

FROM. General Service Office of
Narcotics Anonymous.

For the first time in the long, sometimes glorious, sometimes disastrous history of man; that segment of humanity, the true minority group, the most shunned and misunderstood of all emotionally imbalanced people, the most frustrated failure in the business of living, the most fiendish in the created image presented to society at large and the one most likely to, succeed in terminating life at an early age; the addict, now stands in a new dimension. Only in rare and exceptional cases, ^{name} ~~name~~ the addict ever recover before, even then we do not know whether this change lasted a lifetime or not. Now however the castoff theory in the prognosis of addiction is no longer tenable. The old saying "Once an addict always an addict" is no longer true. Attempts have often been made in the past to help rehabilitate addicted people but most often these have been made more as a sop to the conscience of society, than a serious effort to help the addict as a person. Our Judeo-Christian and constitutional teachings kept us from removing the addict from society in a decisive manner, although this was and still is advocated by many sincerely ignorant people. If the pinpointing of the problem of addiction today, brings us all to a deeper awareness of the illness and a more desperate need for action in this social health field, then perhaps it may also bring a new willingness to try a new approach. We believe we have this in Narcotics Anonymous.

Since 1953 when a small group of addicts and alcoholics, both men and women, met in the little town of Sun Valley, in the San Fernando Valley of California, a new and encouraging page in the history of ~~recovery~~ recovery for the addict began to be written. This first committee believed they knew the way to help other addicts through a valid spiritual program which they knew as Alcoholics Anonymous. Their recovery was due to the utilization of that program for their new way of life. A few addicts (mostly in So Calif.) were finding some surcease and help from alcoholics in A.A. groups, scattered here and there throughout the country. However, more often than not, primary lack of identification at the level that would be most beneficial was wanting. Also A.A.'s primary purpose is to help the alcoholic who still suffers from alcoholism to recover; since the key to sobriety lies in the understanding and empathy of one alcoholic for another, many addicts were lost and continued the old way of self destruction, incarceration and death.

The Traditions of A.A. also make it impossible for that society to ally itself with any other causes, no matter how worthy; although They always cooperate when possible. Violation of their Traditions could well destroy that wonderful Fellowship, which itself in it's experience has written a new page of hope for those as hopelessly bound to alcohol as we were addicted to drugs. Since no affiliation here was possible we had to stand as a distinct and separte movement, known now as Narcotics Anonymous, this could well be described as a rebirth of A.A. in an area needing so much what they had to offer and which they so freely gave to us at our birth as a Fellowship.

Let us, as briefly as possible, state what N.A. is, what it is not is important only to the addict himself.

Narcotics Anonymous is a non-profit fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovered addicts who meet regularly to obtain and maintain a way of life that makes drugs unnecessary in facing everyday living. Ours is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only "One" requirement for membership, the honest desire to stop using drugs. There are no musts in N.A. but we suggest to the addict to keep an open mind and give themselves a break. Our program is a set of principles, written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that "They do Work".

There are no strings attached to N.A. We are not affiliated with any other organizations, we have no leaders in the usual sense of the word, no initiation fees or dues, no pledges to sign, no promises to make to anyone. We are not connected to any political, religious or law enforcement groups and are under no surveillance at any time. Anyone may join us, who wants this program, regardless of age, race, color, creed, religion or lack of religion. We are not interested in the addicts past but only in what he wants to do about his or her problem and how we can help. The newcomer is the most important person at any meeting, because we can only keep what we have by giving it away. Our group experience has taught us that those who keep coming back to our meetings stay 'clean'.

Before coming to the Fellowship of N.A. we could not manage our own lives, we could not live and enjoy life as other people do. We had to have something different and we thought we had found it in drugs. We placed their use ahead of the welfare of our families, our wives, our husbands and our children. We had to have drugs at all costs. We did many

people great harm but most of all we harmed ourselves. Through our inability to accept personal responsibilities we were actually creating our own problems. We seemed to be incapable of facing life on its own terms.

Most of us realized, that in our addictions, we were slowly committing suicide, but such cunning enemies of life are narcotics and sedation that we had lost the power to do anything about it. Jail did not help us at all. Medicine, Religion and Psychiatry seemed to have no answers for us that we could use. All other methods having failed for us, in desperation, we sought help from each other in Narcotics Anonymous.

After coming to N.A. we realized we were sick people who suffered from a disease like Alcoholism, Diabetes or Tuberculosis. There is no known 'Cure' for these --all however, can be arrested at some point and 'Recovery' is then possible.

The following, taken from our N.A. booklet is the program as we present it to the newcomer.

HOW IT WORKS.

If you want what we have to offer, and are willing to make the effort to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps. These are suggested only, but they are the principles that made our recovery possible.

1. WE admitted we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. WE came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. WE made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM.
4. WE made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. WE admitted to God, to ourselves and ^{to} another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. WE were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. WE humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. WE made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

I0. WE continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

II. WE sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

I2. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of those steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

This sounds like a big order, and we can't do it all at once. We didn't become addicted in one day, so remember 'EASY DOES IT'

There is one thing more than anything else that will defeat us in our recovery, this is an attitude of indifference or intolerance towards spiritual principles. Although there are no musts in N.A., there are three things that seem indispensable, these are, HONESTY, OPENMINDEDNESS and the WILLINGNESS TO TRY, with these we are well on our way.

We feel that our approach to the problem of addiction is completely realistic, for the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel. We feel that our way is practical, for one addict can best understand and help another addict. We believe that, the sooner we face our problems within our society, in everyday living, just that much faster do we become acceptable, responsible and productive members of that society.

The only way to keep from getting or continuing a habit is not to take that first fix pill or drink. If you are like us you know that one is too many and a thousand never enough. WE put great emphasis on this for we know that when we use drugs in any form, or substitute one for another, we release our addiction all over again or create a new one.

The substitution of alcohol has caused a great many addicts to form a new addiction pattern, which in its progression brings as many problems as before. We seem to forget that alcohol is one of the oldest known drugs. It would appear that we are people with addictive personalities who are strongly susceptible to alcoholic addiction.

In the last three and one half years, some great hearted people have helped us on our way, we know that these men had to base their decision to assist us on principle rather than on knowledge, they did not know what to expect of groups of addicts and we know that a little fear for the outcome of their decisions, must have worried them even with their faith. They opened the doors of their meeting rooms to us,

on our terms that we in some way we must be self-supporting. They asked nothing but that we help ourselves to a better way of life and their trust helped us immeasurably. We know that it has been beneficial for us, although we have no accurate count in number of recoveries. As a movement we keep no record of individuals but we know that in California, and especially in the city of Los Angeles and the southern area of the state, we now number in the hundreds with more coming daily and more staying with the different groups. More groups are being set up at the present time and the final structure of our movement is forming. The non-addict Trustees of our Fellowship, both proposed and accepted, are the people who gave us an opportunity to stand on our own feet with self respect. That the first of these Trustees is a man of Religion and personal integrity, who placed his trust in principle and in people such as we, with no ties on us, adds only to the respect many of us feel for men such as these in the field of Religion, even though many of us still and may well continue to be non or irreligious.

Our program is a means to an end and not an end in itself. The N.A. principles become tools we use in living and not answers on which to rest. Principle in action is the catalyst that changes our lives and alters our character. Our best ideas must be translated into doing before they have any value. We are not crusaders trying to change the world, only our small part of it, we do these things primarily for ourselves to regain and maintain our personal and creative freedom, and then through attraction, hope that those like us may find the way a little less difficult.

This is a simple but not an easy program for the addict, it takes courage to face our own reality, and most of us are fearful people but if we had never known fear what value would there be in courage. We do not claim perfection in our lives, only spiritual progress, nor do we claim to have all the answers or the last word in matters of addiction, but our experience counts for something. We come to believe not only in ourselves and N.A. but in life itself, which has become good, not only to us but for us, and so self-destruction has ended and self-unification has begun.

As time goes on, we find more addicts facing calamity with serenity and here is one of the surest signs of a valid recovery.

We know that this Fellowship can provide, if accepted, the means to a life free from drugs or even the need for them and this is the true miracle, the release from our obsession. Narcotics Anonymous must continue to exist and grow, if we now on the program wish to survive, If we fail to do this, then only those few, very few, will ~~survive~~ ~~before~~ ~~the~~ ~~history~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~man~~ recover, the rest will surely, as before in the history of man, go down the road of desperation, calamity and death.
