

DECEMBER 1980

The Rainbow Connection

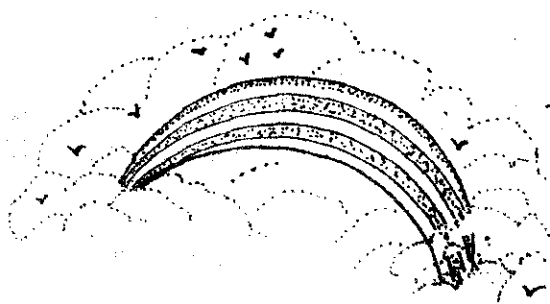
THE TWELVE STEPS OF N.A.

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 Groups of Narcotics Anonymous
"... caring and sharing the NA way ..."
Volume 2, Number 12 December 1980

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We welcome your story, article or perspective relating to NA recovery. Send to: The
Rainbow Connection, 890 Atlanta Road, Marietta GA 30060

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THE RAINBOW CONNECTION 1980 ANNUAL REPORT

In the December meeting of the Marietta Area Service Committee the progress of the Rainbow Connection was discussed at length. With the latest three issues (inclusive), the Rainbow will have published over two hundred and forty pages of new writing addressed to fellow addicts seeking recovery. We have gone from printing the January issue on a mimeograph with only eight pages to twenty four pages of offset printing with type setting on our own press. Ownership of the press has been kept out of committee by traditions but it sure helps with the printing bills. The only difficulty we face is money. Both Atlanta and Marietta contribute to the Rainbow and money comes in from subscribers, but it is not enough. To insure the ongoing publication of the Rainbow, the Committees and staff members voted to sell the Rainbow for one dollar and to have a circulation manager to see to it that it gets out. The Rainbow has been selling at the group level for a dollar here for some time. If excess funds should ever develop they will be forwarded to one of the Service Committees so that the Rainbow will never become profit making. Selling the Rainbow may come as a shock to members who are not directly associated with publication of such a newsletter, but the bills are in black and white. Raising subscription rates was discussed, but the group felt that six dollars a year should stand. We will be able to sell enough Rainbows beyond subscriber copies and archives to make it self supporting. We appreciate your support this year and hope to continue to serve you in this manner.

THE RAINBOW STAFF



The DAY BY DAY book was on the futility of self-pity. When I read it, I was late waking up, and it was raining outside. "Damn right!" says I, self-pity won't catch up with me today!"

Outside, as my feet got soggy and soggy, I thought back on the conversation I had had the night before with a guy that I really like. He said he probably wouldn't be able to come and see me, after all, any time soon. Rats. Soggy feet. No boyfriend.

Work. Same old job. I remembered that my thinking wasn't all too healthy, but it started to seem logical to me. Clean-up. I got ink and chemicals all over my hands, cleaning up the machine. Things were hard to do all day. The electricity kept going off. Paper kept jamming up in my printing press. I work in the basement, but I'm certain the big bosses on the 10th floor heard me scream, "F you!" at my press. I fell off a box of paper I was standing on and lied to my supervisor when he asked me what all the racket was, because I was ashamed of the fact that I was so small I had to stand on the box to do my work. Trying to be creative at the same time as doing my work, I worked on a drawing that got uglier and uglier with each stroke of the pencil. It wouldn't have been so bad if there hadn't been so many interruptions, but those darn people expected a genius like me to do my work instead of draw ladies in magazines.

Realizing that I was quickly becoming a total loss, I tried the phone. Nobody home. I tried hugging, anyone would have me. That helped. I tried going for a walk. God still lived out there. I tried singing. Blues out. By the time I got to the swimming pool, and did my running, the negativity was almost completely out of my system. I ran to the church, to open the door for the N.A. meeting.

I got there early, so I would have plenty of time. As soon as I was sure that everything was in order, I ran a couple of blocks to the park, and I stood in the clearing among a circle of autumn trees, looking up at the full moon.

"Hey God," I said, "I'm wrong." You don't have to give me my way for me to love you. You know damn well how self-centered I've been. Please pull me out of myself. Let me hear and feel my brothers and sisters tonight. Tear down my walls, open my mind." And I found myself singing again as I walked back to the meeting.

We talked about progress. The chairperson had forgotten to attend, and all but two of us were at least ten minutes late, but all of that seemed petty and irrelevant. More and more dope fiends started to arrive, and each one seemed to get a lot out of what was being said.

It was time to go home. One of the women broke down and said that she needed some help. Right at that moment, her old man, who we all loved as a respected N.A. member, was a couple of blocks away, selling his soul for a status job. He had already gone through the \$400 that he'd been saving all summer to buy a truck. knew he'd spent it on cocaine. All of the "right people" were accepting him, and he was hanging out just to be seen.

Steve and I went over. We waited for half an hour or so before we spotted him. Unlike his old self, he didn't waste his time talking to us. We asked him if he wanted to talk, and he said he's been using, and that he was too busy for us. That told us all we needed to know. We left.

Back home, I remembered that haunted, almost nauseous look on my old buddy's face, unlike anything I'd felt, even at my worst, sober. I remembered when I had wanted a job like his and cursed God for not giving it to me. I thought about how much love I felt for Steve, my brothers, and how glad I was that he was clean too. It could have been either one of us out there, easily.

Time for bed. Quietly, gazing out the window at the moon, I had little to say. Just "Thanks. It's been a fine day."



MAKING MEETINGS

I would like to express my need for meetings. They strengthen my grip on my cleanliness. When I first started going to meetings I would go once in a while and I would find excuses not to go. I was scared because I did not know anybody. I used to think I did not need meetings. When things started to go wrong I attended meetings. Now I make a few meetings regularly. I need meetings. Meetings keep me in touch with where I have been, but more importantly, where I can go with my clean and sober life. When I stop making meetings I am headed for trouble. I feel comfortable in any N.A. meeting I go to because I know I'm welcomed. So, to anybody out there who is afraid to go to a meeting for whatever reason my hand will be waiting for you to come to your senses and reach out for a clean sober life.

Bristol Literature Committee





1st Tradition



"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity."

The purpose of this tradition is to remind us as individual addicts that we are powerless over drugs, but as a joint group we can each recover from addiction. As the fellowship of N.A. sticks together as a whole, things get done; on both small and large orders, some say miracles will happen. If in N.A. we forget the basic principle that only those addicted can help and should strive to aid the fellow addict, then the program will fall apart.

It is through this common bond that the program of N.A. functions; addicts helping, caring, and relating to fellow sufferers, that we all may find recovery.

The more united we are the stronger the fellowship. We must be willing to make sacrifices for this program, whether this means taking commitments, being a CSR, doing twelfth step work, or simply cleaning up after a meeting. All of these are important duties that keep N.A. running, thereby keeping us sober.

Let not the bond be broken, for a chain without one link is no longer one chain, but two fragments of the whole. If not for our common welfare coming first, N.A. would soon fall apart. There has been a group that, due to irresponsibility, has had to move. If groups do not hold regular group conscience meetings, or if some members shirk responsibility, and let others do all the work, hassles start within the group, tearing the group asunder. Our fellowship does not grow with this. The division of N.A. will cause us to fall. We fail to be a loving fellowship out to help the addict seeking recovery. We lose our atmosphere of recovery. For this reason we must realize that the survival of the program means our personal survival.

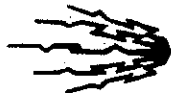
We come from all walks of life and we're all individuals with many different opinions, ideas, and attitudes. Our common bond is our addiction, and our desire to recover from our addiction. We are one.

We should always be conscience of our atmosphere of recovery, and make this a priority. When we put personalities before the principles of this program, we are putting our common recovery, and the survival of this program, in jeopardy. This tradition means humility in the most important sense. Not a single one of us could have recovered, or stayed clean, if there was no N.A. If we forget we are addicts and let other causes or personalities divert us, the basic principle upon which we maintain our unity is weakened. When we put aside our differences, and N.A. is together, there is much love throughout. Addicts can then get back to the basics of recovery, one addict helping another addict.

The first tradition reminds us that we are dependent on the fellowship, and that we must put the unity of N.A. first, that when an addict who desires to get clean reaches out for help, we must reach out and take his hand, and do what we can, regardless of who he is, or where he came from. This is placing principles over personalities. Our main reason for being here is recovery from our addiction.

Some of us may think that N.A. runs itself, but this isn't true, it is the individual addicts working together that make it possible for us all to stay sober. In order for us to recovery, we need each other, one addict sharing with another; we must overlook personality conflicts, egos, opinions, and attitudes, and remember that we need each other. Together, we stand a chance, divided, we're up shit's creek.

Bristol Literature October 80



FREEDOM



As we grow in our recovery, we begin to experience freedom in different areas of our lives. For me, this freedom comes when I begin to live in accordance with life as it is. When I was new on the program, I used to think that freedom brought all kinds of responsibilities and chores. I now understand that when I live in accord with reality as it is, I am automatically freed from the concerns which used to plague me. It is really simpler this way. When I am really free today, I don't have to think about all that other stuff because I'm not going against anything. I am going along with things.

If I am not, then trouble shows up of it's own accord.

Real freedom is not having to worry about all the imbalances that I set in motion when I let my self-will run the day. My self-will is limited just as I am limited. It can only be in accord with things which are directly known to me. My Higher Power is infinite and when I submit to that will I am in accord with the universe and I experience freedom as I have never known before. I experience peace as only belief in a Loving Higher Power which is actively taking care of me can bring. This belief is brought out in my living experience. I see it in the lives of others around me. This world becomes a paradise. When I drift back to personal concerns there is plenty to worry about. The more I drift, the more there is to worry about. When I get back in God's will I find myself in the here and now looking to the next thing to do and not so concerned with yesterday and tomorrow.



Bo S.- Marietta

THE BOOK

Hello, my name is Motorcycle Ed and I'm a drug addict.

I would like to share about the experience I had in Lincoln, Nb. from Sept. 8th to Sept. 14th. What the event was about was the World Literature Conference.

In my head I really didn't know how many people were working on our book so my basic reason for going was to find out how many and how much was being done.

What I found was very surprising to say the least. There were people from all over the U.S. and even one guy from British Columbia (Van Couver). I thought it would be all one sided, and all that stuff, but I found out the people there were very open-minded and listened to everyone. As you know the newcomer can sometimes give you the answer you've been looking for for a long time. The range of sobriety, as I saw it, was a little over 16 years to 1 week clean.

It's hard to say exactly how many were there. Some that were there in the beginning of the week had to leave and some came in late. The local people were very helpfull cause some would drop in on their lunch hour or during classes. Most would come in after work and help until we had to leave the building or meeting time.

Now I've been clean (day at a time) for 3½ years and I've got to see the Spirit at work in a lot of different ways. In new people, meetings grow in numbers and more groups, in clubhouses and all their activities. But what happened in Lincoln touched my heart and tears came to my eyes when Greg read what we had already done on Chapter # 1.

I've not even been involved in the making of a book in all my life and it was so . . . Words seem so inadequate to try and explain the way I felt.

In my heart I believe the Spirit wants us to have our book and I can see some of the ways in which he (or it) is making it possible for us to have.

The program is one of change and it is really a change for me to set down and do this writing.

Yours in the Fellowship of the Spirit
Love, Motorcycle Ed





HOW CAN I HANDLE THE ME I'VE FOUND

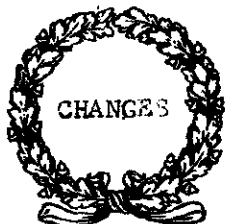
I once wore many masks — masks that I had claimed as my own — As the parade of glittering masks passed my way. My masks drew people to me without letting them get close enough to hurt me. There was something missing, an emptiness deep inside. I tried to fill the emptiness with all the artificial feelings of chemicals and make believe. I finally realized what my soul was crying out for — to be spontaneous to be the real me.

I've let go of my masks through hard work and caring words that guided me. Now the fear arises; I've found no confidence, found no me; I've come upon a frightened little girl that doesn't want to grow up, because she's had a front row view on the games grown-ups play. I took away her defenses and said, "You are on your own kid, give them hell." How could I be so cruel to that frightened little girl in me?

I haven't given up. I believe in that little girl while all eyes are watching, waiting impatiently for that little girl to give up and end it all. I'm searching desperately to give that little girl a purpose to go on.

Mitizie





I have found that my commitment to NA service work teaches me things that help me in my daily life. Every time an opportunity to serve comes up, this isn't going to work. This doesn't make sense. I have to live within my means. I'd like to help and I am very grateful but...". I regard this as part of my disease and it sure makes me uneasy when I listen. I think our program is about freedom from self. The first thing which happens when I start feeling better is that I get interested in another person. The first thing which happens when I start feeling better is that I get interested in another person. The first thing which happens when I start to feel bad is I get selfish and refuse to admit any fault in a difficult circumstance. In this sense, self is negative by right of it's limitations. There's nothing wrong with self unless it is cut off from others by some sense of uniqueness. People really have so much in common, it is painful to watch and experience the loneliness of separation when we have so much basis for identity. Through helping others, I become reintegrated in humanity among those I feel most at home with: recovering addicts. In time this feeling of being a part of spills over into the rest of my everyday life. I can only get a new life through changing. This seems to require a conscious willingness to change. My mind has to be open to new ideas if I am to reevaluate old ideas and learn new ones. Honesty forced me to admit my need for help and keep coming

back long enough for the changes to begin to take place. I have watched myself and others go through hard times clean and sober. In retrospect I can see how I am the architect of my own adversity. I can see how my selfishness has been my undoing. I don't mind admitting this today because I know another way is possible. To get the benefits, I have to reach out and do my part to help. If I get selfish in the negative sense, I get set back in the quality of my life. To get more, I give more. Today is the only day I can do anything about and I don't want to waste it on old ways.

The Fellowship that went on after the meetings helped me express my feelings to others one on one. My trust and confidence grew as a natural result. Working the Twelve Steps of NA lead me out of the confusion and despair and into a way of life tailor made to my needs for personal growth and honesty. I was afraid to hope for the new life you talked about. As days went by I lost my fear and developed a deep sense of belonging. I still fear it will go away but I have great faith that as long as I continue to go to meetings and work the steps, it will not. Today I continue to explore my feelings, Kindness, gratitude, joy, well being, concern for others, love reverence, attention, attraction and repulsion came pretty naturally for me today. I can trust my feelings to be accurate and reliable in most cases. When I'm not sure I pray and trust to my Higher power to take care of me. If something important comes up I call my sponsor or take it to a meeting. I can usually get the answer to any problem this way and the rest I can let go of. I have learned that a lot of character defects kept me from feeling comfortable with my feelings. My lack of Faith kept me taking responsibility for things I could not control and that screwed me up. Unmade amends kept my feelings tied up in various ways. These are exactly the things the Twelve Steps helped me with.

Bo S.- Atlanta Lit.

POINTS ON THE FOURTH STEP:

What triggers Self-Destructiveness and what can trigger Self-Affirmation. The 4th step is more than looking at what prevents the addict from being comfortable.

It is more than looking at where the guilt comes from.

It is a list of things that the addict does or do not do which "lets" the addict feel or bad about him or herself. The word "Lets" is important because, that is the word which allows God into the picture. The addict can only make the decision to place himself in the hands of God. He cannot make God, therefore it is necessary to have worked a 3rd step. This will have opened Grace of God that allows the action of the 4th step.

1) Look at Self-Destructiveness Self-Affirmation. What has the power to trigger these. These are an important part of what can get the addict loaded or help keep him clean. This is a look at the habits as well the image the addict has about himself. They are the "things" the addict knows about himself, from his name on down.

At this point the addict can take a look at every belief, habit, every choice of word, every regular path traveled, and opinion. At this point in the investigation every regular opinion is suspect, because some of these opinions are great (they kept him alive), but that same opinion may not be necessary in a dope free existence. Some of these old opinions can be figments of an old imagination and the addicted has not realized it yet because they have not been clearly examined.

"If I want to feel good I have to stop doing the things that make me feel bad." Here is where the examination falls on the time that this foul act was acted out, or that lousey attitude was carried out and the time which followed. This is where the chain reaction can be discovered. When was the time that a lousey act followed by a lousey feeling, and when did this lousey feeling just lead to more and more of the same type actions.

The Self-Affirmation is that aspect that allows the positive to come through now and did allow the positive to come through in the past. It is important to recognize what it is about the addict he identifies in himself as keeping his identity alive and real.

Personality List: a list of the things the recovering addict wants to keep and wants to get rid of. It is important for a decision to be reached as to what is felt essential, because all the other is the debris God is going to be asked to relieve him of. A period of time can be of help here, being as the personality change of the program may lead to a situation of "whats considered absolutely essential today" may seem like dead weight the day soon to come. Here is where God can be felt taking over.

2) A Daily Habits List: a journal of the daily habits over the period of time before and during the time of actively working the 4th step. List the things done in the course of the day and the feelings about those things, what is done as well as what is not done. This is an involvement with a realistic collection of data that will open the mind to the characteristics the addict is actively dealing with during this period of his recovery.

3) Write a Self-Description. Starting with the name and physical nature, break down the addict into as many components as possible, what he does, is, feels, and seems. Do it in an absent minded way, get loose, and then see what turns up. The addict can look at this description and see what he wants to change and does not want to change.

4) Resentment List: people for whom there is a resentment on the first day, on the second day write what the resentment is, on the third day write how this resentment affects the addict. Doing it over a period of time should allow more reflection than just quickly rattling one off.

The 4th step is for getting strong in the present. It is an effort to make the future brighter. Until the addict gets the present taken care of he has no business trying to straighten out the past.

Character defects are like poison bars, whether they are social, psychological, or financial they are the bars that can keep us caged in the past and prevent us from growing.

David A.
Marietta '00



JUST FOR TODAY

Hi, my name is Faye. I am a drug addict. That doesn't sound too difficult to say, does it? Well it was for me. I could not say this without hesitation for several months, you see, I did not believe I was an addict. Sure, I was using drugs but who wasn't? I came to N.A. by force, it was a move to get outside forces off my back.

I will never forget my first encounter with what was to be and is now the most important motivating factor in my life.

Becoming increasingly drug-addicted the last three years of my using my psychologist suggested N.A. for treatment. I knew I was not a junkie, but I agreed reluctantly to attend a meeting. Knowing full well that I would cancel out my word to go, she insisted I call a man in the program and tell him I would be there. This, I did and I told my daughter to take me, and for her to wait outside for me. I might back out and then when if she left, to be sure and be back on time. In fact I told her to be back 15 minutes early.

It was in an upstairs meeting hall in a room in the back. That was the longest stairway I had ever climbed in my life; I was terrified. My fears fit my self description of a drug addict. All my mind could see was a dive I knew not what to expect — I certainly did not expect what was there — people of all ages all walks of life — people just like me — hooked on drugs of one form or another. I do not remember much else about that first meeting. I was two weeks off drugs my whole body was in pain. My mind was unable to hear clearly. I did not speak to anyone. I did not care about this clique I was forced into. My only thought was look at these larks — all laughing and talking (about what sounded like nothing) and here I am hurting all over and they don't even care, little do they know 'poor me.'

And so my story begins I have always been a perfectionist and when I realized my marriage was less than my expectations I began to have problems. I could never see the problems other people were having in this normal world.

My husband was completely different in temperament then and his temper would drive me into fits of frenzy and frustration I began to over eat every time I became upset. This brought on more frustration because I was getting fatter. My clothes did not fit my life became a maddening circle.

I became pregnant, and consequently became more calm with something to look forward to. This was short lived because 4 months later I lost my baby. I immediately became pregnant again, and began to have more than food addiction. My girl friend and I were both expecting. We spent our days together killing time. We would stop at a gas station buy 25¢ worth of gas and sniff the fumes while it was being pumped into the tank. This process was repeated at various times through the days. We were high in spirit and feeling great. After I gave birth I never lost the 40 pounds and thus began to buy diet pills. I tried hypnosis and every diet-plan I ever heard of. I lost and gained over and over. I was pregnant again and I was on a high again, looking forward to a son. My baby came two months early and lived 3 days. My grief over whelmed me. I could not understand why I was being punished with an unhappy marriage and now I could not even have my babies. I began to hide from people I resented other peoples happiness. The only comfort my husband could give me was don't "cry there will be

others." I did not want more. I wanted that one. I became more depressed. I felt I was living in a trap. A year passed and found me expecting again. I began "why hope" and, of course more weight was added. I had trouble carrying this child and was on doctor prescribed drugs. My birthing were never easy with labor lasting up to 72 hours with some. My daughter was born one month premature, she was a picture of health. I now felt better about myself because I had had 2 out of four. It was winter both girls had colds and it was a constant thing, it seemed, to be sitting in a doctors office either for me, never my husband, he has been blessed with very good health. This created more problems in our strained marriage because the medicine bills were mounting. I was beginning to abuse drugs, during this period my father passed away, he was my best friend. I could not handle my grief. I tried to find myself a replacement in religion. I tried anyone and anything that could give me hope. Through the following years more babies came and more babies died. Drugs got me through the deaths. I would birth them, go home that day or the next, make funeral arrangements, go bury them in the ground and in my mind and pick up the pieces and start all over again. I allowed neither my mind or my body to mourn or rest. Of my 11 pregnancies 5 are living.

I now decided that I needed to work. This, I felt, would help me to be an equal. The only thing I could find was cleaning motels. I jumped in, trying to handle two motels at the same time. My body being tired but being the perfectionist, and never being able to admit defeat. I hung in there and would not quit. My body rejected my decision and I had a heart attack. I spend the next six weeks in intensive coronary care. When they brought me home I could do nothing but look around, at all the work my family had not done. I had a nervous breakdown. Psychiatrists entered my life. We tried to put all the pieces together. I found a loop hole, I could get drugs, drugs, drugs. Now the drugs had become an every day situation in my life. I took drugs to sleep, to give me energy, calm my troubled mind, curb my appetite, you name it. I began to have trouble thinking. My family and my sister began to say "Faye you better get off drugs you are becoming an addict." I don't use street drugs, mine come from my doctor. I can quit any time I want I just don't want to. I was now reaching a point of extreme highs and extreme lows.

One morning I was in an extreme low and having trouble getting my son off to school. I decided why fight it any longer and took a bottle of valium. I was put in a hospital, vocational rehab was called in, and now I was given the chance to open the doors to a job of learning a trade. At last I was being given a fair chance. This was my first encounter in a world outside my home. I decided that since I was artistic I would to to college for a degree in art. I felt very uncomfortable there, the classmates were my children's age and I became very paranoid. I felt they were all watching and talking about me. My weekly visits to my psychiatrist would give me the incentive and courage to keep going. I finished my semester with a grade of 98 out of 100. Instead of feeling great I kept thinking about the two that I missed.

Now, at my age I decided it would take too long to get a degree so I entered cosmetology school. Again, a new element entered my life, homosexuality. They became my good friends and street drugs entered. Home problems were worse. I was staying at school overtime now almost every night. The tension I was creating for myself became unbearable and again I tried suicide. I came home, took a bottle of Valium, put my three children in the car and left. My fourteen year old son drove us home, I found out later. A stay in a mental ward and detox started my new way of life. Withdrawals aren't an easy price to pay but it's worth every pain I went through.

At first I didn't hear any thing they said at the N.A. meeting. But one day something in my head clicked and I thought, "Hey! I did that!" I am now getting ready to celebrate my first birthday, October 1, at the age of forty-six. You might not think one more year is much but my whole way of thinking has turned around. Through the N.A. program, I can now face people and not worry about what I might have said or done to them the day before because now I remember all my yesterdays. I now understand that

my husband has the right to be different from me. We are in marriage counseling. I have now taken my rightful place in the discipline of my children. They respect me and don't walk over me anymore. I cannot say that problems do not come up. They do. But with the help of my Higher Power and my two sponsors, whom I adore, I can face the World one day at a time with all it holds for me.

I have found new friends in N.A. just like me living and enjoying life at last. I see the program working in them. If people now rock my boat, that's okay because just for today I have nothing to fear. I have the N.A. program. If my story can help just one person, then my program is working for me.

Faye — Joplin MO October 1980



CHRISTINA'S STORY

My name is Christina and I'm a 23 year old junkie from Springfield, Missouri. I was sitting in our N. A. "High on Life" business meeting today listening to every one rap their business when a dear friend of mine asked me to write a story on slips to send to the newsletter. I got a resentment at first. I'd had a few so-called slips in the eight months I had been around. I took it as an insult. Who the hell does she think she is, "Miss NA"? Well I sat and brewed about it. Then I started rapping with the Man upstairs. I wanted to know what was wrong. I got to thinking about each time I'd slipped. I wasn't mad or trying to escape from reality. How can you escape from something you know nothing about? I'd lived in a dream world for so long that I that I wouldn't know what's real and what's not. The man upstairs told me that this was a life and death matter and that it was time to quit playing with fire! I'd been in the program about three months when a friend from a treatment center I'd gone through asked me to smoke a joint with him. I had some pot leaves in my bible that I'd been saving for some crazy reason, so we smoked them. Those good old feelings of guilt came on strong. The high wasn't worth it, I shut myself in my room and pulled the covers over my head. It was lots of fun. I told my N.A. group about it. I had to get honest about it before it ate me up with guilt. Everything started working out again. I was sure it was going to work out this time. After an A.A. meeting one night I ran into an ex-off-man. He sat and talked for a couple of hours, he showed me two thousand nize of black

beauties and all my program and will power went out the window. Next thing I knew I was conning him into turning me onto some so I could loose weight. When I got home that night I had 200 hits on me. It took me three days to con myself into taking them. That I was not slipping I was going to take one each morning and loose about 15 pounds. It works for about 2 days. The third day I had to take 3 hits to get off. In one month I had taken all of them except 12. My nerves were shot. All this time I was working on the 4th Step. I was sick! I could not stand it anymore so I tried to quit taking them, that lasted one day. I was sitting in an N.A. meeting when the chairman asked me if I had anything to say. I took a while but I finally got it out. I knew that they were going to hate me and kick me out of the fellowship. I was the black sheep. Wrong again bozo. They showed how much they loved me. How could they? They held me and they told me that it was going to be allright. They sent me to a girl-friends house from our fellowship while I went through the good ole withdrawals. I got back on my feet again and went back to working my Program! It was not a month

later when I got involved with my high school sweet heart, who is now a biker. We'd gone to a few bars together. He drank his drink and I drank my coke. Before the night was over I was drunk. One of those hug the toilet drunks. Now, I'm following the "good ole advice of "When all else fails follow the instructions. I'm working our program and working the first step. I am an alcoholic and an addict. I'm tired of proving it. I don't want to hurt anymore. The beautiful thing about my story is that you people are there and let me fall on my keester then pick the pieces up when I am ready to start living. I owe my life to the fellowship of N.A. It is good to know that I am not alone. I have a dream from yesterday that is becoming a reality today. My slips. My slips were not "slips" I wanted to die more than I wanted to live. Today I live for sobriety. By the grace of God and the fellowship of N.A. I made it today. I love you all.

Gods Love,

Christina M.



EMOTIONAL SLIP

This weekend brought me face to face with a new symptom of my disease: Deaf Ears. For months now my recovery has awarded me with the privilege of feeling better and better; but, suddenly my mind closed and nothing that was being said or had been said was penetrating. It wasn't compulsion to use, or resentments that struck me. It was my mind that attacked me, and it did it by closing down shop and going blank to everything I had learned and felt over the last six months. My ears were deaf to the language of recovery. I knew I wanted nothing that this program had to offer, that it no longer made sense. I knew that I was through with the program. When I left the meeting I felt as empty as I had before I had come to the program I did not want to use, and I wanted to keep the contact with God that has grown over the last months. But I was scared that it would be only a matter of time till I was back to where I had been for so long. I tried to work through this hard place. First I talked at length with a member. Instead of listening to what he had to say I found myself getting angry. My ears and mind just were not working together; I could not get a clear statement through to my brain. I felt my using personality submerging within a couple of hours of my mind first closing. Next I prayed. My body was in a place where I have long felt a contact with my Higher Power. I prayed and felt emptier, I felt it was no use. It had all come to an end. But I continued to pray on the slim chance things would improve. My mind was still

closed. When I got home I was beat. I knew that it was only a matter of time until all the old hassles were upon me. I tried reading the literature and it was as if reading a foreign language. I became disgusted, betrayed, and ultimately angry at the world and everyone in it. I called my sponser and he was not home. That was it. This was it. This program was a sham, goodbye! I opened my notebook to write a goodbye letter to N.A. and when I did I found a letter written to the Rainbow Connection. The power of god shook me. In this letter were words written by one suffering-recovering addict. But, regardless of how detached I felt with the program through all this, My higher Power was working for me and I wasn't using. The pain I was feeling was all in my head and I did not feel I needed the dope to ease it. In the letter that the suffering addict wrote were words that managed to shake my insides. It made me instantly aware of the seriousness of the game my mind had been running on me. It was like a breath of fresh air after a deep dive into cold merky water. It worked as simply as that. The real, sincere, communication of that other addicted who was sharing the life or death proposition of recovery. I began coming out of the closed-mindedness, not all at once, but I had peaked out on it. Amy anger left before I had put down the paper. Over the last thirty six hours I have been clean. I feel as if I have made it through a strange storm in the process of recovery. I have added a new gratitude to the list: open-mindedness. I now know that when it is read in the literature it isn't something to be taken for granted. My mind is capable of blowing out like a tire on a rough road. Neither will I take the N.A. literature for granted, because of it, someting was jarred which began a chain reaction which resulted in me being at a meeting tonight instead of being out on the street.

David A.
Atlanta Lit.

Aug. 80



My name is Berry and I am a happy and recovering drug addict and alcoholic. It was, however, not always that way. In the first two months in this program, I was not willing to make any effort to stay clean and sober. As a result of this, I stayed sick and gradually drifted further and further away from the people in the program. They were not willing to let me die. Several of them individually sat me down and told me to start working the Steps. My main problem was my inability to turn my life and will over to the care of God as I understood Him. Without God's control and loving care in my life I had no hope for recovery. It was, after all, my way that got me here. In contrast, after I made the decision to turn my will and my life over to God's care, it was simply a matter of trusting Him to keep me clean and sober day by day with me doing the footwork. He showed me what needed to be done. Ten months later, I am finally beginning to realize that my God is a loving being who is willing to keep me clean and sober for as long as I am willing to let Him, one day at a time.

Love -- Berry A. Atlanta



Last night (Monday) I had the privilege of attending an N.A. meeting in Gainesville. It was a beautiful meeting. It is really a wonderful thing that our fellowship is growing out from the city and into the out laying areas. I guess I could go on for pages talking of my feelings on the country areas and N.A., but I won't.

Tonight at a meeting they brought up a subject we've all been familiar with at one time or another, "I can't stay sober!"

Recently I ran into a near relapse. I had been missing meetings and carrying on in a lot of controversy, around the house and being generally lazy about my program. Later that night no need for gore stories, it suddenly dawned on me that God was doing for me what I could not do for myself. Keeping me sober!

It was a humbling experience. How long I had sought for an answer and been given one by the grace of God! How many times after coming to the program had I taken things into my own hands only to end up asking to do for me what I could not do for myself. How many times had I looked at a job well done and said see what a good job I can do. Forgetting where the ability came from!

I'm sure my self-centeredness could run much deeper but by the grace of God it does not.

The plunge of my humanity seems to come no sooner than after a humbling experience when I am going to run out and prove how great I am. Today, however it is much easier to give credit where credit is due and recognize where credit's due.

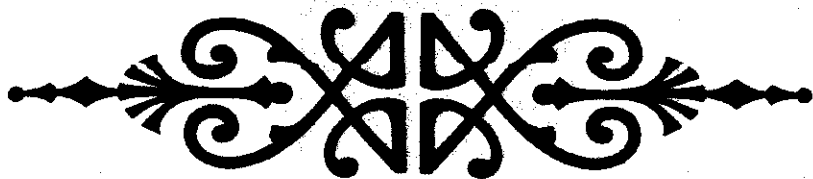
When I came into the program to be humble meant to ride in the back seat and open the door for the other person. Humility was defeat in the face of not so overwhelming odds and humility was a bald headed friar who continuously walked with his head bowed.

Today humility is recognizing who I am. A very powerless and unmanageable drug addict who can ask for help. A lot of pride is gone, I don't have to hold my head up and cry to the world, " Look at how great I am". I can look my fellows in the eye and not up from my wallowing holes. I can reach out my hand to the addict who still suffers and open my mouth and ask for help. Today it's o.k. to need your friendship and love, and o.k. to give some back. It's no longer a one way street. You give and I'll take, I have something to give too!

God bless,
John H.

The calendar and announcements have been omitted from this and the last two issues because we were behind schedule and they would have been out of date by time of publication. We like to think that the writing itself meets the need for communication by the Rainbow Connection. We have a great deal of current support and expect to resume the calendar in the January issue.

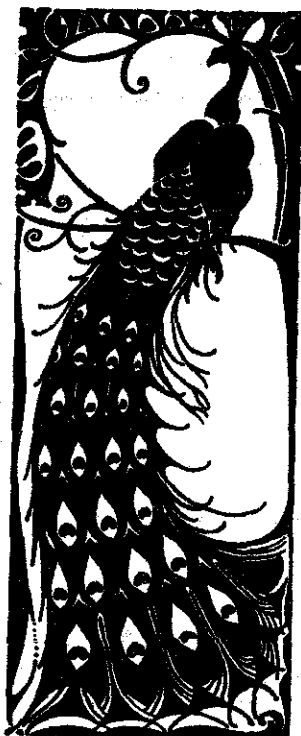
RAINBOW STAFF



SHARING

Since one of the pitfalls of my addiction was an inability to share myself with others I thought I could write a few lines on what benefits I am getting from working on the 8th Step of our program. After writing down a Fourth Step inventory and sharing it in the Fifth Step, I burned the inventory (my choice). Now at Step Eight I need another list of "all" people I have harmed. Although I am only in the middle of my writing 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 shopping sprees for someone I could be. I judged 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 — intimidated by or trying to intimidate. 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 these 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





THE BEST

I honestly appreciate the great work that the hospitals of the Atlanta area are doing in the way of helping our people. As an addict, myself, I am deeply appreciative of the treatment programs in these hospitals and the use of their facilities for our meetings.

I have been blind for a long time and have thought that Narcotics Anonymous was a part of the treatment program used by the hospitals. I am afraid that I was very wrong. I say this because I had an opportunity to recover from the disease for a long time now in Narcotics Anonymous. Isn't that where the real help comes from? I thought that when times really got rough that I could just go back to the Doctor or check in for a few days until I got it a little more together.

I asked myself, "What happens if I go back and the doctor can only offer medicine? and What if I hold back things from him that I feel comfortable sharing with someone who is an addict and doesn't look upon me as a part of their job?" Then it hit me! Those people work from 7 to 11 or 3 to 11 but for only eight hours and that the people in Narcotics Anonymous were willing to work with me for no pay 24 hours a day. Sure the hospitals where I started my recovery introduction to N.A. would be there but I don't want to go back today. I want N.A.

Even though I did it for so long, I would like to see the N.A.'ers of Atlanta (who probably are more loyal to N.A. today than I was 3 years ago) put less support to the institutional launching pads that serve us so excellently and support the quality and growth of N.A. service committees and that such so that the folks like me who have gone through the institutions and those who have no institution to go through can have an excellent setting for help in the real hard times in N.A.

N.A. is the surest help of all. It comes from God. It is not psychological, or theoretical. It works sure as I am clean and sober right now and hope to be one day at a time for the balance of my life in this world.

In closing I would just like to say that it really works to let go and make my surrender to N.A. as the power of love and help that can save any body at all that is willing to give themselves totally to it.

The people in N.A. that didn't go through the hospitals are the ones in service work up to their neck and as a majority they only see the need here they never criticize like I used to or thought about. I really used to blame N.A. for my being so screwed up. Thank God that is over for today. I want what the people of the ASC, The literature committees, etc. have. They really put N.A. welfare above their own. I want to be like them, the ones that know that if N.A. is not its best, then they can't have the best in life. I feel that way now. I did not always.

REFLECTIONS of SELF

Just a boy only fifeteen, trying so hard to be
Somebody; thinkin' so tragically early that ther was
Nothin' i hadn't done or seen,
Tryin' so hard to be lean and mean.

Come from a middle class tradgedy, a father dyin'
at age nine, an alcohlic trying to fill the place,
A lost liitle bouy, trying so hard to keep on despising.
Yeah I played my sports, won many a race, always able
To keep some rad' awsome pace.

Became a Christian, not on my own that step-Dad Beginning
to gradually give me some loving understanding.
Thought I had done it all when I talked to God,
Yet kept on using drugs with such wholey creed,
Trying so hard to fill my hungry need.

Went to jail many a time, wrote in solitude many a rhyme,
So many lyrics, so much expression,
Jammin' my blues and rock upon my Honer 'E',
When they said "I'm gonna go home to rock,
And I said no, you mean 'He'.

An admitted addict of the Devil' feed,
Now workin' hard to kill the false, carnal needs,
So give me MY bed roll, and give me MY harp,
And I will go rockin' on down the highway,
Jammin', walkin', lookin' sharp.

So with only Our God will I now abide,
Never again my thoughts will I hide.
Yeah an addict, and now here is my cure,
But man y u gotta be real sure...
Try Your only God, but you better be sure,
For if Him you turn away...
I am afraid there is no real cure.

KIRK L.



SEASON'S GREETINGS

*Give The
Rainbow for Christmas*

12 months for \$6.00
articles on personal recovery, service
and group growth from all over the
Fellowship . . .

GIVE NAME, ADDRESS AND ZIP CODE

1. _____

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*Please make checks payable to the Rainbow Connection, 890
Atlanta Road, Marietta, Georgia 30060. Help us grow!!*



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

Physicians and Surgeons Hosp.

Canton Group -- No. Ga. Mental Health

Highland Group -- Highland Club

Closed Discussion--

Rising Sun

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

Log Cabin Group

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.

RAINBOW CONNECTION

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

MAILING ADDRESS:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____ PHONE _____

*** RATES ***

One year (12 issues) \$6.00. Checks payable to
the Rainbow Connection, 890 Atlanta Road,
Marietta, GA 30060.