

# The Gift of Powerlessness

## Reflecting the glow of recovery from Starlight at Tamassee

By Jon Holland, CEO of Tamassee DAR School

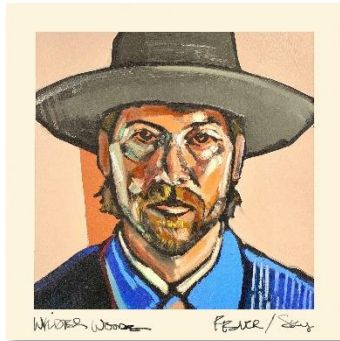


I grew up in a home characterized by domestic violence. As a little boy, I witnessed the abuse my mom and older brothers endured. I felt a deep sense of powerlessness to stop it. Those experiences spawned a passionate commitment for justice for the mistreated, but they also created a deep aversion to admitting powerlessness in my life. I said I never wanted that feeling again. I wanted to be strong enough to overcome.

But sometimes, I'm not. Oh, I've had my victories and successes, but I've also had failures and collapses. I've been powerless, and I needed help to fight the brokenness inside me and out there in the world. The First Step of the Twelve Steps says, "We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction and that our lives had become unmanageable." The journey to recovery begins when I step out of denial and admit I'm powerless by myself to beat this behavior, and I'm powerless on my own to heal the painful emotions and memories that drive the behavior.

Every person struggling with addiction must come to face the truth that if I was strong to beat it, I would have by now. How many times have I tried and failed to stay sober? How long have I stayed sober while white knuckling it? Why won't it stay beat? Why does it keep coming back, and I give in? Why do I make excuses and justify addictive behavior? Why do I seek friends who enable me to keep using?

Honestly facing those questions is a humbling experience, and humility is a gift – as is admitting powerlessness. When I admit I can't beat it, then I open myself up to a Power greater than myself and to the experience of community. I can't win on my own, but I wasn't made to do it on my own. I am made for relationship, and with the help of God and healthy recovery friends, I can indeed overcome.



I love the Wilder Woods song, "Patience," where Bear Reinhart sings, "There was a time when I was too scared to call upon you. I had a weight around my neck, and I was dying from it. ... Trying to bury this secret gave me a grave of my own. ... So here comes a confession, I've been running so long. It finally feels like a blessing to admit when I'm wrong, hey. ... How many times can I fall and wake up? How many times can I change my mind? How many times can I test your love? When fate's on the line, it's so easy to give up. But what kind of life is staying stuck?"

At Starlight at Tamassee, we believe healing begins when we embrace the gift of powerlessness. Admitting we can't do it on our own invites the help that sets families free. To learn more about Starlight, visit [www.starlight.tdarschool.org](http://www.starlight.tdarschool.org), or contact us at [starlight@tdarschool.org](mailto:starlight@tdarschool.org) or 864-944-1390. If your church or civic group is interested in a presentation on recovery, contact Jon Holland at [jholland@tdarschool.org](mailto:jholland@tdarschool.org).

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