

TO: The Fellowship

FROM: Jack Bernstein, Chairperson
The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has been extremely busy during the past nine months. There have been three regular meetings of the Board and one special meeting. In the course of these meetings, the Board reviewed over one hundred letters from the Fellowship discussing matters of concern at various levels of service.

The Board has been active in support of and assistance to the World Service Conference Subcommittees. One or more Trustees are assigned to each committee and our participation with those committees has been considerable. A Trustee has attended each committee meeting and participated fully as a member and resource.

Additionally, our Board members were assigned to Trustee committees established for specific study or action. These committees included one for the revision of the White Booklet, a committee studying open and closed meetings and a committee studying T-shirts and the N.A. logo.

One of these committees, for the review of the Little White Booklet held numerous meetings to study the Little White Booklet for possible changes. Following these meetings a proposal from the committee was made to the Board as a whole to recommend changes. Those proposed changes were discussed by the full Board and adopted.

The Little White Booklet, with the changes the Board recommends, is attached at the end of this report. Our work is attached in two forms. In the first we have included a summary of the changes proposed along with the reasoning for the change if it is other than just a grammatical change. The second is the text of the Little White Booklet as it is being proposed with all changes inserted.

Although the instructions to the Board of Trustees resulting from the last Conference identified only the Little White Booklet for our review, any action taken on it would by necessity also affect the Basic Text and the #1 IP. Accordingly our proposal is specifically to adopt the changes in the Little White Booklet that are identified. However, in order to avoid having similar but different publications (it would be very confusing) it is necessary that the motion to adopt the changes also include language to have the identical changes made in the Basic Text, the #1 IP and the #6 IP.

**THE WHITE BOOK
AND
SUGGESTED REVISIONS**

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.

<u>Current White Book Language</u>	<u>Suggested Changes and Rationale</u>
<p>■ Foreword</p>	
<p>a "...addiction to narcotics and sedation."</p>	<p>"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.</p>
<p>■ Who Is an Addict?</p>	
<p>b "Our whole life and thinking is centered" to "...was centered"</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>■ What is the N.A. Program?</p>	
<p>c "...recovered addicts."</p>	<p>"...recovering addicts..." WSC directive.</p>
<p>d "There are no musts in N.A., but We suggest that you..."</p>	<p>"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</p>
<p>e Same sentence: "...honest desire to stop using."</p>	<p>"...desire to stop using." Delete "honest." Consistency with Tradition Three.</p>
<p>f Page 2 paragraph 1 "We have no leaders, no..."</p>	<p>"We have no initiation fees or dues..." The statement "We have no leaders" is in direct conflict with Tradition Two.</p>
<p>g Page 2 paragraph 1 "...age, race, color..."</p>	<p>"...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.</p>
<p>■ Why Are We Here?</p>	
<p>h Bottom of p.2: Change that paragraph as follows:</p>	<p>"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>

Page 5, 3rd paragraph:

a "...release our addiction all over again, or create a new one.

b Last Paragraph: replace in its entirety with the following:

to use came from the Basic Text.

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

"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?

c 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

d 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.

e 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 "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

I 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

II *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.

b 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"

C 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"

- a
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

- b
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

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

d I WAS DIFFERENT

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

e FEARFUL MOTHER

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

f 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"

**WHITE BOOK:
TRUSTEES' RECOMMENDED CHANGES IN BOLD
FOR APPROVAL AT WSC-86**

FOREWORD

This booklet is an introduction to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. It is written for those men and women who, like ourselves, suffer from a seemingly hopeless addiction to drugs. There is no cure for addiction, but recovery is possible by a program of simple spiritual principles. This booklet is not meant to be comprehensive, but it contains the essentials that in our personal and group experience we know to be necessary for recovery.

Our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions were adapted from those of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are deeply grateful to the A.A. Fellowship for showing us the way to a new life.

SERENITY PRAYER

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?

Most of us do not have to think twice about this question. **WE KNOW!** Our whole life and thinking was centered in drugs in one form or another--the getting and using and finding ways and means to get more. We lived to use and used to live. Very simply, an addict is a man or woman whose life is controlled by drugs. We are people in the grip of a continuing and progressive illness whose ends are always the same: jails, institutions and death.

WHAT IS THE NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS PROGRAM?

N.A. is a nonprofit Fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only one requirement for membership, the desire to stop using. We suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself 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 work*.

There are no strings attached to N.A. We are not affiliated with any other organizations, we have no initiation fees or dues, no pledges to sign, no promises to make to anyone. We are not connected with any political, religious or law enforcement groups, and are under no surveillance at any time. Anyone may join us, regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of religion.

We are not interested in what or how much you used or who your connections were, what you have done in the past, how much or how little you have, but only in what you want to do about your 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. We have learned from our group experience that those who keep coming to our meetings regularly stay clean.

WHY ARE WE HERE?

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, 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 addiction we were slowly committing suicide, but addiction is such a cunning enemy of life that we had lost the power to do anything about it. Many of us ended up in jail, or sought help through medicine, religion and psychiatry. None of these methods was sufficient for us. Our disease always resurfaced or continued to progress until in desperation, we sought help from each other in Narcotics Anonymous.

After coming to N.A. we realized we were sick people. We suffered from a disease from which there is no known cure. It can, however, be arrested at some point, and recovery is then possible.

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 the principles that made our recovery possible.**

1. We admitted that 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.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. 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.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these 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 toward spiritual principles. **Three of these that are indispensable are honesty, open-mindedness and willingness.** 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 returning to active addiction is not to take that first toke, snort, 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.

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.



WHAT CAN I DO?

Begin your own program by taking Step One from the previous chapter, "How It Works." When we fully concede to our innermost selves that we are powerless over our addiction, we have taken a big step in our recovery. Many of us have had some reservations at this point, so give yourself a break and be as thorough as possible from the start. Go on to Step Two, and so forth, and as you go on you will come to an understanding of the program for yourself. 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.

Upon release, continue your daily program and contact a member of N.A. Do this by mail, by phone, or in person. Better yet, come to our meetings. Here you will find answers to some of the things that may be disturbing you now.

If you are not in an institution, the same holds true. Stop using for today. Most of us can do for eight or twelve hours what seems impossible for a longer period of time. If the obsession or compulsion becomes too great, put yourself on a five minute basis of not using. Minutes will grow to hours, and hours to days, so you will break the habit and gain some peace of mind. The real miracle happens when you realize that the need for drugs has in some way been lifted from you. You have stopped using and started to live.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF N.A.

We keep what we have only with vigilance, and just as freedom for the individual comes from the Twelve Steps, so freedom for the group springs from our Traditions.

As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that would tear us apart, all will be well.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. 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.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

RECOVERY AND RELAPSE

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 still prevent them from enjoying complete recovery and acceptance within society. Complete and continuous abstinence, however, in close association and identification with others in N.A. groups, is still the best ground for growth.

Although all addicts are basically the same in kind, we do, as individuals, differ in degree of sickness and rate of recovery. There may be times when a relapse lays the groundwork for complete freedom. 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. The feeling of true independence and freedom hangs here at times in the balance. To step out alone and run our own lives again draws us, yet we seem to know that what we have has come from dependence on a Power greater than ourselves and from the giving and receiving of help from others in acts of empathy. Many times in our recovery the old bugaboos will haunt us. Life may again become meaningless, monotonous and boring. We may tire mentally in repeating our new ideas and tire physically in our new activities, yet we know that

if we fail to repeat them we will surely take up our old practices. We suspect that if we do not use what we have, we will lose what we have. These times are often the periods of our greatest growth. Our minds and bodies seem tired of it all, yet the dynamic forces of change or true conversion, deep within, may be working to give us the answers that alter our inner motivations and change our lives.

Recovery, as experienced through our Twelve Steps is our goal, not mere physical abstinence. To improve ourselves takes effort, and since there is no way in the world to graft a new idea on a closed mind, an opening must be made somehow. Since we can do this only for ourselves, we need to recognize two of our seemingly inherent enemies, apathy and procrastination. Our resistance to change seems built in, and only a nuclear blast of some kind will bring about any alteration or initiate another course of action. A relapse, if we survive it, may provide the charge for the demolition process. A relapse and sometimes subsequent death of someone close to us can do the job of awakening us to the necessity for vigorous personal action.

JUST FOR TODAY

Tell yourself:

JUST FOR TODAY my thoughts will be on my recovery, living and enjoying life without the use of drugs.

JUST FOR TODAY I will have faith in someone in N.A. who believes in me and wants to help me in my recovery.

JUST FOR TODAY I will have a program. I will try to follow it to the best of my ability.

JUST FOR TODAY through N.A. I will try to get a better perspective on my life.

JUST FOR TODAY I will be unafraid, my thoughts will be on my new associations, people who are not using and who have found a new way of life. So long as I follow that way, I have nothing to fear.

empathy becomes a healing therapy for all addicted people. With several other addicts and some members of A.A. who had great faith in us and the program, we formed, in July of 1953, what we now know as Narcotics Anonymous. We felt that now the addict would find from the start as much identification as each needed to convince himself that he could stay clean, by the example of others who had recovered for many years.

That this was what was principally needed has proved itself in these passing years. That wordless language of recognition, belief and faith, which we call empathy, created the atmosphere in which we could feel time, touch reality and recognize spiritual values long lost to many of us. In our program of recovery we are growing in numbers and in strength. Never before have so many clean addicts, of their own choice and in free society, been able to meet where they please, to maintain their recovery in complete creative freedom.

Even addicts said it could not be done the way we had it planned. We believed in openly scheduled meetings--no more hiding as other groups had tried. We believed this differed from all other methods tried before by those who advocated long withdrawal from society. We felt that the sooner the addict could face his problem in everyday living, just that much faster would he become a real productive citizen. We eventually have to stand on our own feet and face life on its own terms, so why not from the start.

Because of this, of course, many relapsed and many were lost completely. However, many stayed and some came back after their setback. The brighter part is the fact that of those who are now our members, many have long terms of complete abstinence and are better able to help the newcomer. Their attitude, based on the spiritual values of our steps and traditions, is the dynamic force that is bringing increase and unity to our program. Now we know that the time has come when that tired old lie, "Once an addict, always an addict," will no longer be tolerated by either society or the addict himself. We do recover.

ONE THIRD OF MY LIFE

Today has been one of those days. It was Friday and Monday all together. Trying to get something done was like trying to make a connection when the heat was on. It was a panic all day, but when I got home and lay down for an hour, it felt good. I can go on a natural nod, because I have nothing up here now but a clear conscience. The old hassle is gone. I can lie down, take it easy and be comfortable. The longer I stay clean, the better it gets for me. It's real groovy to

get up in the morning and not care whether it's foggy or the sun's shining, just so long as I'm clean. No cramps and no sweats now. I remember the times when I'd be afraid to go to sleep, because I had a "git up" there on the dresser; but if I took my "git up" I'd have nothing when I got up and then I'd be sick again.

I never thought I'd feel good being out here with the squares, but now I think sometimes I feel the same things they do. I don't have all those petty little things going through my mind now, like I did when I thought I was hip--so slick. The only one I was being hip and slick with was me. Everybody else could see right through me. I don't have a running nose anymore and no itchiness unless it's an allergy or something. I can go home now at night to clean sheets and blankets, say my little prayers and go to sleep. It's real good for me.

Yesterday was pay-day. I went out and bought myself a few presents--not Christmas shoplifting you know. Now, I can go through these stores without even a temptation to steal. This is my third Christmas on the bricks and I can't think of anything I've stolen since I've been out of the joint. I feel that I was basically honest from childhood. I stole to keep up my habit, to get my stuff, to keep my head on my chest, to keep my stomach from grinding and to keep my nose from running. That nose! It was always running whether I was sick or not.

My story is similar to many others. I hit one nuthouse when I was thirteen--I really don't remember much about it. That was on an O.D. of amphetamines, they thought I was a manic-depressive till I cleaned up off the pills, and then they figured I was just a neurotic.

It progressed though. I started to make the joints. I'm thirty now and there's twelve and a half years gone out of my life like this. Man, I sure don't want anymore of it. Since I've been out of the joint about three years I can't say I 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. Now, however, it's like the passing thought of "There is a real nice car there. I'd like one like that," and then it's gone, and so is the thought. I notice that the times and the periods are getting farther apart when they happen.

I haven't had a driving obsession to get my head on my chest for over two years now, and this is really something. I now try to turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understand Him. Sometimes I like to try to play God and run everything but it doesn't work that way. The longer I stay around and stay clean, the groovier it gets. The last time I came out, I was a scared, sniveling little snot, double hip, double slick, still walking that walk and talking that talk.

Now, I go back to the institutions every week I can make it. I went back to my home group a while back and it was greater than my birthday. You know those guys accepted me back and were glad to see me.

I gave a lot of them a hard time with the attitudes I used to have. At that time nothing was any good, everything was rotten, except dope. Sure, I had a craving for drugs, but at that time I was ready for anything that would get my feet off the ground. Now, however, I know that anything that would 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 if I work the Twelve Steps to the best of my ability or not, but I do know I've been clean about three years by practicing them the best I can.

When things start buggin' me now, I know where most of the trouble lies: me. Now I find I have a greater tolerance for people and a lot more patience all around; this is a big change for me. 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 things have changed my whole outlook on life. It's a good way to live.

I CAN'T DO ANY MORE TIME

I came to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous as an addict, out of an institution for women. I came the first night I got out and it's been here that I've learned how to live, so that it hasn't been necessary for me to use any kind of drugs in my daily life. It has been here that I've learned a lot about myself, because we addicts are so very much alike. I've always seen another side of myself whenever problems and suggested solutions have been discussed at our meetings. I have learned, from those who are following the program of recovery to the best of their ability, how I can do the same if I am willing to make the effort. I have also learned from those who have made mistakes. I feel bad when I see that some leave this Fellowship to try the old way again, but I know that I don't have to do that if I don't want to. Also it has not been necessary for me to steal or to write any bad checks.

My addiction goes way back. I was drinking abusively, when I first started at sixteen, and I realize today that the reason for that was I was sick to begin with. I had this emotional illness and it was very deep. I don't think that if I hadn't been emotionally ill to begin with, that I would have gotten carried away with using. When it became noticeable that I was using alcohol more and more,

being in the nursing profession, I tried experimenting with other drugs. It grew and grew and became a horrible problem.

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. I did not know that there was any answer. There really wasn't at that time. I was in San Francisco, not knowing which way to turn, when I tried suicide and was unsuccessful. I was twenty-six years old at that time. 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.

My pattern, however, continued. I had lost not only my self-respect but the respect and love of my family, my children, and my husband. I had lost my home and my profession. Somehow or other, I hadn't reached the point where I wanted to try this way of life or to try it all the way. I just had to go on and try in my own way. I tried drugs again and was finally committed to another institution three times. The last time I went there I just felt that I couldn't do any more time. I didn't immediately connect it with my addiction. I just couldn't do any more time. It wasn't the thought, "I can't use drugs," just, "I can't do any more time." I just felt completely hopeless and helpless and I didn't have any answers. All of my emotional and spiritual pride had gone.

I'm sure that when I was in the institution they doubted my sincerity in ever wanting to do anything about my problem. However, I did want to do something about it, and I know that this program doesn't work until we really do want it for ourselves. It's not for people who need it but for people who want it. I finally wanted it so bad I knocked on doors of psychiatrists, psychologists, chaplains and anywhere I could.

I think one of my counselors, who just naturally loves all people, gave me a lot of encouragement, for I thoroughly took my first three steps. I admitted I was powerless over my addiction, that my life was unmanageable. 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.

I had read all kinds of metaphysical books. I agreed with them and thought they were great, but I never took any action on them. I never tried any faith in my daily living. 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. I doubted that I could get honest, but I became aware of myself by looking outside myself at the addicts around me, by getting to know them and understand them, by being friendly with them.

I would like to give credit where credit is due, and I do believe that my daily attendance at **psychotherapy groups with very understanding psychologists** helped me become aware of myself so that I might do something about my problem; but when I came out, I thought, "Oh! can I make it outside?" So many times institutions took so many years out of my life that I wondered if I could **stay clean and do ordinary things**. I doubted whether I could go ahead with just normal living, but God has seen fit to see that I have been provided for in this last year and a half. I've been able to work regularly, I didn't have steady jobs at first, but there was never any long period in between them.

Although for a time I threw out the idea of going back to my profession, which is nursing, I have since reconsidered this and am now in the process of perhaps returning to full-time nursing. With the help of some very understanding people I have met, the future here looks very bright. In the meantime, I give myself to my job every day, as best I can, and have been doing it successfully, despite the fact that when I left the institution for the last time everyone thought I was unemployable.

To me this is a spiritual program and the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience. Without the kind of help and the therapy of one addict talking to and helping another, I know that it wouldn't have been possible for me. **The obsession to use drugs has been completely removed from me during this period**, and I know that it's only by the grace of God, I now give my attention to my daily problems. It's amazing, having had a pattern of fear, anxiety, resentment and self-pity, how much of this too has been removed. No longer do these sway my life. I ask for help every morning and I count my blessings every night, and I'm real grateful that I don't have to go through the sickness that accompanies the taking of drugs of any kind.

I think one of the biggest things that helped me here was that this is a program of complete abstinence. I got over the idea that I had a "dual problem." I don't have a problem with this drug or that drug, I have a living problem, and this is all I need to think about today.

I got a lot of help from my sponsor when it seemed that everyone had let me down, both family and friends. I don't know what I would have done had it not been for the doors that she opened in her letters. She shared her experience, her strength and her hope with me, and it was very beneficial. She continues to be my very good friend. Here in N.A. I have found a family, friends, and a way of life. My own family has also been restored to me through working these steps, and

not through directly working on the problem. A lot of wonderful things have happened to me. I can't conceive of anything ever happening that would make me want to forget this way of life.

THE VICIOUS CYCLE

I am Gene and I am an addict. In writing this I hope that I can help other addicts like myself, who are trying to overcome their addition by substituting one thing for another. That was my pattern. I started drinking, whenever possible, at the age of fourteen. With this I added weed so that I could feel at ease and be comfortable with my surroundings in the social activities in high school.

At seventeen, I started on heroin and quickly became addicted. After using heroin for one and a half years, I decided to admit myself to an institution. When they accepted my application, I got scared and joined the Army after kicking at home. I thought that being away from my environment I would be able to solve my problem.

Even here I found myself going AWOL to get more heroin. I was then shipped to Europe and thought that if I just drank, that would be the answer, but again I found nothing but trouble. Upon my release I came back home to the same environment. Again I was using heroin and various other drugs. This lasted about two years.

The rat race really began when I tried to clean up--cough syrup, bennies, fixes, etc. By now, I didn't know where one addiction left off and the other started. A year before I came to Narcotics Anonymous I found myself hopelessly addicted to cough syrup, drinking five or six four-ounce bottles a day. I needed help so I went to a doctor; he prescribed dexedrine and would give me a shot that made me feel good. I found myself going to him practically every day.

This continued for about eight months and I was very happy with my new found legal addiction. I was also getting codeine from a different doctor. I now became insanely afraid and began drinking too. This went on around the clock for a month and I ended up in a mental institution. After being released from the hospital, I thought I was free from narcotics and now I could drink socially. I soon found out I could not. It was then that I sought help from N.A.

Here I learned that my real problem did not lie in the drugs that I had been using, but in a distorted personality that had developed over the years of my using and even before that. In N.A. I was able to help myself with the help of others in the Fellowship. I find I am making progress in facing reality and I'm growing a

day at a time. I find new interests now that mean something, and realize that that was one of the things which I was looking for in drugs.

Sometimes I still find it difficult to face things, but I'm no longer alone and can always find someone to help me over the rough and confused spots. I have finally found people like myself who understand how I feel. I'm now able to help others to find what I have, if they really want it. I thank God, as I understand Him, for this way of life.

SOMETHING MEANINGFUL

I know now I am not the great leader or philosopher that I tried to make people believe I was. After fifteen years of trying to live this illusion, I now find that I am being accepted for just what I really am. All my life before this, I did things my way. If anyone else ever offered advice or suggestions, I rebuffed them with a closed mind without ever trying what they had to offer to see whether it would succeed or fail. It seems that though my way always failed, I had to use again, until repeated trips to jail began to convince me that something was wrong.

I reached the point of desperately wanting to do something with my life that would be meaningful. I had to try something else that would work. I had found N.A. several years previous to this decision, but then I was not ready to change. And although I closed the door on N.A. on many occasions, I have always been welcomed back every time.

Since I have become willing to do something about my life with the N.A. program, life has been fuller and more meaningful. I could not experience life before on a daily basis without drugs. I needed these just to face each day. I know I have to alter this pattern of thinking and living if I am to stay completely clean. This I am doing through the principles of our program.

Although I do not now desire or need drugs, I have to fill the void that's left with something worthwhile. I have found this in the Fellowship of N.A. I have to stick with the winners and go in the same direction that they go. As long as I follow the steps of the program, I know I can make it, too. Although I don't find the program easy, it is simple enough for a complicated person like me to follow.

I WAS DIFFERENT

My story may differ from the others you have heard. I was never arrested or hospitalized. I did, however, reach the point of utter despair which so many of us have experienced. It is not my track record that shows my addiction but rather my feelings and my life. Addiction was my way of life--the only way of life I knew for many years.

Thinking back, I must have taken one look at life and decided I didn't want any part of it. I came from a "good old-fashioned," upper-middle-class broken home. I can't remember a time when I haven't been strung out. As a small child, I found out I could ease the pain with food, and here my drug addiction began.

I became part of the pill mania of the 1950's. Even at this time I found it hard to take medication as directed. I figured that two pills would do twice as much good as one. I remember hoarding pills, stealing from my mother's prescriptions, having a hard time making the pills last until the next refill.

I continued to use in this way throughout my early years. When I was in high school and the drug craze hit, the transition between drugstore dope and street dope was a natural. I had already been using drugs on a daily basis for nearly ten years; these drugs had virtually stopped working. I was plagued with adolescent feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. The only answer I had was that if I took something I either was, felt or acted better.

The story of my street using is pretty normal. I used anything and everything available every day. It didn't matter what I took so long as I got high. Drugs seemed good to me in those years. I was a crusader; I was an observer; I was afraid; and I was alone. Sometimes I felt all-powerful and sometimes I prayed for the comfort of idiocy--if only I didn't have to think. I remember feeling different--not quite human--and I couldn't stand it. I stayed in my natural state...LOADED.

In 1966, I think, I got turned on to heroin. After that, like so many of us, nothing else would do the thing for me. At first I joy-popped occasionally, and then used only on weekends; but a year later I had a habit, and two years later I flunked out of college and started working where my connection worked. I used stuff and dealt, and ran for another year-and-a-half before I got "sick and tired of being sick and tired."

I found myself strung out and no longer able to function as a human being. During this last year of my using, I started looking for help. Nothing worked! Nothing helped!

Somewhere along the line I had gotten the telephone number of a man in N.A. Against my better judgment and without hope, I made what may well be the most important phone call of my life.

No one came to save me; I wasn't instantly cured. The man simply said that if I had a drug problem, I might benefit from the meetings. He gave me the address of a meeting for that night. It was too far to drive, and besides I was kicking. He also gave me the address of another meeting a couple of days later and closer to home. I promised him I'd go and have a look. When the night came, I was deathly afraid of getting busted, and afraid of the dope fiends I would find there. I knew I wasn't like the addict you read about in books or newspapers. Despite these fears I made my first meeting. I was dressed in a three piece black suit, black tie, and eighty-four hours off a two-and-a-half year run. I didn't want you to know what and who I was. I don't think I fooled anybody, I was screaming for help, and everybody knew it. I really don't remember much of that first meeting, but I must have heard something that brought me back. The first feeling I do remember on this program was the gnawing fear that because I'd never been busted or hospitalized for drugs, I might not qualify and might not be accepted.

I used twice during my first two weeks around the program, and finally gave up. I no longer cared whether or not I qualified, I didn't care if I was accepted, I didn't even care what the people thought of me. I was too tired to care.

I don't remember exactly when, but shortly after I gave up, I began to get some hope that this program might work for me. I started to imitate some of the things the winners were doing. I got caught up in N.A. I felt good, it was great to be clean for the first time in years.

After I'd been around for about six months, the novelty of being clean wore off, and I fell off that rosy cloud I'd been riding. It got hard. Somehow I survived that first dose of reality. I think the only things I had going for me then were the desire to stay clean, no matter what; faith that things would work out okay so long as I didn't use; and people who were willing to help when I asked for help. Since then, it's been an uphill fight; I've had to work to stay clean. I've found it necessary to go to many meetings, to work with newcomers, to participate in N.A., to get involved. I've had to work the Twelve Steps the best I could, and I've had to learn to live.

Today, my life is much simpler. I have a job I like, I'm comfortable in my marriage, I have real friends, and I'm active in N.A. This type of life seems to suit me fine. I used to spend my time looking for the magic--those people, places, and things, which would make my life ideal. I no longer have time for magic. I'm too busy learning how to live. It's a long slow process. Sometimes I think I'm going crazy. Sometimes I think "What's the use." Sometimes I back myself into that corner of self-obsession and think there's no way out. Sometimes I think I can't stand life's problems anymore, but then this program provides an answer and the bad times pass.

Most of the time life's pretty good. And sometimes life is great, greater than I can ever remember. I learned to like myself and found friendship. I came to know myself a little bit and found understanding. I found a little faith, and from it, freedom. And I found service and learned that this provides the fulfillment I need for happiness.

FEARFUL MOTHER

I thought an addict was a person who was using hard drugs, someone who was on the streets or in jail. My pattern was different--I got my drugs from a doctor or friends. I knew something was wrong yet I tried to do right--at work, in my marriage and in raising my children. I really tried hard. I would be doing well and then I'd fail. It went on like this and each time it seemed like forever; it seemed like nothing would ever change. 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.

I went through years of telling my children "I'm sorry but this time it will be different." I went from one doctor to another asking for help. I went for counseling feeling everything will be all right now, but the inside was still saying, "What is wrong?" I was changing jobs, changing doctors, changing drugs, trying different books, religions and hair colors. I moved from one area to another, changed friends and moved furniture. I went on vacations and also remained hidden in my home--so many things through the years--constantly feeling, I'm wrong, I'm different, I'm a failure.

When I had my first child I liked it when they knocked me out; I liked the feeling of the drugs they gave me. It was a feeling that whatever is going on around me, I don't know and I don't care, really. Through the years the tranquilizers gave me the feelings that nothing is really that important. Toward

the end, things became so mixed up I was not sure what was and what was not important. I was shaking inside and out. **Drugs would not help.**

I was still trying, but very little. I had quit work and was trying to go back but I couldn't. I would be on the couch afraid of everything. I was 103 pounds and had sores on my lips and in my nose. I had diabetes and shook so that I had a hard time putting a spoon to my mouth. I felt I was out to kill myself and people around me were out to hurt me. Physically and mentally I had a breakdown. I had just become a grandmother and I could not even communicate with a small child. I was almost a vegetable. I wanted to be a part of living but did not know how. Part of me said I'd be better off dead and part of me said there has to be a better way of living.

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. They told me, "Don't be afraid, we have all gone through this." I went to a lot of meetings through the years. One thing has stuck with me, one thing they said from the beginning, "Betty, you can stop running and you can be whatever you want to be and do whatever you want to do."

Since being on the program I have listened and watched many people and have seen them go through many ups and downs. I have used the teachings I felt were best for me. My work area has had to change and I have been going to school. I have had to relearn all the way back to the grammar school level. It has been slow for me but very rewarding.

I also decided that I need to know me better before I can have a meaningful relationship with a man. I am learning to communicate with my daughters. I am trying many things which I wanted to do for years. I am able to remember many things that I had pushed out of my mind. I have found that Betty is not that big pile of nothing but is someone and something that I never really stopped to look at or listen to. April 1 will be my fifth N.A. birthday. How's that for April Fool's day!

FAT ADDICT

I am an addict. I used at least fifty different types of drugs on an ongoing basis for a period of eighteen years. I didn't know it when I started using, but I used drugs only for one reason--because I didn't like the way I felt. I wanted to

feel better. I spent eighteen years trying to feel different. I couldn't face the everyday realities of life. Being a fat kid, fat all my life, I felt rejected.

I was born in Arizona in 1935 and I moved to California in the early 1940's. My family moved around from state to state and my father was married several times. He was a binge drinker; either he was in a state of self-righteousness or a state of complete degradation. This is one of the many reasons we moved so often.

As I moved from school to school, I would relate various experiences that I had and I would talk about my various stepmothers. For some reason, I was thought to be a liar. It seemed the only company that accepted me, no matter where I went, was the so-called lower level people, and I never felt I was a lower level person. It made me feel like I had some self-worth by being able to look down on them.

My family life was confused and painful, but a lot of sound moral values were passed on to me in my upbringing. I always made the attempt to stay employed. As a matter of fact, on most occasions I managed to be self-employed in some type of business. I was even able to maintain some civic status by belonging to fraternal organizations.

I was 5'5" tall, and weighed 282 pounds. I ate compulsively to try and handle my feelings and emotions and to make me feel better. As a matter of fact, this is how I originally got into using heavy drugs. I wanted to lose weight so desperately that I became willing to use heroin. I thought I would be smart enough not to get hooked, that I could use and lose my appetite, feel good and outsmart the game. I bounced around the country and ended up in penitentiaries and jails. This was the beginning of the end; not only was I a compulsive overeater and remained fat, but I was also addicted to the drugs I was using.

Somebody told me about the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous when I was in the complete stage of degradation and desperation. Having no place to go, I walked into this Fellowship feeling as low as a person can feel, like there was no way out. I was completely and totally morally bankrupt. I knew nothing about spiritual values. I knew nothing about living. Life ultimately was nothing but pain on a daily basis. All I knew was to put something in me--food or drugs--or to abuse sex to feel good, which just didn't do it for me anymore. I just couldn't get enough of anything.

When I came to this program, I found something that I had never experienced before--total acceptance for who and what I was. I was invited to keep coming back to a Fellowship that told me there were no fees or dues--that I

had already paid my dues via my past life--and that if I kept coming back, I would find total freedom and a new way of life.

Today, many years later, I find that I am free from addiction and compulsive overeating, and I have status in the community. I have a nice home and family, an executive position, and most of all I have a personal relationship with my God, which has made all these things possible. 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

There is no question about it, I owe my life to the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship and God. I can only extend my hope that if you too are suffering as I once was, you will practice the principles of Narcotics Anonymous, and find freedom from pain and a meaningful, prosperous life.