

## A New Year

Well it's a new year meaning this addict will start a new trip through the steps, traditions, and concepts. This continued application and study of the principles of NA have brought me many gifts, all of which have been the ability to live life on life's terms.

My first step will again be a new level of surrender to recovery, selfless-service, sacred principles, and life. I have found a very practical gift of working steps through a dictionary monthly. It keeps this addict constantly centered in living an NA recovery oriented life. It keeps me out of complacency and helps me fulfill my responsibilities to myself, NA, and the rest of the world.

I like to start the year out with surrender. I remember the first day of January, the feeling of gratitude that I had to get to concede my power through step one once again. I can't wait to see what this year will bring in my recovery; so many changes have already taken place.

This also means it is a new year for

studying the Traditions. January means I get to focus on unity and our common welfare. This brings me to something that is on my mind about my recent readings in the NA Way and other NA literature.

I'm confused by all the special interest group talk. I fully understand the benefit of talking with recovering addicts with similar life situations and lifestyles, I never new that NA had an opinion on that. The first readings that I ever heard led me to believe that the disease of addiction was our common bond and that race, creed, sex, religion, or lack of was an outside issue. So I really can't see or understand special interest NA meetings. An addict is an addict whether they are man, woman, white, black, gay, or straight. Will I have to go to white male heterosexual meetings to stay clean, or can I just go to an NA meeting and share about recovery, try to fulfill our primary purpose, and love each addict that enters the door? Our steps, traditions, and the principles that are the foundation of NA should allow us to grow

together no matter what. "That is if they are the foundation of our groups."

I also believe that one of the other issues that is affecting our unity and my recovery is this new PR push in NA. Now Public Relations rings of being politically correct and as well rings of a business nature, although not stated but heavily implied. Public Information on the other hand speaks of faith and trust in the NA message. We simply give our information to those who need it and let our Higher Power and our message do the work. Instead we have entered what seems to be promotion through public relations or advertisement. We took the responsibility off of ourselves by implying in bulletin 31 that treatment centers and drug courts were a life line for addicts to NA. Shame on us. In our rural communities this hit very hard and now meetings are either overwhelmed by affiliations with court systems or blurred by treatment center language and the "and a" mentality. Instead of trying to rewrite NA, why can't

we just stop negotiating the traditions that we have and let our message, the principles, and the spiritual nature of NA continue to allow addicts to come in and make what is supposed to be their admission of being an addict.

I'm tired of being called intolerant because I only attend closed NA meetings that focus on NA recovery.

Why do I feel that way? Maybe because newcomers are led to believe that closed NA meetings that do not sign court cards must be filled with NA Nazis. Now being termed this is quite offensive when I'm actually just an addict. I still remember the young man who never participated in a meeting, showed up late, and then asked me to sign his court card so he could get his kids back. That was the last card I ever signed because as I was driving home it hit me that he might just get his kids back, that I would be somewhat responsible for children being returned to someone who really didn't care about recovery. Don't call that judgmental either, within a month of this moment of clarity a

woman who was in the court system drove her kids off into the lake, killing one of them, and my own cousin who was in the court system and just had his kids returned committed murder. So I'm not intolerant I just don't want to take the chance that my signature would inadvertently put children in that position.

I'm not intolerant because I get tired of hearing about other literature in NA meetings, or hearing that our key tags are markers in your sobriety. You see I wanted to be a part of a service committee but when we tried to build that service on traditions, guidelines, and base it out of our literature there was great dissension due to affiliation with, and the majority of the sponsorship being based in A.A. I'm not intolerant I just believe that our traditions "are not negotiable". My new life depends on this. Forgive me for being so passionate about these issues but don't call me intolerant.

This addict will surrender again this year to NA recovery. I always remember the agreement that I made.

It comes with the first paragraph of How It Works, "If you want what we have to offer and are willing to make the effort to get it". I'm so afraid that our World Board has lost the true meaning of NA recovery or simply entered a world of being politically correct. Is this what property and prestige brings. Maybe they should concentrate on an inventory of their actions. I like a fellowship based in anonymity much better.

Although I am contrary in much of this my heart and loyalty lays with the principles of NA and NA recovery. I'm simply tired of having to tiptoe around what I say to try to keep from offending people who either are centered in self or really have no working knowledge of our literature in the first place. P.S. Sponsorship families speak of prestige and separation. Knock it off.

Our purpose is addicts carrying an NA message of recovery to other addicts. To do this we have to be unified in our purpose and it has to be based on anonymity. Thank you to all those who stand on principles no matter what.