
THE
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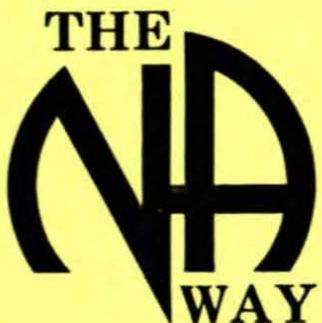
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Together
We
Can





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OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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What is Narcotics Anonymous?

N.A. is a worldwide Fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other to stay clean. It doesn't matter which drugs you used, or what you have done in the past. We are concerned only with how we can help addicts recover. It costs nothing to be a member of N.A.—there are no dues or fees. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that *they work*. For more information about the N.A. groups nearest you, write us at the address below.

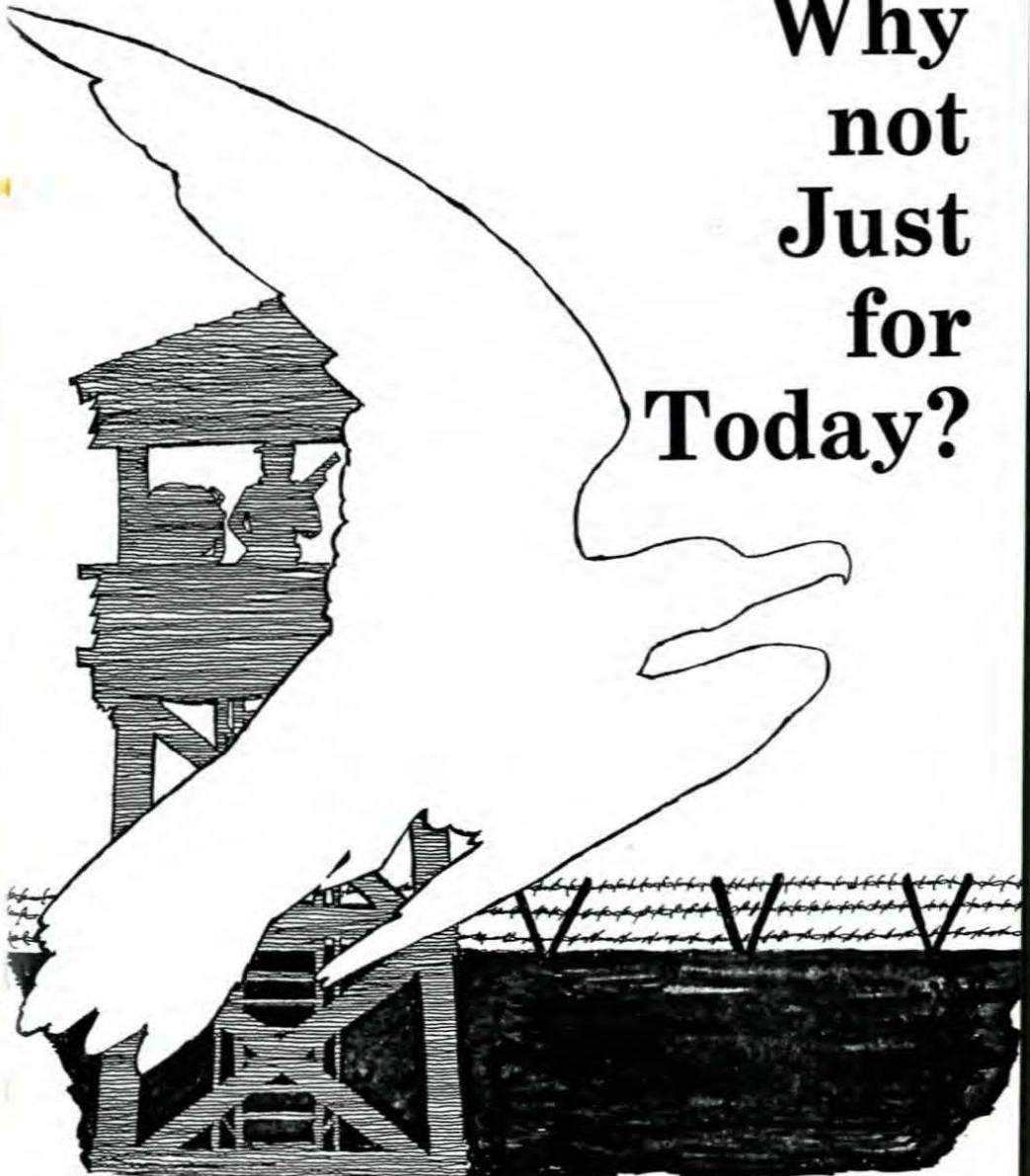
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Why not Just for Today?

THE TWELVE STEPS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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I've been receiving the *N.A. Way* for close to six months now. I read the stories contained and draw strength from their words. I have been wanting to write to you for some time now to tell you my story. Each day I would tell myself, "I'll do it tomorrow," just as I'd told myself for eighteen years in my addiction, when I would talk about quitting. I find that I can't do that anymore. For me, now, I realize

that there is no tomorrow, only today; today, a precious gift of twenty-four hours. Twenty-four hours to work the Steps, twenty-four hours to pursue my recovery to the very best of my ability. If I use these twenty-four hours wisely, and deal with my tomorrows in their own time, I'll be okay.

My purpose in writing is to tell you about the todays of my recovery and how they have taken care of my tomorrows. How the Fellowship being there, each and every day when I needed you, has helped me in my recovery.

Five months into my recovery, my past, as pasts have a way of doing, came back to haunt me. Criminal charges arose stemming from a period in my active addiction. I was told there would be amends to make, and dues to pay. It was my first time and I was frightened, I wanted to pick up, I wanted to run and hide. I did run, fast—to a meeting. And there you were; you listened, you cared, you told me, "For today, don't pick up, go to a meeting; tomorrow will take care of itself." I took your advice, I took your hope and your care. I went to a meeting, I didn't pick up; I believed.

Ten months into my recovery I was sentenced to a term of two to five years in a state prison. Again, I was frightened, wanted to pick up, to give up. Then the letters, your letters, started to arrive. Those letters were filled with your hope, your love. You said, don't pick up, get to a meeting, we are with you; all will be well. I believed you. Where I was, there was no meeting, and with your help I started one. You came to support it, to give away your hope and your love to both myself and others. You stayed right there by my side, showing me the way.

And now, one year into my incarceration, even with the fences, barbed wire, guards, and guntowers, my recovery is alive and I feel freedom, a freedom like I've never known, all of you give me that. And because of you, your love, your support, I don't have to endure this nightmare alone, I don't have to feel the cold that surrounds me. I know that if I stay on my path of recovery for each today that comes along, nothing will stop me from realizing all of my tomorrows.

I.H.
Pennsylvania

Take It Easy



I recently became employed in a city quite some distance from home. The commute by car is about one hour each way. I use this time to my advantage and review Steps One, Two and Three each morning.

The traffic is heavy and moves very quickly (like my recovery), even though the speed limit is 55 mph. The past few days I decided to "go with the flow." I found myself doing a constant 75 mph in the passing lane, occasionally slowing down when someone got in my way.

This morning in an intense moment of willingness, I chose to surrender by driving the speed limit. I had learned in early recovery that surrender without action is like faith without action,—non-existent. At 55 mph my car was a road hazard, with every vehicle passing me by and drivers giving me dirty looks. I took it up to 60 mph.

It was difficult to abstain from going over 60 mph. Just as it was difficult to abstain from using as a newcomer to N.A. Soon though, through constant vigilance, I found myself at a comfortable 58 mph.

At 58 mph I became aware that I now was going with The Flow. The previous faster pace had been my will, not H.P.'s!

As I completed the trip I noticed the usual one hour trip had taken forty-five minutes and that traffic had been considerably lighter.

Today, I thank God for N.A., and N.A. for God.

E.F.
New Jersey

P.S. Today was an example of how Step Three works me instead of me working Step Three.

Just for Today, Some Thoughts for Daily Meditation

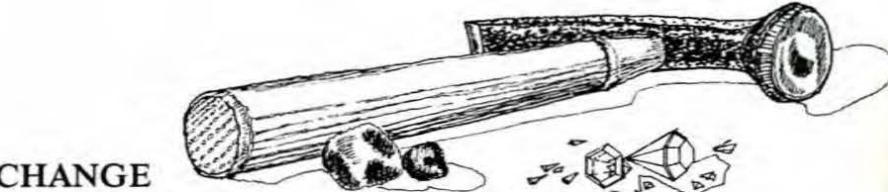
SPONSORS

I am blessed today with a sponsor. A friend, a lighthouse in the storms of life; a compass on the road to recovery. Someone who has gone before me, who knows the way and is willing to show me, if I just ask. Someone who cares enough about me today not to tell me all the things I may want to hear, but to tell me what I need to hear. Someone who wants to share steps with me. I can finally take off my mask and let someone see and know who I really am. I have a partner; I have a friend; I have a sponsor.

Just for Today: Have I called my sponsor today? God, give me the willingness to let someone in and the courage to let myself out.

CHANGE

I must be willing to change my behaviors or I will use again. Only my Higher Power can give me the strength and courage to change. I can show my willingness to change by going to a meeting today, by praying for guidance today, by sharing with someone in the Fellowship of N.A. today, by



helping somebody with no strings attached. By not feeding my sickness with dishonesty, manipulating myself or others, and by just saying "no" today to all the things that my disease dictates that I do and say. Learning how to say "no" prevents me from becoming stagnant in my recovery and allows the process or gradual change into this "better" person that I must ultimately become.

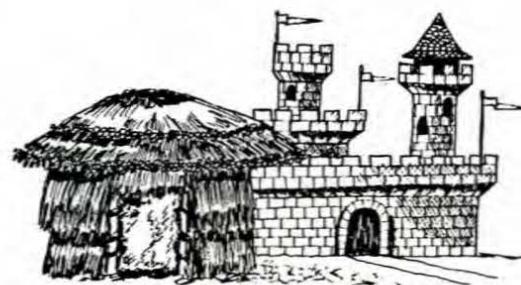
Just for Today: A diamond when first found is rough, hazy, without brilliance or shape. But once in the hands of a diamond craftsman the true, natural beauty emerges. So it is with us, if we let go and let God. God grant me the willingness to change. Help me to let go by saying "no" to anything that feeds my disease, and to let you by saying "yes" to those things which will nurture my recovery.

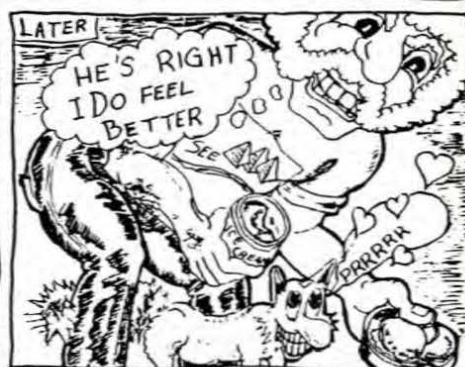
SELF-PITY

I must not dwell in self-pity. Self-pity for an addict can be fatal. It is necessary for me to accept myself for who I am and my disease for what it is. Self-pity stagnates addicts like me and prevents spiritual growth. I cannot change the phase; I must accept the present, and if I do today what the program suggests, I have a future. Gratitude is the antidote for self-pity. I can make a list of things in my life that I am grateful for. Right now. Then I can read the list and ask myself, am I grateful today?

Just for Today: Self-pity is the hay that huts are made of. Self-acceptance and gratitude are the bricks of a castle. God, thank you for giving me yet another day. Thank you for the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

S.G.
Washington, D.C.





Go The Distance

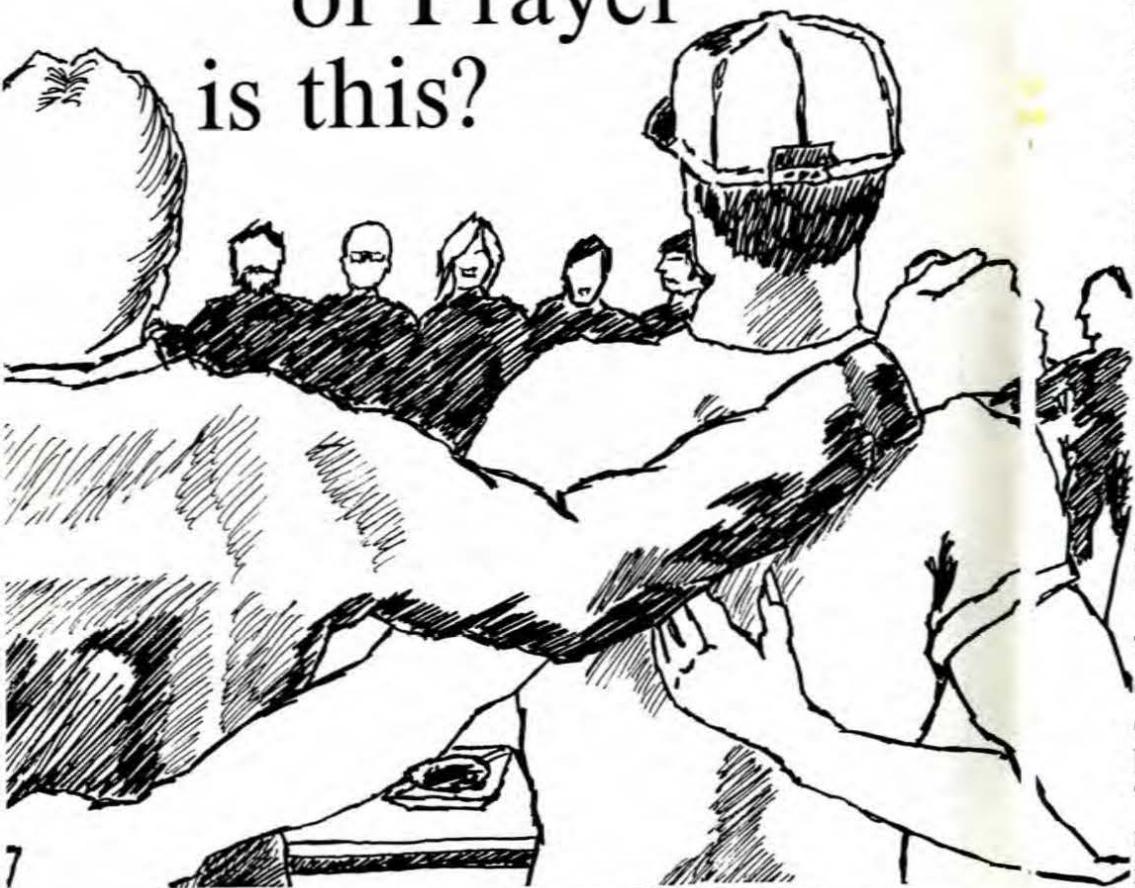


For most of us at first, living clean wasn't easy. Dealing with feelings, new situations, altered attitudes, and new behaviors was awkward; it seemed phony and foreign to us. We were told to "fake It 'till you make it," to take the right actions and eventually our thinking and feelings will improve. Our willingness to follow directions emerged not from an earnest desire for personal growth, spiritual development or emotional maturity, but rather it was born out of desperation, despair and disgust. We knew we needed to stay clean to live, so we reluctantly followed the lead of recovering addicts in N.A. who went before us. It was suggested that we take it easy, that it is a program of progress not perfection; and most importantly, that we keep coming back.

We discovered that we changed with time and effort in the program, that change was difficult for most of us, that we passed through many stages, that sometimes the passage was unbearably slow or painful and that we became impatient. Some decided to leave the program, while others persevered to reap the harvest of their struggles, to celebrate the priceless gifts of recovery: life, freedom, self-respect and serenity. With faith in a Power greater than ourselves and the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous, we do recover. The one way to know for yourself is to go the distance, one day at a time.

M.N.
Utah

What Kind of Prayer is this?



At the end of our meetings we usually close with a moment of silence for the still suffering addict followed by a prayer. In the two years I have been attending N.A. meetings we have closed most with the Lord's Prayer. Some time ago, World Service suggested that we might close with the prayer of our choice. This pointed out that there were other possible prayers—as surely there are. We have been experimenting with other ways of closing but have not really faced the problem squarely. This has led to some humorous, some confused, some inappropriate and some repetitive closings, but not to useful or productive alternatives. I think

we need to look at what we have done in the past and why, as well as what we could do today. Then we need to make some decisions, group by group, through group conscience.

What we did for the most part in the past was to close with the Lord's Prayer. I think there are several reasons for that apart from any historical one. First, we knew that prayer. We may not have said it in twenty years, but based on participation it seems to me that most of us were familiar with it. When we went to say it, members joined in and we said it as a group. The second reason I believe we used the Lord's Prayer was that it reflected various aspects of our program. In the Lord's Prayer we address God humbly. We mention God's will and ask that it be done. We ask for what we need (symbolized by bread in the prayer). We ask for forgiveness and pledge to forgive others. We affirm our desire not to be tempted and to be steered from what is wrong. And in ending we define God as greater than ourselves. All of these rather positive thoughts are couched in archaic language and come to us through Christian literature—namely the Bible.

So here we have a good prayer that nearly everyone knows. This prayer expresses spiritual principles, but has a religious origin. So what are the alternatives? The alternatives are obviously countless. Prayer takes many forms. Where to begin? I think a good starting point is the suggestion, "...prayer of your choice." We want a prayer. A humble request made to our Higher Power. And WE want to choose it. The suggestion was directed to the group.

My first experience with the "prayer of your choice" was at a service workshop. We went to close and the chairperson said, "Let's close with the prayer of your choice." Together in amazing sync we prayed fifty different prayers. It was eerie but also comical and definitely did not sound or feel like unity. I don't think I've seen it attempted since.

Since then the "prayer" has always been the choice of the chairperson or the person asked to lead the closing. For me none of these new choices has worked. One suggested a repeat of the Serenity Prayer, which is used to open the meetings. That didn't quite feel right. After all we had

already said it. Then someone suggested the Twelfth Tradition. Only a handful of members knew it by heart. Then the First Tradition. Same problem. And then came the "Gratitude Prayer." The First Tradition, Twelfth Tradition and what came to be called the "Gratitude Slogan" all have one major drawback—none of them are prayers. They are statements. "Our common welfare..." "Anonymity is..." and "My gratitude speaks..." will never be prayers of choice. They are just choices. Prayer is a part of the N.A. program. It should not be the option of one member to eliminate prayer from our closing.

I believe this issue needs to be addressed as a serious and important one by every N.A. group. Possible prayers can be suggested by members, discussion can take place and conscience can be drawn from the group.

The group may decide to use the Lord's Prayer, to repeat the Serenity Prayer, to use a prayer found in an existing form or to write their own. The prayer could request of God those very things that we are seeking in recovery. As an example:

God
Guide us in our recovery
that we might practice spiritual principles
live the steps
and truly help the still suffering addict.
For all that you have given us
we are grateful.
Amen

Whatever prayer the group chose through group conscience, it could be typed and copies distributed to members of the group, so that once again we could pray in unity at the close of the meeting.

Too often, when we are faced with change or a decision we are unwilling to address it as a group. Instead we struggle against it or ignore it. But an issue as important as this one should not be ignored. We can with God working through group conscience find creative and enriching solutions—prayers of our choice.

Anonymous
Michigan

Together We Can



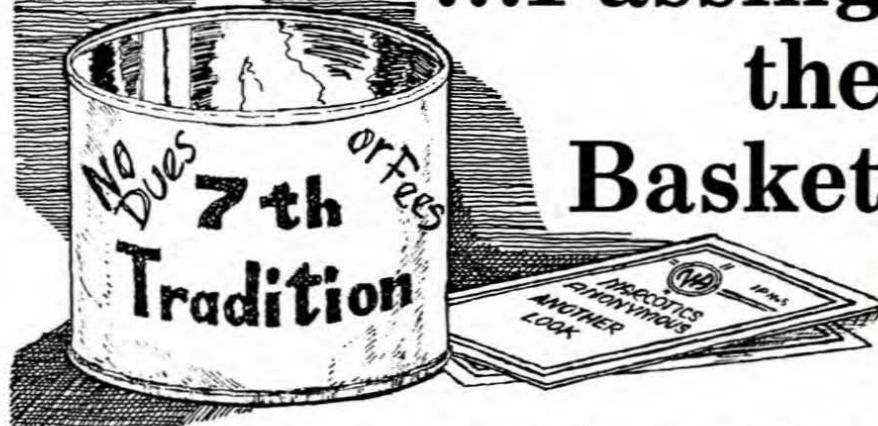
A weekend in mid-October. The moon had been full on Friday, the first of the two nights. It was called "moonlight madness" for the seventh year. But, that was just the name. There was recovery by the campfires, by the tents, under the pavilion, on the lake. We all came around with a desire to stop using. We kept coming back, accepting our addiction, abstaining from the drugs,—a symptom of our disease. Working this simple, spiritual program; may not be easy, so we do it "just for today." I'm not alone, I've got total access to my Higher Power, I call God. The members of the Fellowship, they're close, it seems, when I reach out. That my life has begun to change, there is no doubt.

Today it's recovery, recreation and fellowship. Plenty of moonlight. As for the madness, we have a choice—to keep coming back, or to go back out. But this simple spiritual program got me to this campout. And knowing where I've been, I'll be ready to pitch my tent with the Fellowship again, and again.

L.F.
Louisiana

Personal Story...

...Passing the Basket



For me, Narcotics Anonymous is a program of Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. I have had to learn how to apply the Twelve Traditions in my personal life, just as I have had to apply our Twelve Steps.

I felt a lot of guilt about Tradition Seven the first few years I was clean in N.A. The first ten months, I lived at home with my mother. Thanks to my lawyer, I also found myself in college; and thanks to a parole board, I found myself in Narcotics Anonymous. As I tried to "get my life together," I was more incapable than ever of supporting myself in early recovery. I was unemployed and unemployable for sixteen out of my first twenty-four months clean.

At the time, I felt so guilty that I was not fully self-supporting. You see, I knew what the basket was for, but usually didn't have money to put in it. I was grateful that there are no dues or fees for N.A. membership, but I still felt guilt that crippled my developing sense of self-esteem.

In my recovery, thanks to good sponsorship, I have participated actively in service and have become a responsible, productive member of society. When I started going to area service committee meetings, I saw that contributions

from the many areas working together provided services that would have been impossible alone—regional meeting directories and the regional convention, for example. Attending my first World Service Conference in 1983, I saw with my own eyes how excess group contributions worldwide ended up carrying our message to the addict who still suffers through services that no group, area or region could ever provide alone. Services like our Basic Text, which was published that year along with twelve new pamphlets. *It deepened my spiritual awakening to see how it all led back to the basket passed at every meeting.*

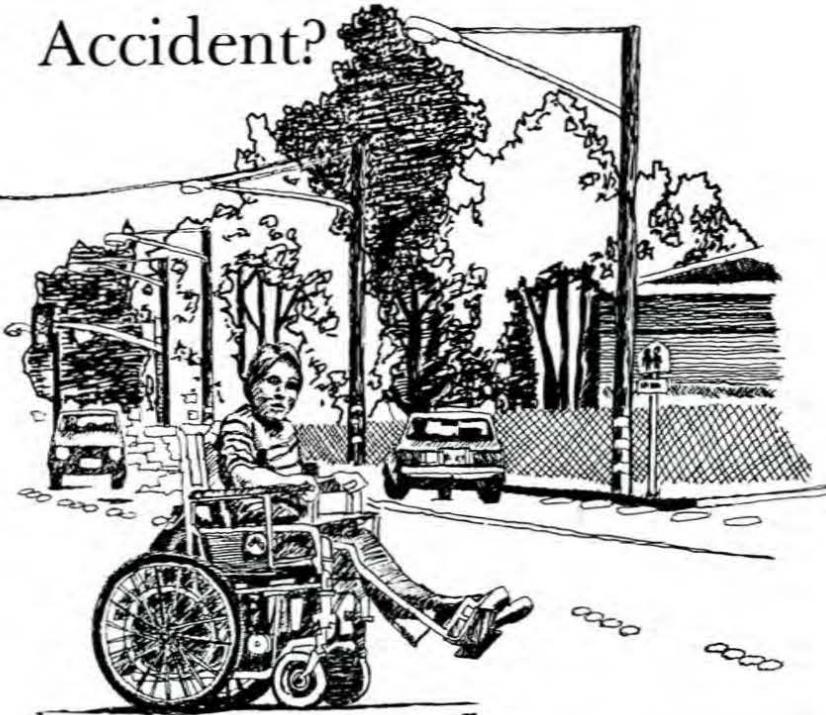
As the Fellowship has grown, I have seen steady progress in all of the services we are able to provide. As an addict, however, the progress has not always been fast enough for me. I want it all now, and it kills me sometimes to have to see Narcotics Anonymous unable to provide services which would contribute to the growth and development of the Fellowship as a whole. I pray to God that we are able to live up to our responsibility. I know that if every member knew the need as I have seen it and felt it, that they would be touched as I have been touched. The therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel.

Today, I am fully self-supporting through my own contributions, and it's a good feeling. I know external chaos is typical of the first couple of years of recovery for many of us. For the first time in my life, I have enough money to make ends meet and settle past debts (extending our tradition of self support and Step Nine into the past). My self-esteem has grown.

So these are some of the things I think about when the basket is going round, and the dream I have for Narcotics Anonymous. Today I see that the basket is the *vehicle* which drives our Seventh Tradition; the best way for us to provide necessary funds to support our individual Twelve Step work and our group primary purpose of carrying the message to the addict who still suffers so that no addict, anywhere, need die from the horrors of addiction.

Anonymous

Accident?



It wasn't until a year ago that I remembered what happened in my accident. I knew I had been drinking, but over the years I had invented a story about hitting a patch of ice and sliding off the highway. The truth is I was drunk. It was about 3:00 a.m. and I had been drinking nearly all day. I was supposed to report for work at 7:00 a.m. in a small town in Colorado. I was pouring a drink and I lost the cap to the bottle in the car somewhere. I took my eyes off the road looking for the cap. The Volkswagen jerked and rolled and I thought, "Oh no, I've done it. I pushed it to the limit this time." I remember this gnawing in my gut, will I survive this one? The feeling was familiar, I had felt it many times in the past. That "living on the edge" feeling.

The Volkswagen came to a stop. I had just driven off a cliff. I remember being upside down, and my back hurt a little. I pulled myself out of the car paralyzing myself. I was a long way from the highway and it was dark and cold. I remember a sense of relief—it was over—the hell I was living in was over. I knew either I would be taken care of or I would die, and I went to sleep not caring whether I lived or died. A noise woke me up when somebody moved a rock.

The sun was shining and I was shivering. I looked at the sun, about 8:00 I thought. A lady walked up to me and threw her coat on me and told me not to move, that the helicopter was on its way.

I remember my father walking into my room at the hospital and asking, "Are you finally going to do something?" He was referring to my addiction. I told him I didn't want to hear it. I was on a path of self-destruction. The loss of both of my legs wasn't enough to make me give up my drugs. My friends would bring me booze into the intensive care unit at the hospital and I would watch the clock because the doctors had me on morphine every three hours for pain. I didn't have much pain, but I liked the morphine high. Pain was an excuse to get high and I used it.

A doctor at the rehab hospital asked me if I liked to drink beer. I told him no, but I liked to drink hard liquor every once in a while, so he wrote in my chart that I could drink while in rehab. (I remember how he wrote it "Let him have his spirits".) Mixing the liquor with the pain medication was wonderful at the time. I didn't have to deal with the grief of the loss of my legs. They could have cut off my arms and I wouldn't have cared.

I got out of the rehab hospital six weeks later. I didn't have a high school education. I couldn't go back to work for the railroad, and the only other thing that I had done was tending bar and knocking heads. I wasn't interested in going back to school so I turned to what I knew best—the streets—conning and manipulating people, drugs, and money.

It was three years later that I was sitting in a vacant warehouse where I had been living for about nine months. I had a 38 caliber pistol in my mouth and was ready to blow my brains all over the ceiling. At that time my total assets were an old stainless wheelchair (that was falling apart), a pair of jeans and tennis shoes, and a 38, which was in my mouth. I had no place to live, no food, no money, no friends. I had been shot and stabbed; I had stolen and conned my friends out of money, playing on their pity and guilt; I was kicked out of most of the bars in town. It got to the point where the dealers wouldn't even sell to me anymore. I remember one dealer telling me, "You are killing yourself, man. I ain't selling you no more drugs."

So there I was with numerous skin sores, a bladder

infection, a huge burn on my leg from shooting hot dope, ready to blow my brains out. I was beat, it had won. I had tried everything I knew to continue my using. I remember thinking, "Is this it? Is this the only reason I've been put on earth, to die like this?" And I turned to God and I asked him to please help me;—whether I pull this trigger or not,—please help me. I heard a radio in the distance. There was a song on the radio I had heard before, but this time I listened and the answer came. I thought about a treatment center which had refused me before, but I decided to try one more time.

I called and talked with them for a while, told them where I was at and what I was about to do. They said they would have somebody call me back. I thought, sure you will, and hung up the phone. As soon as I hung up, the phone rang. It was the treatment center. They sent a cab for me.

I surrendered and I was ready to quit. The bottom line is I wanted to help myself. I was willing to go to any length to stay clean. I recognize that it wasn't my fault that I had the disease, but it was my responsibility to do something about it. For a long time I wondered why I was the way I was, and now I know. The only way to get the answers I needed was the way the N.A. program suggests—through complete abstinence from all drugs and complete honesty with myself.

It wasn't easy at first, but it gets easier all the time. The chatter that was in my head for a long time went away after a while, and the peacefulness that I feel now is wonderful. It seems when I was on the street I was always running from me. I don't have to run anymore. When I was running I didn't like me much. Today, I love myself a lot. Today I have friends, real friends, who love me a lot. I have a very dear friend that allowed me to be present when she delivered her baby. It was a great privilege to watch a new life being brought into this world.

My reality today is I can't take drugs. Not even some medicines doctors prescribe. I can't fix things with a pill anymore. I had to find other ways of dealing with phantom pain, so I learned self hypnosis. A lot of medical complications went away automatically from stopping using [spasms, bladder infections, skin sores, stab and gunshot wounds, etc.) At about six months clean the leg spasms went away. I learned that the alcohol I was drinking was stimulating the nerves and causing the spasms. I haven't had

a skin sore since I have been clean.

I am free—free from the addiction. And in being free I have opportunities. The only opportunity I had before was to stick a needle in my arm every day and be a slave to a drug or die. Those were my options I thought. Today I am in college and make a nice living.

My relationships have changed too since I've been clean. I couldn't allow somebody to love me for a long time. I didn't trust love. If somebody wanted to do something for me, I would instantly ask myself, "What do they want." It felt like a set-up. The street is a place where everybody takes advantage. If I help you on the street and you accept that help, you instantly owe me. And every time we look at each other we both know it. I wouldn't allow people to help me at first because I still had that "street thinking." I did not believe they didn't want something from me.

I had to come to terms with the fact that everybody needs help. It wasn't easy letting somebody help me, but I did it. Today I can give love and receive love without any expectations. I am totally grateful for who I am and what I am. Today I love myself and put no expectations on me. I thank God for giving me the opportunity to reach out and help another human being, no matter who or what they are. I am in a relationship with a wonderful woman today whom I love very much. I want to continue living. It is not easy sometimes, but I have learned that I need to move forward instead of hiding out from life. I have learned to look at what I have instead of what I don't have.

K.G.
Colorado

"ENFORCED" Spirituality

There exists in our Fellowship a tremendous ignorance concerning our Twelve Traditions, in my opinion. No, I'm not talking about people who have never heard of the Traditions at all, rather I'm referring to those *who think they already know*. The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous are spiritual principles; they cannot be "enforced." The idea that spiritual principles can be "enforced," is an oxymoronic image, that is, spirituality and enforcement do not go together. My experience of spirituality has always been consistent with the principle of surrender; when I get out of the way, a Higher Power can work to do what is best in and for my life. The minute I try to force something or "self-will" it, spirituality cannot exist; I am shut off from the "sunlight of the spirit." So it is when we as individuals and groups seek to "enforce" Traditions. By thinking and acting on this very notion we are strangling spirituality out of our groups and hurting ourselves and others; God is out—we are trying to do his job for him.

So what alternatives do I suggest? How about if we all try real hard to first of all trust God as we understand Him, individually and collectively. What have appeared to be threats to the existence of our Fellowship have come and gone in the past; we have become frightened and pointed fingers at each other with furrowed brows, and God went on and guided us back into the light. In the meantime, while we are trusting a Power greater than ourselves we can seek to educate others about our traditions.

But first and foremost, (in my opinion) we must practice a personal Twelve Step program. While doing so we aren't likely to do anything stupid as regards our traditions. We can work a rigorous personal program and lovingly guide the newcomer into a sane understanding of the traditions.

By way of an illustration, let me ask you this: who, while practicing the principles of our Twelve Steps, has the time and energy to be concerned with personalities? Who, while practicing our Twelve Steps is consumed by greed for money, property or prestige? Who, after having taken a good look at themselves could be so self-deceived as to believe that they should become a leader who governs our Fellowship, rather

than a trusted member who serves it? Do you see what I'm saying? The principles of our program, the steps and traditions, compliment each other; they are not mutually exclusive of each other. I'm also confident that a person could not know about one group of twelve without having an understanding of the other twelve.

There are many myths born out of ignorance about our Traditions. Let's look at another one that has always been one of my favorites, it concerns anonymity. Many among us seem to feel that this principle has to do with people not knowing our last names; still others believe that we're supposed to be anonymous to each other within the Fellowship, sometimes to the point of not letting anyone know we exist outside of our local area. Wait a minute! I thought the principle of anonymity had to do with us all being equal peers. And what about the principle of helping someone and not getting caught? The point of anonymity is being lost when we crack on someone who uses their last name from a podium; we miss the spirituality that anonymity is supposed to create. And answer me this: How do we get "what you hear here, stays here" from "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities?"

I suggest as an alternative to "enforced spirituality" (sounds a bit like enforced morality, doesn't it?—see page 41 of your Basic Text) that we practice faith, love and trust. When we were all truly doing this, there should be a minimal need for "God squads" and "holier than thou" attitudes. Let's all put a personal program first, holding hands with God we

I suggest as an alternative to "enforced spirituality" (sounds a bit like enforced morality, doesn't it?—see page 41 of your Basic Text) that we practice faith, love and trust. When we were all truly doing this, there should be a minimal need for "God squads" and "holier than thou" attitudes. Let's all put a personal program first, holding hands with God we can't go wrong. That's what I'm going to do, today.

C.I.
West Virginia

Trans Recovery Airlines

BOARDING PASS

Our tickets are free. The price has already been paid. The captain of our ship has had many years of experience without airlines, so be assured, as we may experience turbulent weather along the way, as we travel into the land of the living.

During our journey, our guides will be serving spiritual principles to help us enjoy our journey. As we board by walking up Twelve Steps, may we put the past and the fear behind us so that we may experience our journey to the fullest extent. We will be making stops along the way to give others the chance to join us and to refuel with Twelve Traditions so that we may continue our journey. So remember the stops are only temporary.

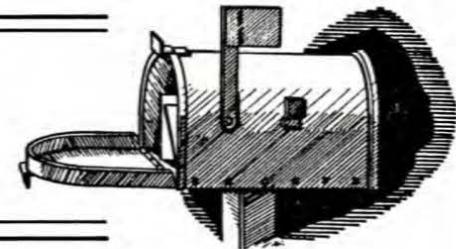
We make only one promise, and that is freedom from active addiction. So come and join us as we begin our journey with the First Step. We will be leaving on runway number nine.

C.B.

South Carolina

SEAT 1
AISLE
ar TUL 5 am
LAX 6 am
009/5704

From Our Readers



Dear N.A. Way,

I came to Rockland County one year ago in hope of starting a new life. I was greeted openly from day one.

There were approximately two N.A. meetings here when I arrived and a need for many more. Today I'm so proud to say that through a lot of concern and unity, we have nine meetings a week and four H&I meetings, and the message of recovery and hope rings throughout the county.

A heartfelt thanks to all my peers who through a lot of hard work and selfless giving have put hope on the map.

I love you all and remember don't give up five minutes before the Miracle happens.

M.K.
New York

Dear N.A. Way,

I am free, I am free, thank God and N.A., I am free. I've been clean for three years now with the help of a forgiving H.P. and a lot of addicts. Fighting the disease of addiction is a real battle some days. Leaving chemicals behind and switching to motorcycles, food, television and sex, which really slowed my growth in recovery.

It took a good sponsor and caring addicts, sharing with me how they get good feelings from themselves. For me to totally surrender to addiction, not just chemicals.

Today I am somebody. Today I am free. It is really neat to be growing with N.A. in the last three years our city has gone from one meeting a week to six meetings a week.

Thanks to addicts everywhere.

B.L.
Wisconsin

Dear N.A. Way,

Inside out, that was my whole way of life. From a kid in trouble without drugs, to a kid on drugs in deep trouble. I started using pot to a pill habit at fourteen years old, then to a world I never knew existed, a junkie. But it didn't end there. After fourteen hospitals and three years in a TC, it got even worse; I never knew it could, but it did.

Six years of total paranoia with mirrors, shadows, talking to the devil, jumping through windows because a creature was after me. Chopping down a door to escape it, and what's worse, I liked looking for creatures, even frightened to death as I was.

This is only a fragment of my life. It scares me when I share my story and write this, but today I look at it as a way to let maybe one person out there know that N.A. DOES work, and maybe with the help of God, someone else will never go through what I did.

Sometimes I say to myself, "Was this all a dream?" "Was I that bad?" "Am I exaggerating?" But the truth of the matter is without N.A. it would get even worse. I was dying out there and never even looked at it because I would have had to look at myself, and I always ran away from me. But today with the people, the steps, and most of all, God, I can be clean. Just for today, and just for today only.

I just found out I have an incurable disease, and to tell you the truth, I'm scared, but to look at dying clean, loving myself and others, well, there is no better way I have heard of to live than with N.A. Throughout my life, when I thought of dying, I wanted to make a name for myself—today I know my name.

Anonymous

Dear N.A. Way,

I am one addict among many who was shocked when I learned that the White Book had been changed. When I first got clean in Narcotics Anonymous the only literature we had was the White Book. I feel that some important words and sentences have been deleted from the new revised White Book.

Why weren't groups in Oklahoma made aware of the planned changes in the White Book? I feel we should have had a chance to give our input. I feel a greater effort should have been made to make groups aware of the planned changes. I don't believe a few people in N.A. should make decisions for the whole.

I personally feel that some very important sentences and words have been deleted from the White Book. Things that were a great help to me when I made my beginning in N.A. I feel the newly revised White Book has lost some of its effectiveness as a tool for recovery for the new addict. I will personally carry my copy of the old White Book and read only from it. For, I feel if it works, don't fix it.

C.B.
Oklahoma

Dear N.A. Way,

I haven't written to the N.A. Way in a while and, I started to feel not a part of. I suddenly realized that when I don't do the things I'm supposed to in my recovery (go to meetings, work with newcomers, work the steps, work with a sponsor, etc.) I start to feel apart from. Now why is this?

I do know that when I do go to meetings, when I am involved, when I go with my spiritual principles and take time to meditate, instead of going on my will, I feel good inside, spiritually fit. So, why can't I always do what makes me feel good? I suppose it's because I'm not perfect and am human. However, I am getting better about figuring out when I'm not feeling spiritually fit and I do what I'm suppose to be doing sooner.

Am I making sense to you? I am to me!

You see, right now I'm ready and willing for change. I've been keeping myself so busy that I haven't had time for me,

to think about what I'm feeling, or what I want. Okay, I'm tired of that now, so it's time for me to do some writing, share it with my sponsor, etc., etc., and walk through those feelings. Guess what comes next? Change!

Thank God for Change. Who wants to be stagnant their whole lives? Oh, I forgot, I might feel some pain. But, I've done this before and I know that the pain is worth it. For me to come out the other end, walk through that pain and fear, feeling better than ever.

So you see, if I didn't have this program, these spiritual principles, I don't know if I could do these things, I would have never known that life can be worth living!
Thank you for letting me share.

Anonymous

Dear *N.A. Way*,

Since coming to the Fellowship of N.A. eighteen months ago, I have been praying about an amends I needed to make.

The person I had harmed had moved away from where the damage was done, and I too had moved to another state. I made an attempt to find her by writing her mother, but got no response. So, I turned it over and kept praying.

Some months later, I traveled back to my hometown to pick up a car (I had planned to attend an N.A. campout that weekend and was resentful that I couldn't make it).

After I fixed the car I went for a test drive. I drove along thinking, praying, not really concerned what road I took, when it dawned on me I was near a friend's house, so I stopped in to say hello. As we sat and talked he mentioned that the very person I had harmed was also in town visiting. When he said that, it was as if someone had thrown a bucket of cold water on me. I suddenly realized why I was there and not at the campout. And I knew in my heart the time for that amends was right then.

I left my friend and called another recovering addict and told him my situation. He urged caution, to make this amend could put me around some "old playmates." I told him, "My gut feeling says do it now and I think I should listen."

After hanging up the phone I knelt and prayed, asking God's protection and care, and left to make my amends.

When I got there my old playmates were gone and it was cool to talk. I made my amends, and in the course of the conversation, I learned she was leaving town that night.

If I had listened to my fear that said, "Wait, do it later," I would have blown my chance. When we parted and I rode away from that Ninth Step, my spirit was singing with joy, and I felt the presence of my Higher Power very strongly.

It was as if a great weight had been lifted from me and I felt a sense of freedom like none before. When I surrender myself to God and work the steps, the rewards are great. For today, I am truly happy, joyous and free.

Thank you God and N.A.

R.R.B.
Tennessee

Dear *N.A. Way*,

I am a seventeen year old girl now living my life, one day at a time, without using any drugs. I believe that carrying the message to addicts in jails and institutions is very important. A year ago I was in a youth detention center for a drug-related charge. I went to some N.A. meetings in there every second week. I can remember thinking, "those poor addicts." I felt real sorry for them.

I did like one of the women who came in with the N.A. group, and asked her if she had any time, would she come see me. She agreed, and did come in a few times and talked to me privately in my room.

I got released to my aunt, who got me a legal job working at a cafeteria. I came to work too many times loaded and finally got fired. I went back to the streets and continued to get loaded and sell my body to support my habit. Three months later I checked myself into the only detox center that would take juveniles. I was there with twelve alcoholic men. I felt real insecure and left two days after I had arrived. I then went back to the fast lane of selling sex and using drugs.

After four months of getting really sick and tired, I ended up in the hospital. From there they wanted to put me back in the same detox center I was in the first time. I refused to go there and asked to be put in a better facility.

My mom picked me up and took me to a different detox. I went to some "mandatory" N.A. meetings and heard some things I could relate to. I thought possibly I might have a drug problem, too.

After eight days I was discharged and went home to my family. I managed to stay clean for a few days, but my addiction got the better of me (as usual) and I ended up wired again. I came home during Christmas holidays messed up on alcohol and pills. I hid in the closet from my dad because I thought he would hit me.

My family was frustrated and fed up, and my dad told me to get out. I started packing and my mom called the woman from N.A. who visited me while I was in the detention center. She agreed to let me come stay with her for a few days.

She took me to an N.A. meeting the next day and I got introduced to a youth worker who was also an N.A. member. I moved around quite a bit in the next month and managed to stay clean more than loaded. I managed to get thirty days clean, but ended up going back to try it again.

The drugs weren't working for me anymore, but N.A. was. I started going to meetings again, realizing I belonged with other recovering addicts. I now have some more clean time in and thank God for those people who carried the message to me in those jails and hospitals, because without those people where would I be? I don't want to know.

K.S.
British Columbia,
Canada

COMIN' UP

This space has been reserved for coming events anywhere in N.A. If you wish to list an event, send us a flier or note at least two months in advance. Include title, location, dates, contacts.

CALIFORNIA: Mar 27-29, 1987; 9th NCCNA; Marriott Hotel, Burlingame, CA; 9th NCCNA, Box 6323, San Mateo, CA 94403; Todd (415) 347-3296; Joe (408) 296-4833

2) Jan 10, 1987; High Sierra Blast Ski Day; Mail by Jan 3, Box 9197, Truckee, CA 95737; Andy (916) 587-5238; NA Hotline (916) 546-1116

CANADA: Apr 10-12 1987; 1st Annl Ontario Reg Conf; Windsor NA, Box 175, 2890 Dougall Ave, Windsor, Ontario N9E 1R9; (519) Bob 977-1743; John 255-7318 (CANCELED)

CONNECTICUT: Jan 2-4 1987; 2nd Ct.RCNA; Box 124, Clinton, CT 06413; Trumbull Marriott, Trumbull, CT; Brian B. (203) 669-8083

FLORIDA: July 1-5, 1987; FRCNA 6; Diplomat Hotel, 3515 South Ocean Dr., Hollywood, FL 33019, (305) 457-8111,

GEORGIA: Feb 19-22 1987; GRCNA VI; Box 678, Riverdale, GA 30274-0678, (800) 228-9898, Frances (404) 589-0697

HAWAII: Jan 9-11, 1987; 3rd Annl Gathering of the Fellowship; P.O. Box 23436, Honolulu, HI, 96822; Claudia (808) 235-0819; Mark 373-9774

ILLINOIS: July 24-26, 1987; 3rd Mid-Coast Convention; Holiday Inn, 7550 E State St., Rockford, Ill 61107; (815)398-2200; Greg 963-5811

KENTUCKY: Jan 17, 1987; 2 Year Birthday; Hopkinsville National Guard Armory, Glass Avenue, Hopkinsville, KY; (502) Howard 885-6421; Tony 886-9641
2) April 10-12, 1987; KRCNAI; Ramada Inn, 4767 Scottsville Rd., Bowling Green, KY 42101; Deanie (502)843-8209

LOUISIANA: March 6-8, 1987; LPRCNAV; Palace Suite Hotel, 2211 MacArthur Dr., Alexandria, LA; (318)443-2561 2) Sept. 3-7, 1987; World Convention; WCNA 17; Sheraton New Orleans Hotel & Towers, 500 Canal St., New Orleans, LA 70130; (504)525-2500

MARYLAND: Feb 27-Mar 1, 1987; 1st Annl Ches/Pot Reg Conv; PO Box 374, Pasadena, MD 21122; (301) Len 787-1273; Mike 437-6055

MASSCHUSETTES: Apr 17-19, 1987; 2nd New England Reg Conv; Marriott Hotel, Springfield, MA; NERC II, Box 422, Chicopee, MA 01021; (413) Steve 736-3979; Nancy 593-3809

MICHIGAN: Jul 3-5 1987; Freedom III RCNA of MI; Interested Speakers should submit tapes A.S.A.P. for review to Program Committee, P.O. Box 770, Flint, MI 48501

MISSISSIPPI: April 3-5, 1987; MRCNAV; Best Western Trace Inn; (Hwy 6 & Natchez Trace) Tupelo, MS; Allen (601)862-7334

MISSOURI: 2nd Annual Show-Me Regional Convention; Ramada Hotel, 2431 N. Glenstone, Springfield, MO; (800)781-0500

NEBRASKA: Dec 31; 3rd Annl New Years Eve Party; OACA Bingo Hall, 1/2 block So. of 40th & Dodge, Omaha, NB; Al (402) 345-2012

NEW JERSEY: May, 1987; 2nd NJRCNA; Interested Speakers submit tapes to Program Comm, Rd 1, Box 222, Pennington-Mt. Rose Rd., Pennington, NJ 08534, Tom (609) 737-8791

NEW MEXICO: July 3-5, 1987; WSUC IV; Box 37558, Albuquerque, NM 87176; Susan (505) 984-2305, Debra (505) 982-8650, Bill (505) 984-1469

NORTH CAROLINA: Jan 1-4 1987; Asheville's 2nd Area Conv; Mike R., 32 Starmount, Asheville, NC 28806; (704) 252-8812

OHIO: May 22-24, 1987; Ohio Reg Conv; Holiday Inn Cascade Plaza, Akron, OH 44372; Please submit speaker tapes for consideration to ORCNA V; Box 5837, Akron, OH 44372

PENNSYLVANIA: Mar 6-8, 1987; Central PA Convention NA; Holiday Inn-Center City, Harrisburg, PA; 717/234-0193: 2) Mar 27-29, 1987; 5th GPRCNA; Dunfey Hotel, Philadelphia; GPRCNA, PO Box 42628, Philadelphia PA 19101-2628; (215) Steve S. 925-7766; Marge 534-2887

TEXAS: Mar 27-29, 1987; LSRCNA II; LSRCNA II Pro Subcom, PO Box 300794, Houston, TX 77230-0794; (713) Rick 531-6734; Janie Rae 973-7002

VIRGINIA: Jan 9-11, 1987; 5th AVCNA; Omni Int Hotel, Norfolk, VA; 5th AVCNA, Box 11443, Norfolk, VA 23517; (804) Kathy 363-9097; Bob 627-6786

WASHINGTON: Jan 17, 1987; Winter Winner '87; St. Martin;s of Tours, Fife, WA, Ray 941-0826, Jo Ellen 852-9148

WISCONSIN: Jan 10, 1987; 8 am; 2nd Annl Milwaukee NA Mini-Conf; Matc Main Campus, 1015 N. 6th St.; Dennis W. 1534 S. 65th St., Milwaukee, WI 53214 476-4984



**THE INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP
OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS**

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THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

1. *Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.*
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.
2. *The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.*
3. *Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole.*
4. *Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.*
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.
5. *Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*
6. *Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.*
7. *N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.*
8. *Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.*
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.
9. *Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.*

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**My Gratitude Speaks
When I Care
And When I Share
With Others
The N.A. Way.**