

## EXPLANATION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES' SUGGESTED WHITE BOOK REVISIONS

*At the end of this report is a complete print-out of the White Book as it would appear with all of these changes. The places where wording changes are being suggested have been highlighted in bold type.*

### Current White Book Language

### Suggested Changes, and Rationale

#### ■ Foreword

"...addiction to narcotics and sedation."

"addiction to drugs."  
Our Fellowship is composed of members who used a wide variety of drugs. These terms are too limited. We wish to exclude no addicts.

#### ■ Who Is an Addict?

"Our whole life and thinking is centered" to "...was centered"

The two sentences beginning with "Our whole life..." have been changed to the past tense, placing the using in the past tense, but the disease in the present.

#### ■ What is the N.A. Program?

"...recovered addicts."

"...recovering addicts..."  
WSC directive.

"There are no musts in N.A., but We suggest that you..."

"We suggest that you..."  
Delete "There are no musts in N.A." to eliminate this potential rationalization for lack of action from our conference approved literature

Same sentence: "...honest desire to stop using."

"...desire to stop using." Delete "honest."  
Consistency with Tradition Three.

Page 2 paragraph 1  
"We have no leaders, no..."

"We have no initiation fees or dues..." The statement "We have no leaders" is in direct conflict with Tradition Two.

Page 2 paragraph 1  
"...age, race, color..."

"...age, race, sexual identity"  
Race and color are the same, and we wish to add sexual identity to be clear on this, and consistent with our Basic Text.

#### ■ Why Are We Here?

Bottom of p.2: Change that paragraph as follows:

"Most of us realized that in our addiction we were slowly committing suicide, but addiction is such a cunning enemy of life that we had lost the power..."  
Addiction is singular, and again we

P. 3, the comments about jail, medicine, religion and psychiatry -- change as follows:

Page 3 Paragraph 2:  
Replace with the following:

Page 3 paragraph 3:  
Entire paragraph.

#### ■ How It Works

"These are suggested only, but..."

Step 12

"Although there are no musts..."

P. 5 "...fix, pill or drink."

de-emphasize the particular drug and emphasize the disease, consistent with our First Step.

"Many of us ended up in jail, or sought help through medicine, religion or psychiatry. None of these methods was sufficient for us. Our disease always resurfaced or continued to progress until in desperation..."  
The old language expressed an opinion on an outside issue, and overstated the point. The new language makes the same point without these problems.

"After coming to N.A. we realized we were sick people. We suffered from a disease for which there is no known cure. It can, however, be arrested at some point, and recovery is then possible." All of the comparisons made in the old language have problems. Since no comparisons are necessary to make the point, we elected to delete them all.

Delete the paragraph in its entirety, but add the following language to the Foreword on the cover page: "Our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions were adapted from those of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are deeply grateful to A.A. for pointing the way for us to a new way of life." This keeps the gratitude statement intact without using A.A.'s success as a measure of our own, and places the statement in a more appropriate place in the booklet.

"These are the..."  
Again, removing a rationalization for not working the steps.

Change the word "those" to "these." This includes Step 12 in the spiritual awakening process.

Three of these that are indispensable are Honesty, Open-mindedness and Willingness." Same rationale as previous.

"...toke, snort, fix, pill or drink."  
After much discussion of a variety of alternatives, we elected to expand the list rather than eliminating it or generalizing it. The problem is that the current language does not accurately reflect the using methods of our membership, but specific mention does make the point more strongly. The language we decided

to use came from the Basic Text.

Page 5, 3rd paragraph:  
"...release our addiction all  
over again, or create a new one.

"...release our addiction all over again."  
We have one disease--addiction.

Last Paragraph: replace in  
its entirety with the following:

"Thinking of alcohol as different from  
other drugs has caused a great many  
addicts to relapse. Although outside of  
N.A. alcohol is often viewed separately,  
we cannot afford to be confused about  
this. Alcohol is a drug. We are people  
with the disease of addiction who must  
abstain from all drugs in order to  
recover."  
We believe this language makes the point  
much more clearly, and is more consistent  
with the N.A. principles of recovery.

### ■ What Can I Do?

First Paragraph, last 2 sentences:  
Replace with the following:

"If you are in an institution of any kind  
and have stopped using for the present,  
you can with a clear mind try this way  
of life." It may not be realistic to assume  
that someone in an institution reading  
this has gone through complete  
withdrawal. This change is to keep that  
from being confusing for them.

### ■ Recovery and Relapse

All of the text on P. 8,  
replace with the following:

"Many people think that recovery is  
simply a matter of not using drugs. They  
consider a relapse a sign of complete  
failure, and long periods of abstinence a  
sign of complete success. We in the  
recovery program of Narcotics  
Anonymous have found that this  
perception is too simplistic. After a  
member has had some involvement in our  
Fellowship, a relapse may be the jarring  
experience that brings about a more  
rigorous application of the program. By  
the same token we have observed some  
members who remain abstinent for long  
periods of time whose dishonesty and  
self-deceit..."  
The current language is confusing and  
wordy, and seems to imply that you can  
go ahead and use again--at least things  
won't be as bad as they used to be. We  
are sure that is not the intent of the  
chapter, and we have made the intended  
points more clearly.

P. 10, lines 5-7: "Emotional  
sobriety is in reality our goal..."

"Recovery, as experienced through our  
Twelve Steps, is our goal..."  
This is more consistent with our  
principles of recovery.

"A relapse may provide the charge for the demolition process."

"A relapse, if we survive it, may provide..." Added the phrase to counteract the temptation to view this part of the essay as a justification for a relapse

The Trustees agreed that the chapter "We Do Recover" is a personal story, and one with historical importance for us as a Fellowship. It was therefore agreed to move that chapter to the beginning of the Personal Stories section, and leave it in its original form. "Just for Today," also unchanged, would then follow "Recovery and Relapse." Throughout the Personal Stories, the word "recovered" will be changed to "recovering" in every case, as per the Conference's instructions. To lead into this section, we recommend the following Introduction:

### PERSONAL STORIES

*Narcotics Anonymous has grown a great deal since 1953. The people who started this Fellowship and for whom we have a deep and lasting affection have taught us much about addiction and recovery. In the following pages we offer you our beginnings. The first section was written in 1965 by one of our earliest members. More recent stories of N.A. members' recovery can be found in our Basic Text.*

We are recommending minimal editing to these stories. We tried to retain the historical flavor of the stories, but we also tried to clear up problems with the traditions. The changes proposed below are all either designed to remove mention of specific institutions, or to clarify N.A.'s perception that we suffer from one disease, regardless of "drug of choice." References to alcohol as creating a different disease have been modified or deleted.

#### ONE THIRD OF MY LIFE

1. "And twice at Ft. Worth" ...delete
2. "This was at TI Federal and" ...delete
3. "Sure I had a craving for narcotics" ...change "narcotics" to "drugs"

#### I CAN'T DO ANY MORE TIME

1. "...out of an institution for women." deleted reference to specific institution
2. "Drinking alcoholically" ...change to: "drinking abusively"
3. "Would have been carried away with alcohol and drugs" ...change to: "would have gotten carried away with using."
4. "With drugs" ...change to: "with other drugs"
5. "And when I finally reached Camarillo" ...delete
6. "And alcohol again" ...delete
7. "The institution at Corona 3X" ...change to: "another institution three times." (delete all references to specific institutions, say "an institution" where appropriate)
8. "One of the counselors at Corona" ...change to: "one of these counselors"

9. "Over alcohol and" ...delete
10. "In Corona" ...delete
11. "And sober" ...delete
12. "When I left Corona" ...change to: "When I left the institution for the last time."
13. "Or to drink" ...delete
14. "Including alcohol" ...delete
15. "I don't have a problem with drugs or alcohol" ...change to: "I don't have a problem with this drug or that drug."

#### THE VICIOUS CYCLE

1. "To turn myself into Ft. Worth" ...change to: "to admit myself into an institution."
2. "Various other sedative" ...change to: "Various other drugs."
3. "Including alcohol" ...delete

#### SOMETHING MEANINGFUL

1. "or drink" ...delete
2. "without drugs, sedative or alcohol" ...change to: "without drugs."

#### I WAS DIFFERENT

"Addiction was my way of life--" Deleted "and dependency" to avoid confusion with N.A. language and philosophy

#### FEARFUL MOTHER

1. "And alcohol (another form of drug)" ...delete

#### FAT ADDICT

1. "periodic alcoholic" ...change to : "binge drinker"
2. "Alcohol" ...delete

#### GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION CHANGES

In addition to the above changes, the Trustees are recommending that the White Book be edited for grammar and punctuation. A small group of WSO staff members and a Trustee made the following recommendations for editing, which were adopted by the Trustees:

FOREWORD: Remove commas from last sentence

SERENITY PRAYER: Commas instead of ellipses; Block style instead of outdent:

God, grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change,  
The courage to change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.

WHO IS AN ADDICT:

Replace comma with dash after "one form or another"  
"We lived to use and used to live." Inverted these for clarity  
(i.e. avoid confusion with "used to" as in "We used to live  
down the street...")

WHAT IS THE N.A. PROGRAM?

Used italics rather than quotes and initial caps for emphasis  
(*one* requirement; *they* work)

WHY ARE WE HERE:

Insert comma after "We did many people great harm"

HOW IT WORKS:

Standardized the Steps as follows:  
a. comma rather than a dash in Step One  
b. capitalize Power in Step Two  
c. italicize "as we understood Him" in steps 3 and 11  
d. Step 11: no comma in "God *as we understood Him*"  
e. Change "those" to "these" in Step 12

[after the steps]  
Fix run-on sentence: replace comma with period after "we  
can't do it all at once"

Add comma after "We put great emphasis on this"

WHAT CAN I DO?

Add comma after "previous chapter" in first line

TRADITIONS

"Freedom for the group" rather than "Freedom for the groups"  
Better parallel with "individual," and reads better out loud

a. Throughout Traditions: "group" will not be capitalized  
b. Tradition 4: no comma in "N.A. as a whole"  
c. Tradition 8: "service centers" not capitalized  
d. Tradition 9: comma rather than a semicolon  
e. Tradition 10: semicolon: "issues; hence" Spell out "Narcotics  
Anonymous"

RECOVERY AND RELAPSE:

Invert the sentence beginning, "At other times..." for clarity  
"At other times that freedom can only be achieved by a grim and obstinate willfulness to hang on to abstinence come hell or high water until a crisis passes."

"An addict who can lose, even for a time, the need or desire to use, and has free choice over impulsive thinking and compulsive action, has reached a turning point that may be the decisive factor in his recovery." Delete "by any means" to shorten up this sentence a little

"...dependence on a Power greater than ourselves and from the giving..." Add "from" for clarity

"Our resistance to change seems built in, and only..." Add comma

#### WE DO RECOVER:

Add a comma in last line of first paragraph: "drug, or some substitute, to recapture" -- sets the phrase off in commas to break up the sentence

After "Compulsion--" delete "that": "Compulsion--once having started..." -- as it is it is not comfortably parallel with the sentence about obsession.

Add a dash after "jails, institutions or death": This sets that phrase off more correctly (the phrase was introduced by a dash, it should be completed by one too).

"When my addictions..." Change to "When my addiction..." for consistency with the rest of the text. (one disease)

"I found A.A., and": Include that comma

"That this was what was principally needed has proved itself in these passing years." Deleted a comma

"We believed in openly scheduled meetings--no more hiding as other groups had tried." Changed the semicolon to a dash

"...could face his problem in everyday living, just that much faster would he..." Added the comma; changed "of" to "in"

#### ONE THIRD OF MY LIFE:

"The old hassle is gone. I can lie down, take it easy and be comfortable." Changed the first comma to a period

Changed "thru" to "through" wherever it occurs

Changed "X-mas" to "Christmas"

"Now, I can go through these stores without even a temptation to steal." Changed "and not even" to "without even"

"I feel that I was basically honest from childhood. I stole to keep..." Changed the comma after "childhood" to a period

"to keep my head on my chest, to keep my stomach from grinding": Add the comma

"to keep my nose from running. That nose! It was always running whether I was sick or not." Changed the dash to a period and the comma to an exclamation point

(All numbers below 101 are spelled out rather than printed in their numerical form throughout the text.)

"My story is similar to many others. I hit one nuthouse when I was thirteen--I really don't remember much about it." Changed "other" to "others"; changed the first comma to a period; changed the second comma to a dash

"cleaned up off the pills, and then..." Added the comma

"...haven't had the temptation; I can't say I haven't had some obsession; I can't say I haven't had the passing thought of wanting to use, because I have at times." Replaced the period and comma with semicolons; added comma before "because"

"I gave a lot of them a hard time with the attitudes I used to have." Delete the comma

"Sure, I had a craving for drugs, but at that time I was ready for anything that would get my feet off the ground." Change "narcotics" to "drugs," and invert the sentence for clarity

"...get my feet off the ground (that isn't an airplane) will head me for real trouble. I sincerely believe this. I don't know..." Set the phrase off in parenthesis; replace the comma with a period

"Now I find I have a greater tolerance..." Delete the comma

"Practicing the principles of this program the way I understand them, staying clean a day at a time, sharing experiences with other addicts who are new to the program, these actions have changed my whole outlook on life." Restructured this sentence with commas so that it is a list of clear participials followed by an independent clause rather than several dangling participles.

I CAN'T DO ANY MORE TIME:

"I came to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous as an addict, out of an institution for women." Omitted the reference to a specific institution.

"...so that it hasn't been necessary for me to use any kind of drugs in my daily life." Omitted references to specific drugs

"...because we addicts are so very much alike." Added the word "addicts" for clarity

"I've always seen another side of myself whenever problems and..." Deleted comma

"I have also learned from those who have made mistakes." Moved the word "also"

"...and I realize today that the reason for that was I was sick to begin with." Deleted commas

"Although this is certainly a suicidal path in itself, when I was aware and in a lucid moment, I did realize I was hopelessly addicted." Reorganized the sentence for clarity

"I was in San Francisco, not knowing which way to turn, when I tried suicide and was unsuccessful." Changed subject to "I" to clear up the dangling participle and ambiguous referent for "it"; changed "that" to "when"

"I now think that if it had been possible for me I would have come to this program at that same age as a lot who are here today." Dropped the comma after "me"; restructured syntax to tighten up this sentence; started a new paragraph after this to shorten up that long one

"It wasn't the thought, "I can't use drugs," just, "I can't do any more time." Added quotes

"I'm sure that when I was in the institution they doubted my sincerity in ever wanting to do anything about my problem." Omitted reference to specific institution

"I think one of my counselors, who just naturally loves..." Omitted reference to the specific institution

"I had tried so many other things, so I decided to see if a Power greater than myself could restore my sanity. To the best of my ability I turned my life and my will over to the care of God as I understood Him, and I tried in my daily life to understand God. " Made two sentences out of one, added commas and added the words "other" and "to see if" to clarify that point

"I had read all kinds of metaphysical books. I agreed..." New paragraph, period instead of comma

"It's amazing how after I had gotten just this far, I began to get a little honesty and could see myself as I was."

Rearranged the sentence for clarity

"...could get honest, but I became aware..." Added comma

"...looking outside myself at the addicts around me, by getting to know them and understand them, by being friendly with them." Cleared up parallel construction problems by using commas and repeating "by"

"...where credit is due, and I do believe that my daily attendance at psychotherapy groups with..." Added comma and deleted specific reference to Corona

"Oh! can I make it outside?" Added quotes

"...times institutions took so many years out of my life that I..." deleted commas

"...just normal living, but God has seen fit..." Added comma

"...steady jobs at first, but there was..." Added comma

"In the meantime, I give myself to my job every day, as best I can, and..." Rearranged syntax for clarity

"...I now give my attention to my daily problems..." Change know to now

"...fear, anxiety, resentment and self-pity..." Clear up parallel construction problems--resentment singular, only one "and"

"...every night, and I'm real grateful..." Added comma

"...helped me here was that..." Deleted comma

"dual problem." Added quotes

"I got a lot of help from my sponsor when it seemed that everyone had let me down, both family and friends." Made one sentence out of two, changed "have" to "got" and added "when" for the transition

"...and a way of life. My own..." Replaced comma with period

"...have happened to me. I can't conceive of..." Replaced comma with period

#### THE VICIOUS CYCLE

"...one thing for another. That was my pattern." Period instead of comma

"...same environment. Again I was using heroin and various other..." Period instead of comma

"...me a shot that made me feel good. I found myself going to him..." Period instead of semicolon

"...insanely afraid and began drinking too. This went on around..." Delete comma; period instead of semicolon

"...drugs that I had been using, but in a distorted personality..." Deleted a comma

"...interests now that mean something, and realize that that was..." Deleted a comma

"...I still find it difficult to face things, but I'm no longer..." Added a comma

"...understand Him, for this way of life." Added a comma

#### SOMETHING MEANINGFUL

"I know now I am not the great leader or philosopher that I tried to make people believe I was." Combine the first two sentences this way

"...trying what they had to offer to see whether it would succeed..." Delete comma

"It seems that though..." Delete commas

"...ready to change. And although I closed..." Period instead of comma

"Since I have become willing to do something about my life with the N.A. program, life has been fuller and more meaningful." Replaced "life" with "it"; replaced "with more meaning" with "more meaningful" (parallel construction)

"...on a daily basis without drugs." Delete comma

"Although I do not now desire or need drugs, I have to fill the void that's left with something worthwhile." Changed "narcotics" to "drugs"; added "that's"; deleted comma

"...that they go. As long as I follow..." Removed "and" and replaced comma with period

#### I WAS DIFFERENT

"My story may differ from the others you have heard. I was never arrested or hospitalized." Deleted comma; new sentence after "heard"

"...my way of life--the only way of life..." Replaced semicolon with dash

"...‘good old-fashioned,’ upper-middle-class broken home."  
Moved the end quote

"Sometimes I felt all-powerful and sometimes I prayed for the comfort of idiocy--if only I didn't have to think." Dash instead of parentheses

"No one came to save me; I wasn't instantly cured." Semicolon instead of comma

"After I'd been around for about six months, the novelty..."  
Added comma

"Somehow I survived that first dose of reality." "that" instead of "those"

"...it's been an uphill fight; I've had to work to stay clean."  
Semicolon instead of comma

"...used to spend my time looking for the magic--those people,"  
Dash instead of semicolon

"I found a little faith, and, from it, freedom." Add commas

#### FEARFUL MOTHER

"I thought an addict was a person who was using hard drugs, someone who was on the streets or in jail." Added "someone who"; deleted second "was"

"...was different--I got my drugs from a doctor or friends."  
Changed first comma to a dash, second to a period; Changed "of" to "or" (assumed typo)

"...I tried to do right--at work, in my marriage and in raising my children." Changed comma to dash; changed "in working" to "at work"; added "my"

"I wanted to be a good mother. I wanted to be a good wife. I wanted to be involved in society yet never felt a part of it."  
Changed "Wanting" to "I wanted" to avoid awkward sentence fragments

"...remained hidden in my home--so many things through the years--" Changed periods to dashes to avoid fragment

"I had just become a grandmother..." Changed "have" to "had"

"When I started on the program of N.A., there were a lot of people who suggested just everyday things for me to do, like eating, taking a bath, getting dressed, going for a walk, going to meetings." Added comma after N.A.; changed period to comma and deleted "things" to avoid fragment; added present participles

FAT ADDICT

Deleted the paragraph break after the second sentence

"...I used drugs only for one reason--because I didn't like the way I felt." Dash instead of semicolon

"He was what some people call a periodic user; either he was in a state of..." changed to "He was a binge drinker; either..."

"...mothers. For some reason, I was thought to be a liar." Period instead of comma

"...lower level people, and I never felt.." Added comma

"My family life was confused and painful, but a lot of sound moral values were passed on to me in my upbringing." Added comma and deleted paragraph break

"to stay employed. As a matter of fact" Period instead of "and"

"...not to get hooked, that I could use..." Comma instead of "and"

"I bounced around the country and ended up in penitentiaries and jails." Inverted the sentence for clarity

"Having no place to go, I walked into this..." Deleted "seemingly"

"...no way out. I was completely and..." Period instead of semicolon

"...no fees or dues--that I had already paid my dues via my past life--and that..." Set dependent clause off in dashes

"I have a nice home and family, an executive position, and most of all..." Parallel construction

"I am able to feel good, to feel joyful and blissful, to feel serenity, even when things are not as good as they might be." Parallel construction

"...that if you too are suffering as I once was, you..." Deleted commas and the second "that" .