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Narcotics Anonymous Purist Newsletter



November 2010

Notes from the editor

Hello once again my Brothers and Sisters of recovery!

Last month my home group hosted a History day here in Kingston PA, We had about 60-70 members attend and most of us had a great time. There were a few people that seem to have a problem with the message that was put out at the event about Narcotics Anonymous being a program of complete abstinence from all mind and mood altering chemicals. We don't understand the problem... Narcotics Anonymous is a program of complete abstinence from all mind and mood altering chemicals... is it not?

At the history day we passed out a pamphlet the Spiritual Solutions home group is sponsoring called "Total Abstinence" which I am sending out with this newsletter. We are looking for input on this pamphlet please read it and send us input. We know there are some people out there that will disagree with this pamphlet because there always is. We ask those to find a copy of the Gray book and read Tradition 11, Narcotics Anonymous can't be all things to all people!!! Narcotics Anonymous is about complete abstinence.

I don't know about all of you but I'm getting sick of NAW\$ taking our message and watering it down to a state of nothing!!!

We need to make a stance and ASIS is that stance!!! come join us at nahelp.org start a gray book meeting and become a group of ASIS ...

Jeff



We have decided to keep the newsletter open for all topics for now on due to the variety of the articles that have been submitted the last few months. Please don't be afraid to submit your articles to us we need to hear what you have to share.

THE PURIST NEWSLETTER WHERE EVERY VOICE COUNTS

Open Forum

Support Your Home Group !

Print your own literature. Don't listen to the bullies - they are lying or wrong - it is perfectly legal, and allowed under the terms of the Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust that so many members of narcotics anonymous fought for. The settlement in the Grateful Dave lawsuit made it crystal clear - the literature belongs to the members, not to the World Service Office (or its eventual successor NAW\$), the World Board, or any of the other entities that are not - according to our traditions - Narcotics Anonymous.

Band together, pulling groups into one purchasing arm to keep the price down. The last quote I got for "real" baby blue type Basic Texts (leaving out the personal stories) was \$2.02. That was printed with a full color cover if desired, and "perfect bound" (like most paperbacks you see on the shelf at a bookstore).

Would you rather take \$200 and have almost 100 copies, knowing that none of the money went to support the corrupt NAW\$, or would you rather have 16 copies of the sixth edition, knowing that you padded the coffers of NAW\$ to the tune of somewhere around \$180 PROFIT to support the Travel Club ?

Printing your own literature, starving the beast that is NAW\$, solution based !

When you say you are

Addicts don't seem to be "joiners" by nature. Most of us did our share of following, I guess; and some sort of membership just couldn't be avoided. Sometimes we could put up with it in order to keep a relationship or a job. It can be bad enough trying to believe with all of your guts that you've got a problem that's gonna kill you if it's left unchecked. Worse still is getting told that your ideas and methods aren't gonna work - no, that they'll get ya dead even quicker.

What you need, see, is to come down and hang out with us. Get straight and come on back and listen to how it was for us, and how it is now. And call us. Really. We mean it. Same time, same place, next week, - wait, what're you doing tomorrow night? See, there's another meeting right over at - oh. Well, how about at noon?

And you look at the person talking at ya, and the two or three others nearby. Before you wouldn't have been caught dead with these people. You sure wouldn't let yer roaddogs know you knew them. These lops are... straight. And proud of it. I didn't come here to listen to th... oh, yeah.

Were you there once? Do you remember?

You knew you needed to learn something they already knew, but you didn't want to get... well, involved in all this. Maybe you came because that senile ol' P.O. gave you an ultimatum or you just wanted to get a handle on your using, get torqued only on the weekends... So you looked for an out. You knew you were different from those other clean nerds, but there was still the feeling that they might throw you out on a technicality. But their posters and all those pamphlets are... lacking in rules and regs. You thought of that one dude who seemed least geeky of the bunch, considered givin' him a call and asking him... subtle, half-hopeful.

No dice. All you need to belong, is a desire to stop using. Everybody's a member who wants to be, if they want to stay clean. This bites... your escape hatch slams shut. Disappointment. And relief.

And so it goes, a hundred times a week just in this area alone. We must make this clear to the suffering peers new to our rooms, poisoned as surely by their terminal uniqueness and self-destructive "committees" as by the drugs: Nobody has to rack up felonies or an angry "ex" or death-defying street stories to make it into N.A., or to make it in N.A. Just a desire to stop. Period.

Come as you are... but come back.

See, our lives depend on it.

"The full Message"

"There is a special feeling for addicts when they discover that there are other people who share their difficulties, past and present." B.T., p. 53
The wealth of our recovery is too good to keep to ourselves. Some of us believe that when we talk in meetings, we should "remember the newcomer" and always try to carry a positive message. But sometimes the most positive message we can carry is that we are going through difficult times in our recovery and are staying clean in spite of them! Yes, it's gratifying to send out a strong message of hope to our newer members. After all, no one likes a whiner. But distressing things happen, and life of life's terms can send shock waves even through the recovery of long-time members of Narcotics Anonymous. If we are equipped with the tools of the program, we can walk through such turmoil and stay clean to tell the tale.

Recovery doesn't happen all at once; it is an ongoing process, sometimes a struggle. When we dilute the fullness of our message by neglecting to share about the tough times we may walk through on our journey, we fail to allow newcomers the chance to see that they, too, can stay clean, no matter what. If we share the full message of our recovery, we may not know who benefits, but we can be sure someone will.

Our Primary Purpose

Primary purpose is to carry the message to the still suffering addict. When a newcomer finds the strength to walk into a the rooms of NA, and sometimes it requires quite a bit of strength, and they are met by men or women that are "checking them out" like the proverbial piece of meat, and all they wanted was some sort of relief from the pain of using. We have failed in our primary purpose.

Especially if those who see that behavior occurring and do or say nothing to stop it, we have not only failed but also have done so miserably.

Step of the month club

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

Self-awareness is a very important part of recovery, it helps us stop creating problems in our lives. Most of us approach this Step in three ways; one is by taking time at the end of the day to review what has occurred during the day, another is by writing about a specific aspect of life or recovery, and a third is by monitoring ourselves throughout the course of the day. We look at our motives, our actions, our reactions, our focus (past, present, future), and our relationship with our Higher Power and the world around us. Most of us, in learning about ourselves, develop a set of criteria with which to measure these things. When we find that we are drifting away from "recovery oriented living" we quickly take corrective action to avoid accumulating "wreckage in the present". We stop living in the problem and start living in the solution.

When the addict is ready...
spiritual awakenings appear.
If you're sitting in a meeting,
wondering "why am I here?",
Open your heart and mind,
for the answers are near,
One day you will experience
the loss of your fear,
And be able to apply principles
Recovering addicts hold dear.
Honest, open-minded, & willing...
these words I often hear...
Today I understand, today I finally
can adhere,
This new way of life, this
opportunity for change,
all begins with the willingness to
walk into a room
And ask yourself, "why am I here?".
~Anonymous~

ALL ELSE IS NOT N.A

Long ago, there was a saying that helped members of Narcotics Anonymous deal with the various elements that try to intrude on our way of life. When the business concerns of N.A., or the committees that we form to serve us began to get caught up in themselves, we would say, "All else is not N.A."

This handy phrase helped us keep things straight. It didn't mean we weren't grateful to those who served us. It didn't mean we have an attitude towards anyone or anything not N.A. It did mean we don't like bosses. It meant N.A. members set up and were responsible for the meetings of Narcotics Anonymous in the various places where our meetings are held. It strengthened us and made us aware of our spiritual responsibilities. It kept us from feeling betrayed so badly when some of our servants get out of hand. Our trusted servants were responsible to serve us, not to control our actions or manipulate the information we were allowed to receive through service publications.

The phrase "All else is not N.A." helped us focus on the spiritual facts of the program instead of the arrangements and activities of those who act on our behalf sometimes. It is easy for us to get things like this turned around.

When our Basic Text was written, this line was included under the Traditions. It was later the subject of some discussion as a result of a few members in world services who didn't agree with the line and were in a position to exclude it from the material.

That was OK for then but now many years have passed and many members still see N.A. as a spiritual, not religious program of recovery from addiction. Not just from drug addiction or addiction to narcotics as our name would imply. We have grown. Many, if not all members, have realized for some time that once the chemicals are taken out of the picture, our addiction stands intact and ready to deal with us if we do not find a way to deal with successfully.

Our need for spiritual integrity will always be great. Emptiness seems to result whenever we try to place something other than our spiritual yearnings and experiences in the center of our programs.

N.A. is not a business. We have some needs and functions that may involve collecting and disbursing sums of money to get literature printed or to put on a convention. This is a scaled up model of what we experience in our groups. Never should our coffee chair feel more important than our members who come to care and share the N.A. way of life with one another.

Trusted servants serve our group and fellowship needs at many levels. They are enjoined to avoid the error of thinking themselves governors, rulers or directors. This would be untrue and create problems. Our trusted servants have to keep faith with the members they serve. Other goals must never come ahead of carrying our message to those who come to N.A. seeking recovery. There can be no more important persons than these for us.

Those of us who are clean and reached a level of gratitude serve only to balance the scales with those who helped us. We help others in our turn and do for others what was done for us. Further, many of us believe that helping others is the key to our ongoing recovery and part of the reason we were able to escape the clutches of active addiction.

It is easy to slip back into spiritual laziness and let others deal with the things we cannot. "Can not" may be "will not." "Will not" can lead to big trouble if we expect spiritual growth. One of the greatest verities for us is that abstinence alone is not enough to keep us clean. Spiritual growth, a sense of emotional health, the ability to tolerate increases in our honesty and the alleviation of our obsessions and compulsions is fundamental to recovery. The hole in the gut must be filled.

Confusing spirituality with morality would put us in the category of churches and other institutions that seek to promote goodwill, health and well being among people in a variety of ways. There is nothing wrong with these efforts. It is just that we are not a business and we are not a church. Worldly concerns are not the source of our disease.

For our spiritual fellowship to survive, we need to look long and hard at our goals and our resources. If we promise to share freely that which we were freely given, we can hope to live up to it. If we promise to provide recovery and various levels of assistance to addicts seeking recovery, we have crossed a line and risk spiritual bankruptcy. You can't bankrupt God. Spirituality is shared human experience of what goes beyond the world and fills the needs we have for a sense of comfort and well being. Once we learn to apply spiritual principles in a practical way, our lives improve dramatically.

It is true that not everyone can do this with equal results. What is right for one may be wrong for another. We can't predict outcomes. We can say that for those of us who have given this program our best, we have been surprised and amazed. Our actions and commitment to recovery reflect our gratitude.