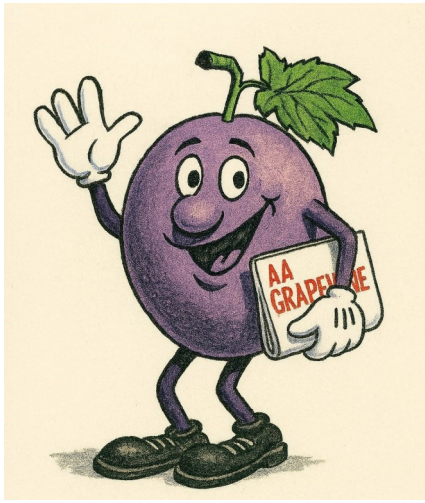


2024 W 3rd St  
Duluth MN 55806  
218-727-8117

Twin Ports Area Intergroup is here to help anyone who  
has a drinking problem.

Our sole purpose is to carry the message of Alcoholics  
Anonymous and to be of service to A.A. Groups in  
Northern Minnesota & Wisconsin.

## Daily Reflections for January



The AA Grapevine Half-Hour Variety Hour. Featuring AA members Don and Sam.

The AA Grapevine Half-Hour Variety Hour. Featuring long-time AA members Don and Sam.

Each week Don and Sam will interview a different member about their experience, strength and hope, in a casual “meeting after the meeting” manner. Special features will enhance each episode.

A new podcast episode will be available in English every Monday at 9:00 am EST.

### In every copy:

- Letter from the editor
- Dear Grapevine
- Discussion topic
- Alcoholism at large
- At Wits End



January 2026

### Stories for Day Counters

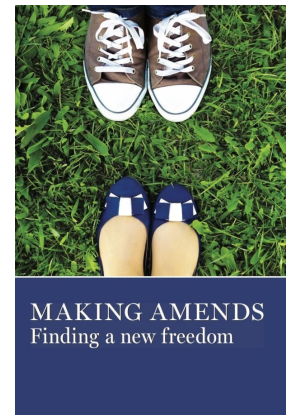
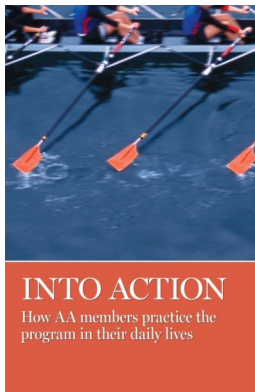
We kick off the year with our “Stories for Day Counters” issue, full of experiences by AA members about the things that helped them most during their very earliest days in AA.

- The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves.
- We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.
- We feel that elimination of our drinking is but a beginning. A much more important demonstration of our principles lies before us in our respective homes, occupations and affairs.
- We perceive that only through utter defeat are we able to take our first steps toward liberation and strength. Our admissions of personal powerlessness finally turn out to be firm bedrock upon which happy and purposeful lives may be built.
- Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.
- As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action.

Your Daily Reflection each day can be found at  
“[Twinportsaa.org](http://Twinportsaa.org)”

## Month of December in A.A. History

- 1934 (December 11) – Bill W. takes his last drink & enters Towns Hospital. Bill has a spiritual experience there & the obsession with alcohol is removed
- 1938: New York A.A. split from the Oxford Group.
- 1941: A.A. Bulletin No. 2 reported St. Louis group had ten members.
- 1943: Canadian newspaper reported eight men met at “Little Denmark,” a Toronto restaurant, to discuss starting Canada’s first A.A. group.
- 1951: A.A. Grapevine published memorial issue on Dr. Bob.
- 1938: Jim B., author of *The Vicious Cycle*, a former atheist, gave A.A. “God as we understand Him.”



I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that I am responsible.