



NEWSLETTER ~

THE VOICE OF N.A.A. Vol. I Feb. '68

It has taken us a long time to start this paper but if we bring to mind the saying "All past is Prologue" we can realize how well it applies to us. Increased hope for more and better recoveries comes from a better understanding of our disorder plus the experience of addicts who have long term recovery.

In the past about all that was really known about the addict encompassed only a small segment of addiction. Since there were few if any real recoveries how could anything else be known, except our behavior while using, during withdrawal and thru some short periods of abstinence. Even when long periods of abstinence had been imposed upon us nothing really changed to bring about real freedom from drugs.

We hope this newsletter will enlarge on one of our basic beliefs, that the best hope for any addict is the practice of personal freedom in abstinence and the maintenance of a simple spiritual program.

In comparing parts of our past with others it would seem that we all reach a point, soon or late, when we say to ourselves or others "I just don't have a way to go, if I only knew what to do."

In N.A.A. we find a way to go and a way to know and in association with others like ourselves we learn to know.

We trust that this paper can help in that transition. That we can share hope, faith and courage with each other and reach our common goal, a clean, secure, satisfying, meaningful and productive personal life.

Editor.

UNITY.

George R. Sect. '67 '68

Although all of us develop a sense of humor and are able to laugh at most of our past, I would like to be serious in this first newsletter. I'm directing my words to all our members (no matter where they are) who are truly interested in the N.A. Fellowship and wish for more unity and greater growth.

Most of us know that the N.A. movement, west of the Rockies, started with one group in San Valley, California. In 1953 the foundation group gladly or at least willingly took all responsibility for our society as a whole. It took some time to bring the structure we now have from idea to reality.

This structure includes:-

Help for the addict seeking it or information as to the places of our group meetings, both open and closed.

Answering mail requests from addicts or others seeking information.

P.O. BOX Service----Phone Answering Service ----Literature Tape Library----Banking---Public Relations---Other related services, such as, helping new groups to form, both on the street and inside institutions.

For a long time we had only the Foundation group funds to depend on for maintenance and expansion of our services. Now some of the other groups, knowing these services make it possible for them to do a better job, voluntarily donate to the general service such funds as they are able. This means a closer bond between us and a united effort to meet our common responsibility.

Other groups have formed in the past with high hopes for success, but they kept apart from the main stream of N.A.; without the strength that comes from unity of purpose their isolation defeated them and they disbanded; we would like to avoid this where ever possible.

We have well established meetings now but would like even closer communication with each other. This newsletter and your written material for future issues, could be one of the best ways to integrate and expand our society, thus making it possible to carry our message of recovery to those still seeking help.

Yours in Unity.

George.

A pessimist sees a difficulty in every opportunity.

An optimist sees an opportunity in every difficulty.

Faith was the willingness to perceive a thought and a will infinitely greater than one's own. Faith was the ability to see what others had failed to see, or to discover what others had vainly hoped to see.

Excerpt from "Thirst For Freedom"

Any addict will tell you that medicine alone will not cure his illness. He may regain good physical health only to relapse. Many addicts report that they got in good shape the better to enjoy their next binge.

Psychological insight, if it were the only required remedy, would enable addicts to resume their habit. The records show that it is impossible for an addict to indulge with control no matter how enlightened he may be about his emotional trouble and no matter how well he may control his feelings.

Social adjustment similarly fails to bring recovery, if it is thought that a suitable job and harmonious social relations alone are the answer to the drug habit. They report they "Never had it so good." then relapse.

What the addict must strive for, more than anything else, after he realizes he cannot be free alone, is a richer experience of personal freedom. This is far more important than anything he may learn from medicine, psychology or sociology. It is of course true that scientific facts can help him in his pursuit of sobriety, provided he has already developed some desire for the freedom which sobriety will give him.

Permission by., Dr. D. Stewart

ANOTHER LOOK.

There are probably as many definitions of addiction as there are theories or ways of thinking based on both research and personal experience. It is not surprising that there are many areas of honest disagreement in the definitions that we hear. Some seem to fit the observed and known facts for some groups better than for others. If we accept this as a fact, then perhaps another viewpoint ought to be examined in the hope that we may discover a way more basic to all addiction and more valid in establishing communication among all of us.

If we can find greater agreement on what addiction IS NOT, then perhaps what it is may appear with greater clarity. Maybe we can agree on some prime points.

I. ADDICTION IS NOT FREEDOM.

The very nature of our disorder and its observed symptoms points up this fact. We addicts value personal freedom highly, perhaps because we want it so much and experience it so seldom in the progress of our illness. Even in periods of abstinence freedom is curtailed, we are never quite sure that our choice of action is based in a conscious desire for continued sobriety or an unconscious wish to return to using. We try to control our lives, unaware that need for control comes from the fear of losing control. This fear, based in part on past failures, often prevents us from making meaningful choices; choices which if put into action would remove the very fear which blocks us.

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2. ADDICTION IS NOT PERSONAL GROWTH.

The monotonous, imitative, ritualistic and compulsive routines of active addiction render us incapable of spontaneous action. Personal growth is creative effort and purposeful action. It presupposes choice, change and the capacity to face life on its own terms.

if it is not a way of life, it is not a way of life

3. ADDICTION IS NOT GOODWILL.

Addiction insulates us from people, places and things outside of our own world of getting, using and finding ways and means to continue the process. Self-centered and self-concerned we cut off all outside interests as our illness progresses. We live in fear and suspicion of the very people we have to depend on for our needs. This touches every area of our lives and anything not completely familiar becomes dangerous and alien. Our world shrinks and isolation is its goal.

if it is not a way of life, it is not a way of life

All that been said in 1 to 3 above can be summed up in--

4. ADDICTION IS NOT A WAY OF LIFE.

The sick self-seeking, self-centered and self-enclosed world of addiction hardly qualifies as life; if anything. It is the way of despair, destruction and death.

Any real way of life seems to demand the very things missing in addiction; Freedom -- Goodwill -- Personal Growth -- and Creative Action.

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With freedom, life is a meaningful, changing and advancing process. It looks forward with a reasonable degree of expectancy, to a better and richer realization of our needs and desires.

Goodwill is an action that includes others beside our selves. Away that considers others as important in their own life as we are in ours. It is hard to tell whether goodwill is the key to empathy or vice versa. If we accept empathy, as the capacity to identify with others knowingly without losing our own individuality, then we recognize a sameness in each and if we have accepted ourselves how can we reject another. Affection comes from seeing similarities, intolerance from seeing differences that we will not accept. One of the benefits of goodwill is peace of mind.

In personal growth we use both freedom and goodwill in co-operation with others. We realize that we cannot live alone; that personal is also interpersonal. To find better balance we examine both personal and social values as well as material values. Maturity seems to require this kind of evaluation.

Creative action is not a mysterious or hidden procedure. It means simply to listen to those hunches and intuitive feelings, that we think would benefit us or others, and act on them spontaneously. We are then able to make decisions based in principles that have real value to ourselves.

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As we become self-reliant and gain self-respect we know that we are neither inferior nor superior to anyone. Our real value lies in being ourselves.

In Narcotics Anonymous, we who are addicts, have found a way to realize the above spiritual qualities. We know we are not perfect but we can make progress a day at a time.

Lack of power to change was the main problem in our addiction. However, thru' the Twelve Steps of our program we find a power, acceptable to each of us, that will do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

J.K.

Statement of Purpose and Aims of Newsletter.

1. To share our experience, strength and hope with the addict who still suffers.
2. To better carry the message of recovery thru' the "Voice" of conscience
3. To provide better communication with the written word.
4. To build up a source of information, that will provide material for future literature, based on a cross section of personal experience.
5. To hopefully provide another means for personal and Fellowship growth thru' creative action.
6. To help in establishing our own publishing Co. named "C A R E" Letters standing for.....
 - C..... COMPASSION.
 - A..... ACTION
 - R..... RESPECT
 - E..... EMPATHY

Some of our clearest and best inspirations come to us at times of greatest anguish. This little verse, written by one of our members years ago, is beauty in simplicity. I hope she will understand that any errors are due to my faulty memory. Personally I will never forget the first time she read it to us. ED.

E. M I N U T E.

I have just a single minute,
 Only sixty seconds in it,
 Didn't make it, didn't choose it,
 But I'll suffer if I lose it.
 I have just a little minute,
 But--- ETERNITY is in it.

Lyn.

This is your paper. We need material to carry it on. It can only come from you. Please don't let the thoughts that you can't write or that you may make mistakes in grammar or punctuation stop you; we will help in every way we can to correct these. (I have to have a dictionary and other guides at my elbow all the time.) The idea is the most important part in anything you send us. If you are in this area, get your material to our Chairman or Sect. If by mail address to---

THE VOICE.

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