

SEPTEMBER 1980



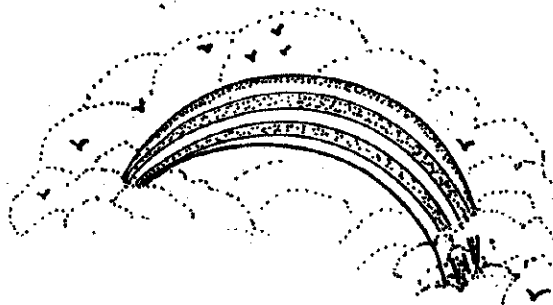
The RAINBOW CONNECTION

HOW IT WORKS

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

1. We admitted 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 those steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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

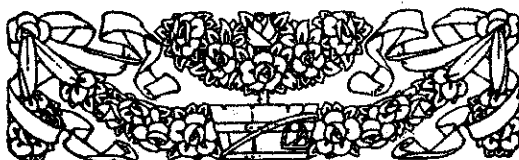


The Rainbow Connection

Metro Atlanta NA

" ... caring and sharing the NA way ... "

Volume 2, Number 9 - September 1980



Individual opinions expressed do not necessarily express those of NA as a whole.

We welcome your story, article or perspective relating to NA recovery. Send to:

The Rainbow Connection
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Marietta, GA 30060

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of Narcotics Anonymous

WHEN I'M TIRED . . .

Recovery means a lot to me today. Because I'm human and because I work, I sometimes find myself tired and less than excited about it all. I don't think I would have been able to enjoy my one day at a time existence unless I had learned to deal with the little things that bother me especially my feelings of fatigue or restlessness. I have leaned clean and sober that I don't have to feel good all the time. Clean time has taught me that a loving God is running my life today and that when it really counts God will be with me and give me the strength and guidance to do his will. The rest of the time I feel I'm off the clock. I stay ready to do God's will but most of the time I just do the next thing and try to be good to myself and others. Habits formed since coming to the program get me to a lot of meetings and provide the structure I need to carry me through the times when I am resting and don't want to have to strain to keep my life together. I got terribly used to living in a strain before I came to the program and never expected that to change but I figured if I'm a creature of habit, I might as well get my habits to work for me than against me. One thing I am able to do is identify my feelings. If I don't like them I can accept responsibility for my fatigue or restlessness and do something to change them. Also I can just plain accept them. That helps a lot because where I come from every little thing in life was terribly important and it all had to be examined because I was afraid I would miss something — it's easier than that today.

Bo S.

Atlanta Literature Committee

AUGUST 16

Have you read the "Day by Day" today? The title is 'Persuading Others,' and goes on to say that "if our existence, being clean, sober and at peace is not enough to convince others, then they have not yet gone far enough in their own misery to want help." I'm sure that was written just for me and just for today. Did you ever read one of those and feel just that way?

I'm hating to practice "detach with love," for today has been a lesson in powerlessness for me. My husband didn't come home last night and in the 16 months we've been in the program — it wasn't his "normal" behavior pattern. I was hysterical when I didn't know if he was dead or alive. My sponsor said pray for a miracle — that prayer made all my prayers go in a positive direction. I got hysterical when I got the message that he got "a little too drunk to make it home." The relief of his being alive far outweighed the fact he was loaded. That feeling of relief is still with me. I am now rocking back and forth between anger and compassion. Anger because of all the unanswered questions — why?, doesn't he know that this program works? Where is he? How much did he use? The next thought I feel so much compassion that I start to cry. I love him so much and want him to come back. As far as I know he's still using, I choose to believe he's still alive — it's easier that way.

Anonymous 1980



Dear Fellow Members,

I don't quite know how this letter is going to fit into our quest for togetherness. I only know that it is a pleasure to be able to have a desire to get in touch with fellow members in other parts of the world.

I don't know if you have been informed of it yet but the Bridge Group has been blessed with a new meeting place after the closing of the doors of the Back Room Club. It seems like there was an apathetic attitude toward any sort of participation in the upkeep of the room that had gotten so many of us sober minded.

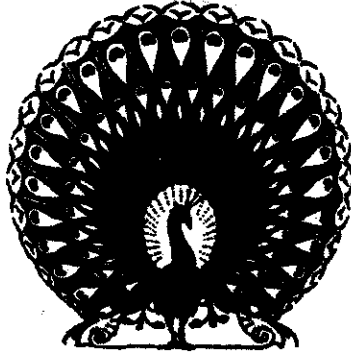
What I would like to see in our book of recovery is an attitude of humility which is one of the prime ingredients in the steps. In order to make the program work you have to be willing to do things that you might not like to do even so far as doing a lowly chore like dumping an ash tray.

It seems like many of us with some length of sobriety feels that just because we have a few years in the fellowship and have become active in recognizable areas of the program such as becoming officers that we don't have to dump ash trays or take out a bag of trash. Like that is not the way to carry a message to a sick and suffering addict. I can only say that I used to feel that way about things until I started reading articles in the "A.A." Big Book and literature from the Grapevine. My twelve step work today is not quite limited to verbal messages. Today the idea of practicing the principles of the program are a foundation for me to build on like the Golden Rule in the Holy Bible is a foundation. In order to clean myself up I have to be willing to clean up my meeting place and support it by any other means within my capabilities. This letter, I think is a good example of that. I realize today that if there hadn't been people like myself to carry the message to me I might not ever had the desire to stop killing myself.

This program has been a great blessing for me and it doesn't have to wear a disguise. I believe in the "How it works" portion of the program more strongly than I had ever believed in any thing in my life. I believe all the answers are in the preamble and that all a sick and suffering addict has to do is to open his eyes to it just one time and he will know what it is saying as I did when I opened my eyes up to it.

I don't quite have the ability to stay in touch with the Fellowship on a physical level but I have got the ability to read the literature today and receive a whole new outlook on matters I might have thought hopeless before because I know that the literature is written by a Group Conscience with the Group in mind as well as the individual. I must always remember "together we stand, divided we fall."

In Loving Fellowship,
John J., Miami, Florida
June 1980



Dear Rainbow

How are you? Rebecca S. and Lynn W. are sitting here in this new club house watching the telephone woman install the telephone. Fantastic. We are grateful to part of this fellowship that is growing at a rapid pace. Roger Whitaker has it in a very simple sentence, "I love you more beautiful than the spoken words can tell." How can we really show our gratitude? At times it is so hard to be able to express and do so in service work or otherwise. The chains that used to bind us in self bondage through drugs and our various related activities of our addiction are no longer applicable to our new lifestyle, except only as we choose. I guess my message is again that "I can't, We can," and this new clubhouse in Atlanta means so much to all of us and many yet unborn, and so many others still using. This new freedom did not come overnight and the responsibility is often measured in our capacity and willingness to get the ball rolling, and giving up some of our own free time and using this new freedom to help unshackle the bondage in our community, city, county, state, states, and THE WORLD of the stigmatism of addiction and help build a more worthwhile society for which we can grow in loving care (even though very stern at times). This 2nd clubhouse makes it possible more so for the hand of NA to always be there, which is the greatest responsibility and which also brings the greatest freedom. The anticipation of our growth does not have to overwhelm us any longer (being a part of OUR PROMISES) our dreams and goals are coming true, being happy in the here and now, each additional day being clean and sober reveals that God is doing for us (or through us) what we cannot do for ourselves. In doing service work we can reap the deeper benefits of being clean and sober. "God bless us each and everyone" said Tiny Tim.

LOTS OF LOVE,
Rebecca S. and Lynn W.
May 14, 1980



BITTER SWEET SERENITY

Today is the first day of the rest of my life. Tomorrow I am having delicate open heart surgery. The relief that it is about over with is tremendous. Taking it a day at a time has helped me greatly with the love and support that I have found in Narcotics Anonymous. I have had about six months to come to terms with this other disease which has affected me during this period in all areas of my life with self pity to self seeking to looking at poor little old me type attitude and getting away from my HIGHER power as I understand HIM. In coming closer to the program and trying to get honest I feel closer to God and the Divine Intelligence than I ever have. I know that I will have a lot of love and support for me irregardless what happens in the hands of the doctors which I have to implicitly trust as I have got to trust the God in them to treat the outward manifestation of God in me. The physical pain that will manifest itself in my body will hopefully break that shell that does enclose some of my grosser handicaps and my misunderstanding that stands in the way of me and God and the help of my fellows. We all have our sorrow to bear and we can be happy with it for we need stormy wind to enjoy the calm of peace that is always there if we will see and allow it into the soul. The steps, especially the third step, lately, relieves me of that bondage of self. All is really well in God's Universe. With spiritual progress, eventually continence replaces lust, forgiveness anger, contentment replaces greed, humility replaces pride. We can get well regardless of anyone. The only condition is faith in God and getting into action. We have to work like we're in school, unlearn old patterns of thought and behavior, read, share with friends, sponsors, and at meetings. We maintain our abstinence by working on sobriety day by day. The ability to see our short comings through humility can be used to our advantage to help us stay clean and sober today. The time is always now and never tomorrow and by the Grace of God. We can handle right now and be relieved of the bondage of self and learn the new pathways God has for us and so tomorrow is and can be a vision of hope through our twelve stepping stones . . .

HIGHER POWER — FREEDOM

On in the Spirit

Lynn W.

July 28, 1980



GOD AS I UNDERSTAND GOD

I was one of those who always sought God. Even at the conscious level, God preoccupied my thinking and talking from the age of eighteen onward. By that time I have been saved in a Baptist Church and later we went to an Episcopal Church. Whatever I was seeking was very elusive and just when I thought I was coming to some sort of understanding, I would feel like I had to start all over. At the age of eighteen, I started praying for oneness with God and that has continued to date. It was a long time before I started feeling like my prayers were going to be answered. That began when I started coming to the program.

When I first came to the program, I had to go to some AA's and ask them if their was any Narcotics Anonymous meetings in my town. The eventually got me a NA pamphlet and several meetings took place but he meetings failed and it was three more years for me. This last time, I had as they say lost some of my reservations. It seemed possible that I could change my personality through the program and spiritual principals. I went to more than seven meetings a week and read the literature. I spent almost all of my waking life talking program with members and the program eventually showed up in my dreams. I was very in touch with my powerlessness and the unmanageability in my life. I was clean and sober eighteen months before I completely submitted to the fact of my addiction and surrendered to the program of Narcotics Anonymous. By this I mean that I moved from simply feeling apart of to the point of total identity. At this time it became very important for me to work on my belief. I discovered as if for the first time the face that belief is mental and therefore changable. If I ever realized that before, it was at a time and place where I had nothing definite to go on to. In the program I had learned to pray and that prayers got ansered whether or not a person has a perfect belief or not. I prayed for God to reveal itself to me in terms I could recognize and waited for the prayers to be answered. I found myself able to see the divine process in everyday events. I found that if I had **any** difficulty I could pray and get help from my Higher Power. Whatever was troubling me would either go away or get better. Little by little my days were filled with countless prayers. My belief had progressed to the point where I realized help with real things was possible through specific prayers. I was pleased with the progress and I now believed that my Higher Power loved me and would handle any problem for me, if I asked, but I still had a ways to go. In my Third Step I discovered Faith, which for me is believing that God will and is constantly arranging things for my benefit and happiness. My limited awareness can make me worry if my faith is weak but now having seen so many miracles in my own life and the lives of others on the program I know that a loving God is running my show. I still make specific prayers for help but I frequently renew my prayers for oneness with God, and for God to make known to me what God's will is for me. The strength to do God's will seems to come with the knowledge of God's Will. I among many others am deeply grateful that the program did not prescribe any particular belief or religion because I would not have been able to make my surrender. Like many of our members I have been seeking along spiritual lines for quite a while and I feel

insulted when someone tries to force their belief on me. Especially if they act as if they are talking down to me. I have never encountered anyone with the warmth and strength of Spirit I sought who would feel the need to force their belief on anyone. Those who do make me feel that their belief is insubstantial and their need to force their belief on me springs from spiritual weakness instead of spiritual strength. I pray for them. I love the look in a newcomers eyes when they begin to suspect that the program is for real and real freedom is possible for them. That in the program of NA we have Traditions which keep us non-affiliated and free to develop our belief along spiritual lines without having to conform to any set pattern. That is to say the program concerns itself with recovery from a mental, physical and spiritual disease and does not involve itself with any particular religion. Our concern is only that a member seeking recovery find a belief in a Power greater than themselves so loving that they can completely and without reservation turn their life and will over to. Obviously this is a very personal thing. We can read and discuss belief with others to find out what works for them but we have to really believe in our Higher Power before we can take the Third Step. Belief can begin with a piece of paper describing our belief or a series of gradual awakenings which eventually compose themselves into a belief which is strong and complete enough to give us what we need and what we will die without. I believe that the Second Step is second most important step without which the remaining steps would be meaningless. Those who seem to work the Twelve Steps without a firm belief in a Loving God may be calling God by another name. Their recovery delights me and only strengthens my belief because the God I have come to believe in is so big and powerful it would not quibble over details or name-calling. My Higher Power seems always to strike at the very heart of the matter and a sincere desire for recovery is what makes that recovery possible. I believe that along the pathway of the Twelve Steps there is an infinite number of ways for recovery to take place regardless of personal preferences. I respect the program for offering recovery without demanding that which a suffering addict seeking help may not have. Some addicts have died thinking help was beyond their reach because of the wording of what they heard or through they heard. If you're like I am it is easy to think someone said something with one meaning and never check it out to find they intended to say something just the opposite. My willingness to try makes it easier to ask today but even so I often flee in self imposed terror. Recovery for me today is still of desperate importance. I want a new life in which I can live day at a time in any direction without recourse to drugs. As an addict I naturally used to think this sort of life was impossible without drugs, but, you have taught me that the clean and sober life makes possible exactly those things which were most important to me and only leaves out those things which would really hurt me and make me miserable. I attribute my recovery to the Grace of a Loving God working through the program of Narcotics Anonymous to give me the happiness and joy I always wanted but thought impossible until I stumbled through your doors.

Bo S.
Atlanta Literature Committee



The most important part of my recovery is my relationship to my Higher Power. I rely heavily on my sponsors, Group Conscience and my new brothers and sisters in N.A. for my recovery, but my Higher Power is Number One. I have always had an intellectual knowledge of a Higher Power, but I never put him first. I wasn't raised in a Christian home and was exposed to religious expressions of spirituality that I was never really able to accept the concept of a caring and loving being greater than myself. The religious dogma was which I was indoctrinated prevented me from seeing a Higher Power as loving and caring. I was filled with great fear of anything capable of the destruction and vengeance with which I saw God using so carelessly. In early adolescence I rejected God and adopted Science as the driving force behind the universe. A few semesters in the School of Hard Knocks and a few workshops on The Inner Nature of Cosmic Reality convinced me that indeed a force greater than myself did exist. I didn't intellectually accept the existence of a Higher Power, but I was so emotionally strung out that I could no longer deny the reality of a Higher Power. I did not want to turn my life over to him, however. As soon as I "Had My Act Together" I enrolled in the School of Hard Knocks again, taking the most difficult courses that I could find. A full solid year was spent on involving myself in sick dependent relationships (six in 1979), geographical cures (I moved to Key West: a nice quiet place where I could get into my music and writing), and began to see how many different drugs I could take, seeking "the" drug of choice: one which would be cheap, plentiful, safe, non-addictive, and of course enjoyable. My drug of choice (acid) forced a leave of absence from the School of Hard Knocks for a restorative cure in two mental institutions, a half-way house and a drug addiction clinic. In the course of five months every single sick dependent relationship I had was knocked out from under me leaving me with two choices: suicide and holding on to my Higher Power with all my might and pleading to be restored to sanity. I knew that I could no longer depend on my family, a lover, a job, or school to feed my ego. I knew that I could no longer place any one person high enough on my pedestal to keep me going. I knew that unless I put my Higher Power in charge, and quit running the show I was going to go crazy or kill myself — neither alternative being very attractive. Until I had reached that point I felt that phrases like "restore me to sanity" and "first things first" were simply too trite to have any bearing on my very serious and chronic mental illness. Now I feel that those phrases among others help me keep me aware of my Higher Power. Unless I keep reminding myself that without my Higher Power I simply do not exist I'll simply keep repeating the sick deadly behaviors which have kept my life so screwed up for so long and I'll never make any progress. My recovery is the most important part of my life today and my Higher Power makes my recovery possible.

Paul K.



The use of dope, leaves no hope.



A DAY AT WORK

When I asked my H.P. to keep me clean and sober this morning, I really didn't think anything about it. It has become a daily routine that goes with my morning prayers. If the day happens to be a work day, I also ask Him to let me have a good day at work and for me to do His will, which, I'm sure, is to do a good job.

After lunch, a co-worker and myself were going back up to the entrance of the club and he asked me to drive around for a minute so he could smoke a joint. This is not the first time that I have been around dope since I've gotten clean so there wasn't that burden of making any decisions. I could have said "No", or since I have seniority over the man, I could have come down on him, or I could have told him that I didn't mind if he smoked, but that I didn't like to be around it, so would he please smoke by himself. But instead I said "OK", and drove around the golf course while he got high. He knew that I didn't smoke, but he offered me a toke once and I simply said "No thanks." We didn't have much of a chance to talk until about it until a half an hour before quitting time, and it had been a long, hard, hot day and he asked me if I would like to go have a few beers. When I said no, he asked me why I didn't drink socially. I told him that I had never in my life drank socially and that I know myself well enough to know that I never would be able to drink socially. I thanked him for the invitation, and he went his way and I went mine.

All told, I didn't want to get high or have a beer. I didn't feel uncomfortable next to him while he got high and when the day was done I was completely satisfied with a half gallon of orange juice instead of a case of Bud. I can attribute this to Narcotics Anonymous and my Higher Power working in my life. I'm just real grateful that NA is strong in Atlanta, and that I don't have to worry about where to go for my next fix.

Page C.

Atlanta Literature Committee

ABOUT NARANON

When I attended my first Naranon meeting, I came looking for help for my addict. I was worried, confused, angry and resentful. I felt helpless. What a shock it was to learn that if I stayed with Naranon, I would be participating in a program designed to aid my own recovery — that I was powerless over any other human being!

But I did stay — and through the fellowship and love of people who understand my problems, six months later, I truly think I am recovering. The Naranon Program, and daily communication with my Higher Power, has taught me that I do not have to tackle my whole life's problems at once. I am learning — one day at a time — to change my negative attitudes to positive ones, my worry to loving detachment, my anger to serenity, my resentment to gratitude, and my helplessness to inner strength. This is the promise of Naranon — a better way to live!

Cathy A.

Atlanta, 1980

Dear Friends,

I have been incarcerated here at Buford for 16 months, all in which has been served in your beautiful organization of Narcotics Anonymous.

When I first started we were receiving tremendous response from the outside. It really helped me get into the feel of the program and all its wonderful teachings.

Now it seems only a very few people have an interest in what goes on in here. If not for Barry L. his wife Shelly, Rebecca and Annie, this group would have no way of knowing the beauty you can receive from this program.

I plan on getting out real soon, so I'm not asking this for myself. I'm asking for support for the new members that come into our program. They are what keeps the meetings happening. So, if you have an hour to give to helping others, think about us. We meet every Thursday nite from 8:00-9:00. If you need further information contact Barry L. or Rebecca.

I am very grateful and thankful for what this program is doing for me.

Hope to see ya'll soon,

Robert W.

Golden Eagle Group

Buford, Ga.

SHARING

Since one of the pitfalls of my addiction was an inability to share myself with others. I thought I could send a few lines on what benefits I am getting from working on the 8th step of our program. After writing down a fourth inventory and sharing it in the 5th step, I burned the inventory (my choice). Now at step 8 I need another list of "all" people I have harmed. Although I am only in the middle of my writting I have found out certain characteristics I had and have. I always wanted to be someone else, never satisfied with myself, this led me on a "shopping spree" for someone I could be.

I judge people as to whether I wanted to be like them or not. I had no acceptance of myself. I thought I could get the things (physical and emotional) they had, by simply hanging around with them. Kinda like osmosis with no work on my part. Most of my relationships with guys or gals I would either be jealous of or disgusted by or trying to imitate.

I have failed through selfishness to form any kind of positive relationship in the past. I judge people and am alternately resentful and jealous or cold and callous. Either I thought they were above me or I was above them. These are benefits to know those things about myself. There are many more. I just keep forgetting that the people who wrote these steps did so because they loved me and us.

Love and happy trails,

Denny

Monaia, Pa.

MY HEART IS OPEN TO YOU WHEREVER YOU ARE

I know that you are very far away.
But I can still here your voice calling at special time sof the day.
When I am alone and its silent outside I can hear you calling to me.

I know you will come back, but it may take a while.
Someday we will be together and we can love forever with a smile.

Stacy H.
February 14, 1980



SEARCHING

I was searching for you, but I did
not know your name,
when I finally found you, each time
I called you came.

You gave me a program that was
uniquely mine,
and said don't get loaded one
day at a time.

I took your advise and begin
to understand,
that if I don't use today,
tomorrow, I'll be free again.

Janice

Dope is not a vengeful substance, it will simply let you drown in your own pool of foolishness.

SOFTER, EASIER WAY

However I came about coming through the doors of NA, the timing was perfect. I was a heartbeat away from the dramatic consequences of our disease. The softer easier way my Higher Power had laid out for me was a series of meetings on gratitude.

It has occurred to me that topics can move in waves through our fellowship: hammering away until that magic ingredient clicks in the mind of those who are lacking and looking. Gratitude was the fuel I needed. After hearing pieces of recovery relayed through the necessity of Gratitude I caught my first clue as to what these people had going for themselves. By the end of the first couple of weeks I had come to realize the subtle power of the program. It was handing me the beginnings of the program at the beginning. I did not feel as if I had come into a movie in the middle.

After the years of using dope, of abusing and being abused by people, the idea of being grateful in my daily life for all the simplest of details seemed naive. But after the first pains of withdrawal passed, it was easy to be grateful for not using that day. This was the seed. It is easy to be grateful for not being strung out. The feeling began to spread to the immediate surroundings, later to feelings, and as the people of the fellowship continued in meetings to explore their relationship with gratitude in their daily lives, I began to see.

I feel that I was delivered to those first meetings by the hand of a loving God that the "clicking" I felt in those meetings was the working of his will. The foundation began with gratitude, and that foundation is to a program of recovery from addiction based in a system of quality to a whole new life of values instead of destruction.

David A.
Atlanta Literature Committee

TIME IS ON MY SIDE! IS IT?

I have a deep and almost burning feeling of concern inside. It is for my fellow addict (who still suffers). The one who has "X" amount of months or years of sobriety and leaves the fellowship, returning to using and suffers like never before.

My own experience of using again after being in this program (once for fourteen months, once for sixteen months) comes back. Sickness, remorse, guilt, and mental agony are some of the feelings I experienced coming back to this fellowship.

But, you already know this, if you are one that made it back to the fellowship. The feelings of self-condemnation inside, because: once you had what other people wanted and now it's time to listen to those other people. These feelings I share with you out of my own experience.

With time on my side I too returned to using drugs. Of course drugs were not the answer. They only shortened my length of time . . .

Marie H.
Atlanta Literature Committee
August 1980

SIMPLE BASIC PROGRAM (IT WORKS)

You know, it's unreal how strong my monkey really is. Not to mention how smart. He is tremendously sneaky. Sometimes he'll lay dormant for a day or even a month! Waiting for an opening, just a chance to jump, when he can have a say in my sobriety.

It's then that I have to get back to some strong basic program. Like powerlessness and unmanageability or my Higher Power and surrendering my life and will to Him or even just plain old hurting enough to work the Steps and read the literature.

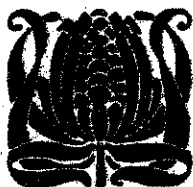
It's amazing, I mean the power it has in changing my outlook. Sometimes, in fact most of the time, it isn't that simple or should I say it isn't that easy. I need to open up and share with someone in the program. That's not so easy for me. You see, I was always a loner in my using days. Among other things I was a problem solver. Not mine of course — yours. "Something wrong? Bring it to me, I'll fix it." The thing is I couldn't even solve my own. So now in my recovery — I have to change that. I've got to go to work on me or die! It's not so easy — especially for an ego like mine — for me to see someone or call someone and ask for help. The way my upbringing said, it was "A man solves his own problems, only baby's need help." Let me tell you, if you called me a baby in those days, a few seconds later you were picking yourself up off the floor.

Recently, someone very dear to me, someone I love very much, had a relapse. They also disappeared for approximately five days. Let me tell you, I went through hell. See I'm also in love with this person. Well, I called everywhere and searched a lot. I even called some of my old connections and using buddies, trying to find this person. Soon I began wearing down. Losing sleep every night and struggling with some nerves that were wearing thin, I was going bananas. Finally I couldn't go on that way any longer. I called a friend of mind in the program. Boy, did I get it. They let me know right quick that they wouldn't give me any pity. Just tough love. Guess what? It was exactly what I needed and it came back down to my first three steps. Simple — Basic — Program!

It was work it or die, or end up in a hospital again. I've had enough of those. So that night, I had a nice long talk with my Higher Power. About four thirty or five A.M. I got a call from an old connection. He said she was about thirty miles or so away in a hotel but didn't know exactly where. I hung up! About five thirty (an hour later) she called me up of her own will. It was over! I went and picked her up.

Everything I did was to no avail until I gave it to a Power greater than myself, which I choose to call God. Simple Basic Program — It Works.

Ed B.
Atlanta





New Ideas on Sex

Sex, romance, and relationships with other people; these are some of the problems that have had me over a barrle for years. Sometimes, in the refuge of our meeting halls, I have rested in a false sense of security, pretending that the world has just faded away forever. But, as always, I forget about those things only temporarily, and then, once again, I am forced to pull out the tools of the program, and deal with my hang-ups directly.

When I was a little girl, I started to look for a substitute for Papa. I had a father, but he wasn't the father I wanted. He was a drunk, and a compulsive personality. He beat me and he spent a good deal of time away from home.

The first place I looked was in the neighborhood where I grew up, and later on I looked in school. As far back as kindergarten, I had a boyfriend, and that boyfriend would have to be the boy that I thought was the cutest one in my class. If there were someone cuter that moved into the neighborhood, he would always replace the first. I was lucky to be as pretty as I was, and as much of a tomboy, because the little boys always responded the way I wanted them to.

My luck changed when I got to be around nine. I was a little fat, and my parents insisted that I wear my hair in braids, which was definitely "out" at that time. For about five years after that, I was a nerd. I sure didn't want to be one, and I did everything I could to rectify the situation, but no matter what I tried, I was still not accepted within my own peer group. To me, rejection meant failure. I started going out of my way to find acceptance and escape.

My older brother, Joe, with whom I was in constant com-

petition, seemed to be so popular and together beside me. When he would allow me to hang out with his friends, I felt honored. He was always one step ahead of the other high-schoolers, so it's not surprising that he was one of the first kids in our school to get high. He got stoned on pot, pills, and hallucinogenics, among other things. These avenues of escape seemed awfully attractive to me. I just loved any kick I could get my greedy little hands on. Although Joe didn't want me to be doing drugs, he soon got used to the idea, while I found many people to supply my new thrills. When I was thirteen, I started having boyfriends again. At first, I was very innocent. Once, a boy four years older than I was took me up to "Love Circle" to park. He got his hands all over me. I had absolutely no idea what he was trying to do, or how to respond. I felt like I'd really done something evil, just by agreeing to ride in his car. I'd heard that men couldn't be trusted under those circumstances, so I blamed myself for his actions, and decided to keep the whole incident to myself.

Although I had been frightened off from sex at first, I soon started experimenting with my boyfriends, and within a year and a half, I was due for an illegal abortion. After a year of drinking, and another year of drugging, I had another pregnancy. This time, there was no abortion. Because of my daily habit of dropping acid, (LSD) the baby was born with internal deformities, premature. It died. For a little while after that, my parents kept me under lock and key, living in a foreign country. I stayed away from most duugs, and remained chaste for months. Unfortunately for my parents, the country they chose was Colombia, S. A., so my "state of Grace" didn't last.

Obviously, I was not taking responsibility for my own behavior, my own body. Most of the young men I was involved with were much older than I was, living in their own apartments or on the streets. My lifestyle was so dishonest that I couldn't communicate with my parents at all. I figured that if they had any idea what I was doing, they would

try to stop me, and I sure didn't want that. Between the day I turned fifteen, and the day I turned twenty-one, I had sex with at least two hundred different men, and that is a conservative estimate. I rationalized that I was becoming a worldly person, more independent and flexible than the average woman. I learned to have compassion for men's feelings. I learned that when one person is being used, so is the other. But, aside from those things, most of what I learned was garbage. Secretly, I believed that men were not to be trusted, and that other women were useless as anything other than threats.

As I became more and more promiscuous, I also grew more and more disgusted with myself. Because most of my love life grew out of a feeling of self-hate, instead of making that feeling go away, sex just seemed to intensify it. The few times when I really felt any love for a man, I was unable to stay "true" to him long enough to keep his interest, or his trust.

As soon as I was eighteen, I left home. For a while during that year, I was a little more sober than I had been, since I had developed a case of Hepatitis and I was scared to use any drugs stronger than grass. Right before my 19th birthday, on the spur of the moment, I took off for Boulder, Colorado. There I became even more engrossed in the street scene than ever. I had my own philosophy of freedom, which included "free Love." But there was a man up there who led a street gang, and he wanted to keep me. I stayed with him, in my own wild way. As usual, I screwed around on him, and he did the same to me, but I really did love him.

I traveled all I could, singing in bars and pan-handling. I left my Colorado man, and then went back to him, but we didn't stay together for very long. He died of a drug overdose, dealing MDA in Boulder. That made quite a difference in my life, especially in my attitudes. From then on, I always had an "old man" to take care of me, but I didn't really love any of them. I just didn't know how

to function alone, and I was scared.

But, boyfriends weren't the only people I had sexual experiences with. Often, I was threatened and raped, so not all of my contact was pleasant. Much of my sexlife was violent, and it's still painful for me to think about it.

My first rape happened to me when I was fifteen, crashing off some weak speed, and crying a lot to begin with. I was raped again the age of eighteen, this time by two men at once, at the point of a gun. At nineteen, many of my sexual experiences were "reluctant seductions", and that means that I realized I would be hurt or killed if I didn't comply with my assailants. During a period one month, I was raped three times. All three times happened after I had taken rides with strangers, hitch-hiking. And, some months later, I came to after an alcoholic black'out, with physical evidence of rape all over my body, but no recollection as to how it got there or who I was with. The last time, the man who got me had known me for several days, and he was drunk. He was angry at me because I would not succumb to him voluntarily; he figured I deserved a beating, and he almost killed me. By God's Grace, I ran out into the Georgia night, 3:00am, bleeding from head to toe, and was saved by a local drunk, who took me in and nursed me back to semi-health. That time, I almost lost one of my eyes, and my life. It's one of the few times I prayed for help, ever.

After that last episode, and after some county jail time to boot, I drank and drugged wildly for a few more months. I was terrified all the time. Finally, I had no friends left that would shelter me, and I scared off most strangers. With no support for my habit, and fear as a motivator, I quit smoking in the summer of 1973, and I put down all the dope that fall.

During the next year, I got sicker and sicker, even without the dope and the booze. I fell in love with a song-writer; a married song-writer. When I wasn't staying sober on fear, I was staying sober to spite this man's wife. I had very little sexual contact, but I substituted fantasy for reality. I

had no sedation and no highs, but I developed a severe case of anorexia nervosa, which is an addictive disorder in which the victim eats, vomits, and starves compulsively. Even though I longed for a man's touch, I was too ashamed of my sickness to let anyone get close to me.

After a year of torture, trying it on my own, I joined AA. I knew I had a lot more problems than booze, but AA was the only show in town back then. If nothing else, I figured that I would at least have some company. The AA community took me in like a baby left on their doorstep. I was a baby. I had hardly ever worked, hardly ever handled anything for myself, so these people showed me what to do. I still didn't want anyone to know about my anorexia, so it got worse. In AA, I learned that there was a way out of alcoholism. Since the AA'S instilled a fear of booze in me, I figured that whatever I was doing, no matter what it was, was better than drinking. I read the BIG BOOK and I went to a lot of meetings. AA was a place to hide, and it was quite a change for me to be around people that were so accepting and so helpful. Still, I felt lonely and unfulfilled most of the time when I was outside a meeting. The men I met in AA were way too old for me, and not my type. Every so often, I would go out and pick up a cowboy in a local bar, but that proved to be so unfulfilling, I gave up on it. For a long time, I believed myself to be immune to sexual attraction, but I was only kidding myself, thank God.

In 1978, my food addiction led me back to alcohol in the form of Ipecac, a poison which induced vomiting. From spring until fall of that year, I ate and puked, and my life just went down the toilet, literally. My new dry date is October 13, 1978.

After I finally got clean from that, admitting just how sick I really was, my emotions finally started to surface. I found out that I had not gone any further than the 8th grade, sexually. When I rediscovered men, I went bananas all over again. I felt so awkward and shy, so self-conscious.

I still have a long way to go. In trying to form a new ideal to work towards, I have made certain decisions that are not always easy to stick to. The first thing is that I will always be honest about how I feel and what I am doing, not only with my partner, but with my sponsor as well. Next, I want to try to be less self-centered in my demands. And, finally, I believe I have a perfect right to say "no", unless I am absolutely sure I want to take part in anything with a sex partner. All of this is trial and error. When I was using, I treated sex casually, using my body and other people to make me feel like a real person. After I got clean, but was still sick in other ways, I totally avoided the issue. Now, I would like to try for a balance. It would be nice to just see if I can love a man and get to know him for a little while before we engage in sexual intercourse, so that we can be truly sure that we are making love, and not just screwing.

I have read and re-read the AA big book's chapter 5, especially the last few pages, which deal in sexual relationships. In that chapter, we are told to frankly analyze the past, see where we have been selfish, and to strive for a new ideal in our sexual behavior. I want to grow towards maturity and honesty, toward responsibility and calmness in this area of my life. I would like to maintain my personality, my autonomy, and my self-respect, and not hide or repress myself behind a man.

I fall short of my ideal quite often. I still day-dream, project, manipulate, and overreact with potential partners. I still melt at the right touch. But, I thank God I'm still human. I thank God I am a woman now. I thank God I can feel.

Anonymous N A Lady



Twelve Steps to Relapse

1. Start missing meeting for any reason, real or imaginary.
2. Become critical of the methods used by other members who may not agree with you in everything.
3. Nurse the idea that someday, somehow, you can use again and become a controlled user.
4. Let the other fellow do the 12 Step work in your group. You are too busy.
5. Become conscious of your NA "seniority" and view every new member with a skeptical and condescending eye.
6. Become so pleased with your own views of the program that you consider yourself an "elder" statesman.
7. Start a smallclique within your own group composed of only a few members who see eye to eye with you..
8. Tell the new comer in confidence that you yourself do not take certain of the 12 Steps seriously.
9. Let your mind dwell more on how much you are helping others rather than how much the NA program is doing for you.
10. If an unfortunate member has a relapse,, drop him at once.
11. Cultivate the habit of borrowing money from other members, then stay away from meetings to avoid embarassment.
12. Look upon the 24 hour plan as a vital thing for new members, but not for yourself. You have outgrown the need for that long ago.

To this list of twelve might be added the 13th Step to relapse: Leave off prayer and scorn the attitude which comes from dependence on a power greater than yourself.

INSECURITY

The root of my addiction is insecurity. My insecurity leads me to depend on drugs and other people. My addictive personality looks for comfort and serenity from the modes of fellow addicts and drugs. I confound my problems by hiding them and taking on the multitudes of others that come from the use of drugs. The mental confusion becomes so great that I can't live with or without drugs and be happy, at least as long as I continue with this pattern of life. The problems and fears become so enormous mentally that it takes more and more drugs to escape from them, until all I'm living for is the consumption of and acquiring of drugs. The more drugs I do to get out of my misery, the more I'm actually trying to kill myself, instead of disillusioning myself about living and coping with my problems. My life has become unmanageable. It's hard to let go of that life style, being easier to repeat the same cycles over and over.

In my addiction, the people of NA have come to mean a great deal to me in a very short period of time. They are teaching me to live and be happy without drugs. Their sobriety is becoming part of my addictive personality day by day. Their love for me is teaching me to love myself. Daily contact with my H.P. in communion with loved ones is bringing me closer to these people and gives me strength to carry on. They've given me something to live for that I never could find in a pill, fix or bottle - myself.

Charles T.
Marietta



NA members in Baton Rouge, Louisiana are holding a camp out the weekend of October 24th, 25th and 26th at the Chicot Louisiana State Park. Bring your own camping equipment and food. Campsite cost is about \$5.00 per night. Cabins are available. There will be a sunset welcome meeting Friday, a Saturday night bon fire meeting and a Sunday morning spiritual meeting. Come join in the fun, meet old friends and make new ones. Call Charles at 504/673-3472 or Chris at 504/ 275-1368 for more information...Ya'll come!



NO EXCUSES BUT ...

The activities surrounding the production of material for a book for Narcotics Anonymous has absorbed a lot of the energy which does the Rainbow each month. We had plenty of material come in though and so we are doing two issues at one time and sending them out together. We hope you like them.

The Rainbow Staff

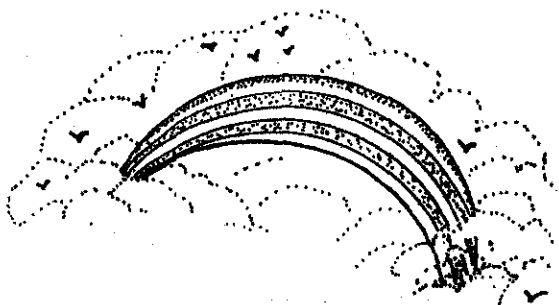
CALENDAR

Come help us celebrate the South Avondale Group of NA first anniversary in Birmingham on Saturday, October 18th. Speakers meeting begins at 8:00 pm with Jeanette P. from Decatur, Alabama. Good fellowship and food to follow. Regular meetings on Tuesday and Thursday nights at 8:00pm. The Anniversary will be held at 40th Street and 4th Avenue South, Birmingham. For further information call Cindy at 856-0521 or 854-8882, Kevin at 822-6420 or 979-6433, or Brian at 871-3610.

2nd Annual Southern California Convention of NA on the Queen Mary in Long Beach, California October 17, 18 & 19. Registration \$7.00. Convention Committee, PO Box 3663, Van Nuys, CA 91407.



Find Yourself,
Become to Know yourself,
Become to love yourself,
Only then You can help Yourself.



The Rainbow Connection

GROUPS IN METRO ATLANTA

SUNDAY

12 Step Study Group — Rising Sun
Highland Group — Highland Club

MONDAY

Clean and Serene — Ridgeview Institute
Feeling Free Group
Peachford Hospital
New Answer Meeting
Parkway Regional

Highland Group — Highland Club
Serenity Group — Gainesville, GA
United Methodist Church

Literature Meeting — Rising Sun

TUESDAY

Open Arms — Brawners Hospital
New Visions Group
DeKalb Addiction Clinic

Buckhead Group — St. Ann's Episcopal
Canton Group — No. Ga. Mental Health
Highland Group — Highland Club
11:00 am Meeting — Highland Club
New Meeting — Ga. State U.

Room 212, 11:40 am

Non-Smokers — Rising Sun
(no smoking in room only)

WEDNESDAY

Turning Point
Peachtree Parkwood Hospital
Southside Survivors — Clayton General
Forward Group — Rising Sun
11:00 am Meeting — Highland Club

THURSDAY

NAVAHO Group — VA Hospital
Woodstock Meeting

Little River Methodist Church
New Meeting — Kennestone Hospital
Golden Eagle Group — Buford Prison
Open Up Group — Rising Sun
11 am Meeting — Highland Club
Good Time Gang

Holy Cross Catholic Church
Highland Group — Highland Club

FRIDAY

New Connections — Peachford Hospital
Highland Group — Highland Club
Reaching Out Group — Rising Sun
New Birth Group

New Horizons Womens
Pre-Release Center

Late Meeting — Highland Club

SATURDAY

Speakers Meeting — Rising Sun
Frogmyre Junction

Ridgeview Crisis Center
Survivors Group — Rising Sun
Speakers Meeting — Highland Club

Meeting times are all 8:00 pm except
Survivors Group and Friday Late
Meeting at Highland Club which meets
at 11:00 pm; and the Golden Eagle Group
and Southside Survivors which meets at
8:30 pm.

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the Rainbow Connection, 890 Atlanta Road,
Marietta, GA 30060.

USE THIS FORM FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

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 groups 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 out to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our Service Centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such ought never be organized; but we create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. N.A. 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.