

THE **NAWay**
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Valentines Day 1993



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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THE NA Way MAGAZINE®

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Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409
(818) 780-3951

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The NA Way Magazine welcomes the participation of its readers. You are invited to share with the entire NA Fellowship in our monthly international journal. Send us your experience in recovery, your views on NA matters, and feature items. All manuscripts submitted become the property of World Service Office, Inc.

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The pain of taking control again

My name is R. and I am a recovering addict whose life has gone to s____. I had everything going for me, but I wanted more. Now I don't have anything except that I am still clean, which doesn't seem like that much anymore. I know everyone goes through some rough times now and then, but I am the one who brought these times around because I let my disease take control again. I didn't have to pick up a drug this time to see how unmanageable my life can get if I stop working the Twelve Steps of NA



in all aspects of my life. So now what do I do? Go back to the basics, just like I had to do when I was introduced to this fellowship. So that means I have to humble myself. I have been clean for five years but haven't been in recovery all that time or I wouldn't be in the spot that I am in right now.

I am enrolled in college, and I am supposed to be graduating in June. If things don't change soon, I will be flunking out. I try to talk about where I am at, but I feel like the newcomers don't need to hear this stuff.

Well, I will tell you a little about myself: I was engaged to be married to this wonderful lady who is also recovering. I let my self-centeredness get in the way. I now have all of these feelings that I have never felt before. I don't know how to be just friends, especially on her terms alone. So, now all I can do is pray to my God, and ask Him for the strength to carry on and the willingness to carry out His will for me.

You are probably thinking that I have a case of the "poor me's." Well, I don't. I just don't have the willingness to move on. I have no concentration whatsoever. And it hurts like you wouldn't believe. There is this voided out part of my life, and it amounts to the better part of my recovery time.

So what do I do? My disease tells me that I deserve to go back to using, but my recovery tells me to think first and remember what it was like living in that self-imposed hell that I made for myself. I know it hasn't gotten any better out there; if anything it is worse.

"Where do I start?" is another question. How do I detach from these feel-

ings that I have never experienced before and have the faith in God that they will return to me at another time? I am thirty years old, it took me this long to propose to someone who I actually intended to spend the rest of my life with, and now I am told that it isn't meant to be. I am told to let it go—so easy to say, but doing it is completely different. Am I unique, or is it really possible if I have enough faith in my God? Is this all it takes? It can't really be that easy, can it?

So, take my experience in consideration before you try to take control of your life again. Stay involved with the Fellowship of NA and apply the Twelve Steps to all aspects of your life or eventually you will be in the same place my disease has brought me. I am telling other fellow addicts that if there is no "we," it doesn't work. I could never do it before, but I let my disease fool me into thinking I could do it alone. It isn't possible for me; I am not so unique as my disease tells me I am. No matter how much pain I feel today, it could never compare to the pain of my using days. I pray that I never return to that way of living.

I am a not-so-grateful addict today, but this too shall pass. There is always light at the end of the NA tunnel.

R.T., Illinois

Gifts, both big and small

My name is D. and I am an addict. When I came to the program of Narcotics Anonymous, I was spiritually and emotionally dead. I was desperate for relief, and the drugs weren't working anymore. I had tried doctors, counselors, psychiatrists, religion, and medication, but none of these worked for any length of time. When I went into treatment, I told myself, "This is it. If I do not get some relief, I am going to kill myself." I was sick and tired of being miserable. Although I didn't realize it at the time, God was there with me, guiding me in the direction I needed to go. I was ready, and He knew it.

Since I have been in the program, God has given me many gifts. I have friends now who love and care about me just the way I am. They love me enough to be honest with me, even when I do not want to hear it. My relationships today are not superficial, and I prefer it that way. I have an appreciation for the little gifts that I was always too into my own misery to notice before: a fiery red sunset, a full moon, peaceful quiet, happy laughter, hugs. I can feel things today and recognize what I am feeling: joy, serenity, gratitude, anger, sadness,

grief, self-pity. And I can share my fears and insecurities with people I trust. I can share my experience, strength, and hope with someone who is in pain. I can talk to and about a Power greater than myself. Not everyone understands or accepts my new way of life, but I am okay with that. I am learning to accept the fact that I am only human and will make mistakes. I am learning that it isn't necessary to try to do everything perfectly anymore or blame others for my shortcomings. For the first time in my life, I am learning to be honest and direct. There is a great freedom that comes with this. Other people's opinions of me and what I should do are not as important to me today.

When I am acting on self-will, my life is complicated and confusing. When I am living in God's will, I can accept life on life's terms.

I feel good about myself today. I have a purpose for being here and my life is full. I wish I could take what I have learned from this program and put it in a box and give it to all the people who don't want to surrender to a better way of life. All I can do is tell them that this program works if you are willing to work it. It has been proven by many addicts before me, and I am no different. I can have it too. The work is simple, but not easy. The benefits are incredible. Thank you, God.

D.B., Texas

The hand you extend

For twenty-two years, I was addicted to drugs. I lived in total fear and isolation. I hated who I was and what I had become. I wanted to live less and less with each passing day. The only thing I lived for was my next hit, my next fix. Then in August 1990, a friend who was in AA but knew of my problem with narcotics gave me an NA text. This text stayed tucked away in my drawer for about one-and-a-half years as I continued my self-destruction.

In April 1992, I decided I had had enough. The fighting was over for me. Instead of going to my pusher, I went to the drawer with the NA text when my drugs ran out. It was a Monday I will never forget. I sat in my apartment with tears running down my face and I read from this book. I looked in my local newspaper and found a listing for a Narcotics Anonymous meeting that was fifteen miles from my home. That night, I attended the meeting alone.

As I came to the meeting's door, a guy greeted me with, "Hi! I'm S., and I'm an addict. Welcome!" He shook my hand. He was smiling and seemed so happy! I was so scared. Before I could find a seat, another man came

up to me, introduced himself, shook my hand, and said, "Welcome home, brother! You never have to use again."

That meeting and that night will live in my memory until the day I die. For the first time in my life, I saw drug addicts who seemed happy with life and had found something to release them from the pain of addiction. That night, I realized I wanted what they had.

That was 142 days ago, and I've lived each one of those days clean. I now have a wonderful, loving sponsor who is guiding my recovery with an excellent step program. I have taken on two service commitments in NA. I am slowly coming out of my isolation by surrounding myself with friends who are "winners" in this program. With each day, I strip away my self-hate and learn to love myself. Oh, yes, that first NA meeting, which I attended in fear, is now my incredible home group. I am indeed a miracle of this recovery program.

I have so far to go but, thank God, I am able to make this journey. I am so grateful to those who walked before me and gave me this chance at a new life. I just want to say thank you. I am just a small speck in the NA program, but tonight, this small speck is feeling mighty big! Just remember, the hand you extend to newcomers may just be the hand they never forget in their recovery. I love you, and God bless you all.

D.C., California

Recovery and networking: the greatest gifts of all

I remember back in August 1991 at the Las Vegas Convention that there was a workshop on writing stories for *The NA Way Magazine*. Having a typical addicts rationale, I figured that I could get a few free copies of the magazine. I approached the meeting, sat down, and listened to the editor say that he was going to try a new concept called "networking." As he explained the idea, I felt it was a good way to let addicts know that they could submit stories to the magazine. I was very aware that I could write, but always felt that I was unable to write about my experiences in print. The editor explained that the magazine is a "we" thing, that our grammar does not have to be perfect, and that the NA Way staff was there to help.

He showed us what networkers are doing to help the magazine grow and become self-sufficient. I was interested and willing to try this new endeavor. I filled out the questionnaire and thought, "Why not give it a shot?" But the negative side of me told me that I probably wouldn't hear from them. However, I remembered

that when I was in active addiction, I always gave it a shot. So, I got involved anyway and became a networker.

It's a very easy commitment. In the beginning I felt disappointed that other addicts weren't as enthused as I was, but I forged on. I was receiving correspondence from the editor every month and also getting encouragement from him. I would spot potential story writers and explain how they could write a story. Many were surprised to find out that the stories in the magazine were written by recover-

ing addicts like me. I got more involved with networking and I stayed in contact with the magazine staffer. We spoke at least once or twice a month by telephone. He always encouraged me and stressed my positive attributes.

I felt real good because I knew that God had given me an outgoing personality, and He helped me overcome the fear of talking to people in recovery. This networking gig helped me immensely as I continued letting others know about networking and writing for *The NA Way*.

I started going to area servicemeetings to let others know about networking. In the past year, I have gone to about six conventions to let other know about networking. As a result of this commitment, I have established contacts across the US. When I went to the world convention in Toronto, I established contacts with addicts from around the world.

I'm very grateful for this commitment, and I'm also grateful to God for helping me grow. I had a beautiful time at the world convention. I always felt the presence of God in the meetings and when interacting with others. I remembered what the magazine editor told me: "Use your positive personality and reach out to others," and that's what I did. It was great to get addresses of addicts from other parts of the US and the world. God willing, I'll try my best to stay in touch with all of them. It also felt good to meet and talk with addicts from other parts of the globe. I met addicts from Canada, England, Ireland, Germany, France, Australia, and Japan. I also went to the international meeting and participated in reciting the Serenity Prayer in seven languages.

The main meeting was awesome. It was great to see thousands of addicts from all over the world in one great big circle. This is truly a universal and loving fellowship. I truly owe my life to NA. I really love the NA way of life, and I wouldn't trade it for anything. No matter what experience I encounter, I can pick up the phone and call anywhere in the world. NA has given me a better way of life and the tools to learn how to accept things as they are and make new friends in recovery. For that, I am truly grateful.

S.R., New York

network news

JANUARY 1993

NA WAY BENEFITS FROM NETWORKER'S EFFORT

Hello everyone, and welcome to the twenty-three new networkers. Their names were sent to us by Steve R., from the Vermont and Bahamas Conventions. We are glad to have you aboard. We like to take a few moments for the new people to let you know a little bit of how we work. The magazines sent monthly are for you to hand out wherever you see fit. Take them to meetings, workshops, conventions, etc. and spread the word about the NA Way. You will notice in your packages that there are six magazines, various numbers of cards, release forms and your newsletter. The release forms are for you to have on hand in

tionally deciding to amend initiatives of the managing editor, while respecting the preliminary decisions of the review panel. The Cincinnati meeting allowed the

Want To Be A Networker?

Call or write the
World Service Office
and ask for the
NA Way department.
We'll get you signed up.

The ride of my life

I'm in a car right now headed for the black hills of South Dakota. A road trip for the Labor Day weekend. Today, road trips are different than they used to be. I used to take them for many different reasons, usually to get out of the current situation I was in. I remember one trip I took, trying to get away from one particular drug. I moved from Wyoming all the way to the north slopes of Alaska. I still kept my one drug but, eventually, the drug I was trying to get away from found me in the snowy white nothingness of Alaska.

There were the road trips with the single purpose of getting and using and finding ways and means to get more, like from Phoenix to San Diego to pick up drugs, a nonstop trip many times—and I never saw the ocean once. The insanity of active addiction makes me grateful for where I'm at today.

This morning was different. I woke up, made some coffee, read my meditation reading for the day, then prayed to my HP to please help keep me clean today and for His will to be done, not mine.

I'm on this trip with a couple of friends in recovery. I took in the beau-

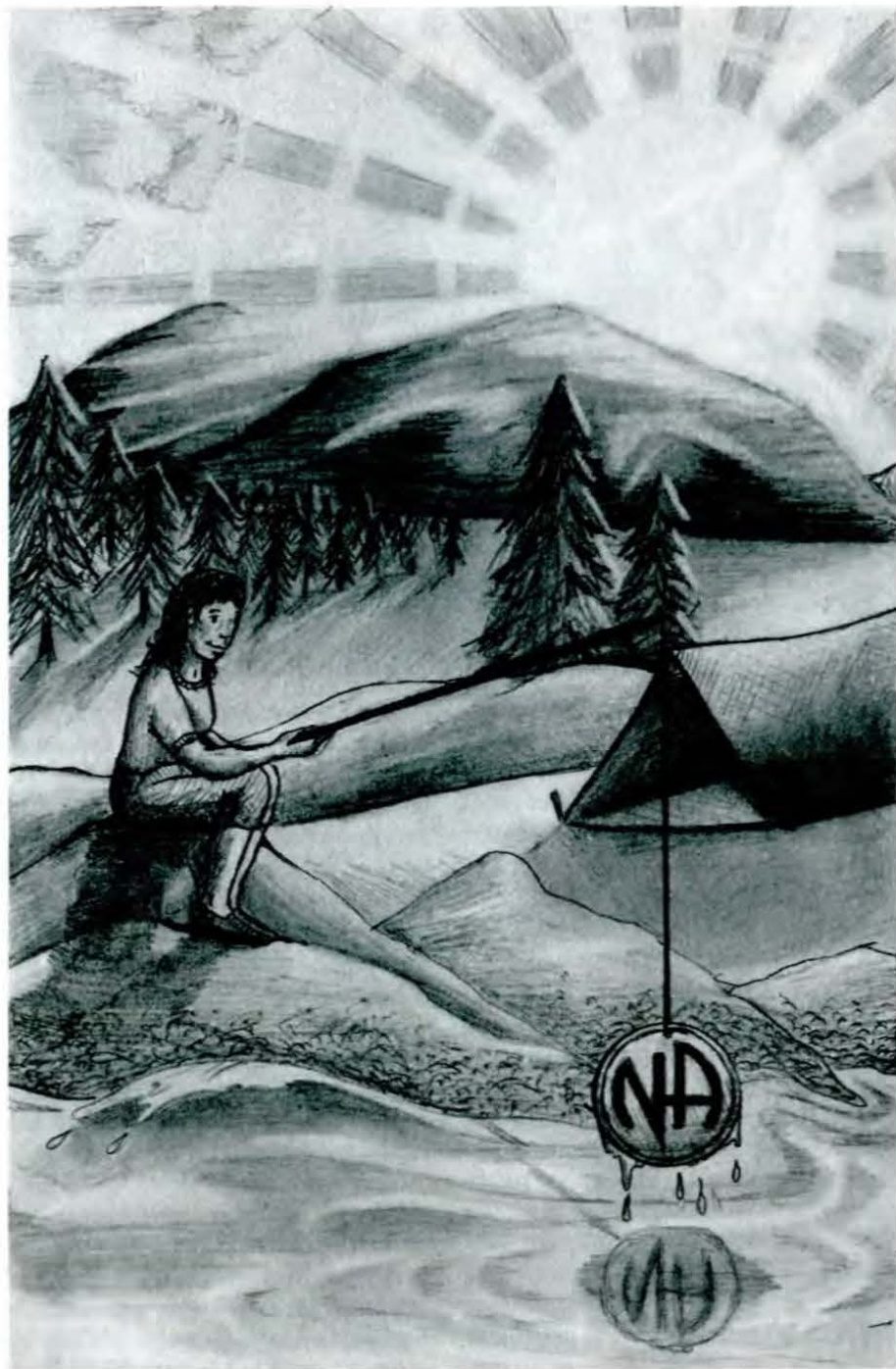
tiful scenery along the way, read the latest *NA Way*, and had a sense of my HP. Road trips today bring on a whole different meaning.

Later: I can't believe the change recovery has made in my life; it's so different than it used to be. We went to the shopping mall yesterday. I used to be so scared of people that I could be around them only if I was high. Today I can walk through a place full of people and be comfortable. After supper last night, we played cards. It was fun—nobody drank or got in a fight over the game. What a difference!

This morning I woke up and, in the splendor of the Black Hills, did my morning meditation and prayer. We went fishing today, and although we didn't catch many it was neat just doing it. It says in the Basic Text that we'll find new hobbies and activities to interest us. I never fished before I got clean. A couple of years ago I was introduced to it and it has become an enjoyable pastime. Another thing I like to do is go camping. This program has released me from my self-imposed walls and allowed me to be free to live.

Last night we had a meeting with all the people who had spent the weekend together. As I shared, tears of gratitude spilled from my eyes—gratitude for my newfound family and for being able to actually feel and experience life as it happens. As I experienced this weekend, I couldn't help but think about how it used to be and how it's so different today. Just thought I would drop a line and share my road trip with you. Thanks to NA and my HP for a new way of life.

S.B., Wyoming





A thirst for truth

Recovery has been very good to me. I don't live in a big house and I don't have new car. I am not living happily ever after in a relationship, and I still have a difficult time with feelings. When I say recovery has been good to me, I mean it has been good to *me*, not to the material world I have been trying to live in all my life.

I have learned that I am a spiritual being and that I am here to learn and grow. I have learned that pain is as necessary to happiness as joy. Where I used to see black and white, I now try to find comfort in the spiritual paradox of balance. Where I used to escape pain and fear, I now find the growth that comes from the experience of a full range of emotions. Most of all, I have turned from trying to make a statement with my life to trying to live my life as a question.

When I say I try to live my life as a question today, I mean that I am beginning to experience enough humility to understand that there are no human words for spiritual truths. I believe that the reason we struggle with the paradoxes so often found in spirituality is that we, as humans, try to place things so vast as God and love into definitions limited by a human vocabulary.

When I look back at my life, I see that I have always lived in prisons. If I allow my fear to force me into only experiencing the things I can fully understand, then I have chosen the prison of my own limitations. It is when I let go of that which I can understand and reach to something much larger that I find grace. Today, I strive to let that grace enter every area of my life. Today, when I am

experiencing sensations and feelings I cannot put into words, I know I am feeling something spiritual. I do not see how we can become so egotistical and self-righteous that we believe anybody can "know the way" to God, Heaven, Nirvana, or whatever.

It seems to be much easier to use the definitions and beliefs that we have acquired so far in life—or have borrowed from others with virtually no personal investigation at all—and believe them to be fact than to accept that we may be entirely wrong and continue a search for a higher truth. How many things can you think of that you believe in, that you really never questioned beyond the original source of information?

Recently, I have found it necessary to take an inventory of what I "believe" in. I found the results quite

astounding. I have found that almost all of my beliefs have come from second-hand information, and many from some pretty unreliable sources. I don't think there is anything wrong with accepting information from other people. After all, I can't personally research every piece of information I have gathered throughout my entire life. What I mean by questioning is to never accept anyone else's truth as an absolute truth. In many ways society has taught us to rely on information blindly and without question.

I have developed a thirst for truth that I will never fully quench in this lifetime. However, today I will question borrowed beliefs as well as beliefs based on my own experiences and, in the process, achieve what I hope to be a deeper understanding and a closer relationship with God.



Even when I have personally experienced something, I may have misinterpreted that information on a spiritual level. I have found that when I am honest, open-minded, and willing, God sometimes seems to reveal his will to me. I reach a point where I must begin doing the footwork so that I can go in the direction that God seems to want for me. In the program, I so often see people follow this process, then get stuck in the "this is God's will for me" syndrome. I see us (myself included) stumble down a path of self-will with the belief that we are doing what God wants.

One of my biggest challenges in the Third Step is to discern what I believe God's will is for me. I still try to stay open-minded to the distinct possibility that I am entirely wrong. I try to never let myself get so smart as to

think I know for sure what God has in store. I see all of my beliefs as temporary, and I hope that, through experience and growth, my beliefs will change—in fact, I am counting on it. I think that process is what I am here for.

What does all of this have to do with recovery? Well, for me, the point of recovery is to develop a close relationship with my Higher Power and maintain it to the best of my ability on a daily basis. If I continue to try to wrap God or the vast spiritual lessons he makes available to me into these neat little cages of human understanding, I will only experience a fraction of the grace that is available to me through the human experience. I choose not to water down God with the blandness of a human vocabulary.

I will continue to question my truths and those that people try to share with me. I will continue to allow myself to experience those sensations that have no words. I will continue to live my life as a question and understand that my question has no human answer. In living this question and seeking an answer beyond human words, I hope to find true life as a mere expression of the soul and that, somehow, the answer I am here to find will come.

Yes, recovery has been good to me. Today, my soul is alive!

M.A., Oregon

Remembering Fridays

Friday mornings were always the worst. A typical one went like this:

It's 8:00 a.m. I haven't slept since I don't know when. My paycheck is gone. I've broken my promise to myself one more time. I was going to cover the rent, pay the long list of creditors, and buy food. This is not to be. I called my dealer last night after getting off work, and away I went. I've been up all night. The drugs and the money have long since vanished.

I can vividly see myself walking out of the subway station against a stream of people going to work. I am living the complete opposite of a normal life. The bus is always more of the same. I'm dressed to the nines in clothes suitable for going to a club. Everybody else is dressed to go to work. The sunlight streams into the bus, blinding my poor eyes. They have not been closed in a day.

I crawl into my apartment. The answering machine is flashing with a hundred messages from people looking for me. I review them briefly, then hit the rewind so I won't feel guilty listening to them. My cat meows desperately for food, having not seen me in over a day. This is one thing I always pride myself on. The cat never goes hungry, though I do. I wash and,

incredibly, get myself to work by 9:30.

My boss would always get a good deal on Fridays (not!). I would sleep at my desk—or pass out, I'm not sure which. The sad thing was, I got away with this for years. I had a good job, full of responsibilities. Somehow, I was able to cover up my using to my employer, to my friends, to my roommate. The only person who knew the true extent of my misery was me.

I can remember Fridays so well. I wanted to cry all day. I had no money, no food, no drugs. The problem was, I'd be too dehydrated, both physically and emotionally, to cry. The despair was overwhelming.

With all good intentions, I would vow on Thursday not to use my drug of choice. By Friday, I had used as much as I could. How could this be? It made me paranoid. I had auditory and visual hallucinations. I felt as if I'd had the crap beaten out of me. I knew all this would happen, and I still used. Was I insane? This is what got me to my first NA meeting.

What prompted me to write was what I saw at a meeting last night. A newcomer stood up to announce that he had ten days clean. He started talking about how good he felt. Then his voice cracked and he started to cry. He said, "How come, if I feel so good, I want to go and stick a needle in my arm? Why do I keep wanting to do it? Why?" I had forgotten all I have related above until I heard him express that most basic paradox of addiction. You don't want to use, but you continue to use as if controlled by an outside force.

My heart truly went out to this man. How can I explain that the

program really works? If NA can work for me, it can work for anyone. This newcomer caused a whole flood of memories to return, things I have long since forgotten.

The readings tell us plainly that "the power of one addict helping another is without parallel," but oftentimes my ego tells me that it is I who helps the newcomer, not the other way around. I now know that if I forget that part of my First Step, that incredible pain, desperation, and hopelessness, I can forget the rest of my program, too.

The people who know me know what difficulties I have lived through in recovery. I have learned some of the lessons of recovery through periods of

great pain, both emotional and physical. My faith in the recovery process was not necessarily unwavering, but it held on long enough to see my problems through. I guess that's really what it's all about, just hanging on, 'cause this too shall pass.

I've found myself thinking that it really must be a miracle, divine intervention, or whatever you would like to call it, when one addict stays clean for one day. After all, what do addicts do? They take drugs! It may be a fight for the rest of my life, but I must say that I had forgotten how hard it is to get straight and the newcomer from last night reminded me that, in the grand scheme of things, I've really come a long way.

N.S., Quebec



"Portugal!"

Many of us are still finishing dinner, but all of the waiters seem to be in a hurry to clear the tables. What surprises us most is how intent they seem to be on taking away our napkins. Maybe they know more about the World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous than we do, as this is the first one we are attending.

We are four Portuguese NA members, a little lost in this huge hall at the Toronto Metro Convention Centre. The convention ends tomorrow. After this dinner the chairperson will call out each country present followed by the clean-time countdown.

These last two days have been simply overwhelming. What a frenzy! Lots of meetings on topics which don't seem to end. To go to one meeting you have to give up going to so many others. Two marathon meetings go around the clock in two nearby hotels. Best of all are the inevitable and welcomed encounters in the halls, the dozens of hugs and kisses, the smiles, the addresses written down in a small book given to us for that purpose.

We celebrated the eleventh anniversary of a friend we hadn't seen since the European Conference and Convention in Barcelona. Also memorable was our meeting with a member from Los Angeles who has "only" thirty-one years clean in NA (thirty-one years ago I could barely walk, much less talk.) We will always treas-

ure the sharing we have heard: a woman who speaks about her life and brings tears to our eyes; someone from New York who shares about AIDS and carries a strength and a faith without equal; the meeting on relationships in which the speakers give us so much to think about (and try to practice!); a man who, from his eighteen years of recovery, conveys such warmth, love, and such a limitless sense of humor; a man's baby girl, God's present for his twentieth NA anniversary; an addict's caring friendship, such an example on how to place principles above personalities. And all those we encountered and all those we met again are all those we miss so much today.

"Portugal!" shout out those we meet. They probably don't know where our country is placed on the map, but who cares? What really matters is knowing that, somewhere in the world, there are other addicts in recovery and other ways of saying the steps.

Thousands of years of recovery. A whole experience capable of moving mountains. A faith that knows no limits. More than five thousand addicts are seated tonight in this hall. And suddenly we hear the voice in the speakers: "Portugal!" It isn't just the four of us standing up. Four other souls seated next to us stand up, too. They are immigrants to Canada, but Portuguese at heart. It was in Toronto that they found the rooms of NA, and it is there that they keep coming back to rooms where our Portuguese Basic Text is also useful. Portugal was represented at WCNA-22 with the largest delegation from a non-English-speaking country.

J.O., Portugal

For those behind the walls

This is for the convict who needs encouragement. I started my journey in recovery with a treatment program in prison. Society needed to keep me there for a while. I thank them as, without this, I would surely have been dead by now.

My first realization of what recovery was all about came when I admitted, finally, that I was unmanageable. It wasn't too hard. All I had to do was wake up each morning with three sets of bars between me and the free world.

My life has been through many cycles of change. At different times, I have been involved with drug smuggling from Mexico, dealing drugs for bike gangs, and the usual con games in between. This is just some of my history.

My incarceration history is replete with a lot of county jails, prison time on the west coast, and, just recently, thirty-one months in a midwestern state's prison system. It's been a long twenty-six years of using.

My hope is that somewhere a convict will read this and be able to re-

late to me. I'm not giving my history for effect; I'm just hoping it can have an impact on someone else.

Fellow cons, there is a way out of our cycle. It isn't easy, because we make it hard, but it does work. I have found, through the Twelve Steps of NA, a way to do time with some semblance of order. I have found peace and happiness through my Higher Power's consistent love.

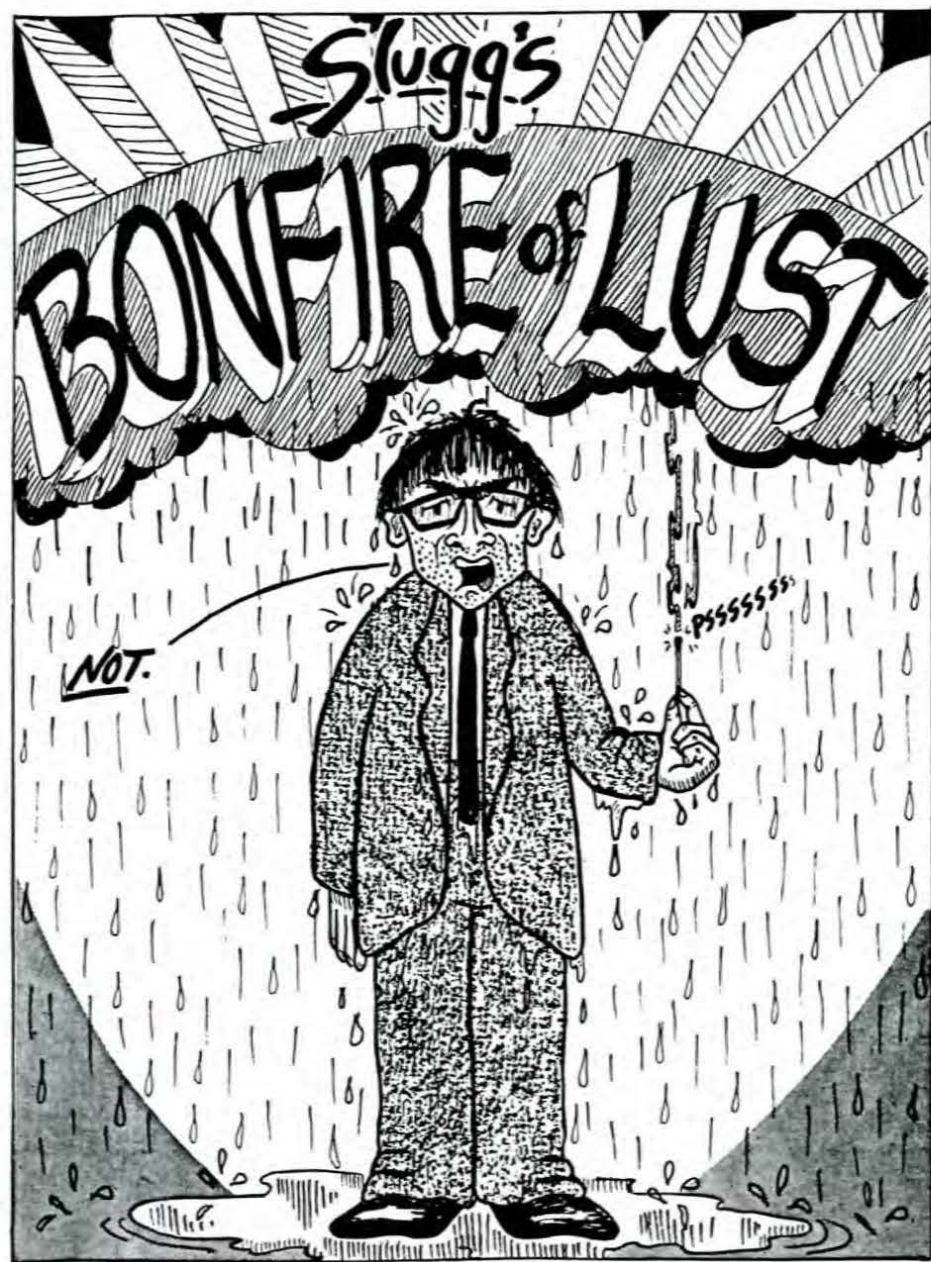
Now that I've been released, I've found even more. The members of my family can now love and care for each other without the constant mind games we had before recovery. My wife and kids now have the husband and father they always wanted and needed.

I have friends in the program who care for me just because we have the same common goal, not because of what I can give them or do for them.

When I share at meetings, it is with a sense of relief that I can give back what was so lovingly given to me: a way to remain clean and happy at the same time.

Through my Higher Power, whom I chose to call God, my life has a daily prayer that I never had before. Fellow convicts, this is the only way I have found that works. I've tried rehab centers; methadone was not the answer for me; abstinence is the only way I have found that works. With the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous, we have a way to live free. Try it; get honest, get meetings, get a sponsor, get on your knees, pray to your Higher Power for strength, and get right with life.

From someone who has been there,
A.P., South Dakota



Newsletters

From: The Recovery Review
Maryland

Submission

It was after a meeting the other night. I had been the last person to share, basically sharing about my gratitude to the program for being clean today, and I felt something build up inside me. The tears almost came as we closed with the Serenity Prayer and the Lord's Prayer. My emotions were whirling around inside me, and when a friend gave me a hug, I almost grabbed a hold of her and started crying my eyes out.

What was going on with me? As I walked home I went through my mental checklist. Hungry? Just a little. Angry? No. Lonely? Yes. Tired? No. Everything in my life seemed to be going really well; scholarship for school, job prospects looking good, better relationships with my parents and family. Then what was wrong with me?! As I looked back over my seven months of clean time, I realized that I hadn't cried in seven months.

Me, who cried at sad movies, who cried when my life seemed so empty and out of control. I haven't cried in seven months! Have I been burying these feelings and emotions all this time? Why haven't I allowed myself this natural expression of sadness—not self-pity, just genuine sadness? Do I cover it up with smiles and bland assurances of “fine, just fine,” when people ask how I'm doing? Am I driving myself back into the self-imposed isolation I was in when I was using?

As I write this, the answer comes to me. I go back over what I have written, and I read, “I,” “me,” “my.” Did I reach out to someone and tell them how I felt? No. Either I can live in the problem or I can live in the solution. I know I have that choice today. A friend is just a phone call away, so pardon me as I put down my pen and pick up the phone reminding myself that “I” can't, “we” can! Thanks for letting me share!

Twirl

World service news

As the annual meeting of the World Service Conference draws near, we would like to take this opportunity to highlight the development of Narcotics Anonymous in countries outside North America.

From Mt. Vernon to St. Petersburg

Members of the Positive Connection Group in Mt. Vernon, Washington, USA report that they have established a “sister group” relationship with the Vertical Group in St. Petersburg, Russia. The WSO Translations Department received a report from Jamie B., a member of the Positive Connection Group, who had met an NA member from Russia at a convention and, inspired by the possibility of carrying the message of NA to Russian addicts, decided to learn the Russian language. After taking a class at a local college, James called the WSO for contacts in Russia. His follow-up report told of the joy he experienced when he first spoke to an addict in Russia. An excerpt:

“In February of 1992, I made a really long-distance phone call to St. Petersburg, Russia to . . . the contact for the Vertical Group. As the phone rang, my being was washed with

waves of gratitude. I then got the chance to practice the very first phrase I had ever learned in Russian: Hello! My name is Jamie and I'm an addict.

“I began to cry because it had been, ever since I could remember, a secret dream of mine to reach out and do something good . . . yet I never believed it [was] truly possible. That is, of course, until I found NA.

“Since that time, in February 1992, I have corresponded with . . . members of the Vertical Group through letters and phone calls. I truly believe that what we have here in NA is a gift from God. Nowhere before have I ever felt such a Power, that knows no limitations except for those we impose on ourselves.”

For many years, getting the NA message to Russia has been as chancy as the roll of dice. A recent letter from Shelly M., an American addict who was visiting Moscow, reported that correspondence mailed from the World Service Office on December 10, 1990 was received in Moscow in May of 1992. While we're certain that much of the delay was due to the general upheaval in that country, some can be explained by the language barrier. It seems that mail addressed in English to a Russian address may or may not be forwarded

on. It all depends on whether the Russian mail carrier can read English or not. "A lot of correspondence is being lost or thrown away because it is an annoyance to the postal personnel," said Shelly in her letter.

In addition to problems imposed by unpredictable mail delivery, there is some concern about sending NA literature into Russia because its copyright laws do not provide adequate protection.

"Clearly, it opens us up" to the possibility of having NA material pirated, said Anthony Edmondson, support services division director at the WSO.

"A piece of material could be used by anyone for any purpose. But withholding literature from NA members seeking recovery is not a viable option, either," he continued.

Translation of NA literature into Russian has proven very difficult to get started. The WSO received a rough translation of the Basic Text that was obviously done on an old-fashioned Cyrillic typewriter, then photocopied. "We think it's the entire Basic Text," said Mary Van Every, fellowship services team leader at the WSO. Citing the lack of financial resources to verify its accuracy, she continued:

"We're sort of in a quandary. We have to have an English speaker whose native language is Russian, and he or she has to be an NA member. What we have discovered in translations is that, unless you have a native speaker, the translation may not be conceptually accurate. Russian [literature] is just going to take a while."

Appeal for funds

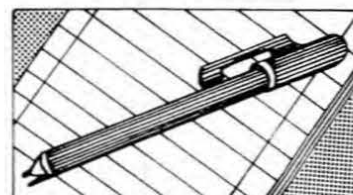
As reported last month, fellowship contributions to the WSC have fallen far below the amount received last year.

In response to this, the WSC chairperson sent a letter to RSRs in December. However, the letter isn't merely an appeal for funds. According to the WSC chairperson, the intent of this letter is to raise awareness of the need for funds to complete projects. "I want it to be informative," he said.

In his letter, he calls attention to the high-priority projects that have been put on hold or cancelled. "The Interim Committee, in its October meeting and subsequent phone calls, has wisely chosen to delay funding decisions about requests for travel to multiregional CAR workshops. Plans for a February WSB meeting, a February WSC workshop or planning meeting, a consultation meeting of the WSC Outreach Ad Hoc Committee with WSO staff, and the final WSC Ad Hoc Committee on NA Service have all been cancelled. . . .

"We all are reluctant to ask directly for donations. It just always seems that, in NA, you don't have to ask. I believe that, too. However, it has been my experience that whenever our members know that a need exists in NA, the need is met."

Viewpoint



Respecting our Sixth Tradition

I'm certain this issue has been addressed numerous times in the past, but I have an overwhelming desire to express my feelings on it based on what I've recently observed at my home group and many other meetings in our area.

I've noticed many newcomers to recovery, and especially newcomers to NA, constantly talking directly about other fellowships they attend while sharing in a Narcotics Anonymous meeting. Although I'm not in agreement with the manner in which some individuals identify themselves or the specific language they use when sharing, I try to remain open-minded and allow others to be who they are without having to pass judgment. However, direct reference to other fellowships constitutes an implied endorsement of such, is in direct

violation of our Sixth Tradition, and has no place at an NA meeting.

I've learned that where someone chooses to go for his or her own personal recovery is his or her business, no one else's, and is another aspect of the freedom we enjoy in recovery. As a recovering addict and member of Narcotics Anonymous, I feel strongly that we need to respect the house we are in and adhere to our Twelve Traditions. Unity is defined in the Basic Text as "how well we follow our traditions," which are referred to as non-negotiable "guidelines that keep our fellowship alive and free." The traditions do not exist to insult anyone or hurt their feelings, but rather to ensure that we act in accordance with our primary purpose so that addicts seeking recovery do not die.

I know that at one time or other I have probably violated all of the traditions, and I realize that becoming familiar with them is a learning process. However, I am grateful to all the NA members who approached me one-on-one in a loving, caring, spiritual manner to explain when and how I had violated traditions during a meeting. This gentle teaching enabled me to better understand our spiritual principles and pass this understanding on to others in order to maintain an atmosphere of recovery in our meetings.

Narcotics Anonymous is a distinct and separate fellowship from all the others, and I can never truly express my gratitude because it saved my life. Today, it is the one place I call home. I feel fortunate that I haven't found a need to go anywhere else for my recovery. All I ask of others is that, when you attend an NA meeting, please respect the house you're in. Adhere to our Twelve Traditions and talk about Narcotics Anonymous. It is a courtesy I truly appreciate, and it is also a must for the survival and continued growth of our fellowship.

N.C., New Jersey

Semantics

I am writing this letter in response to your request to renew my subscription to *The NA Way Magazine*. I will not be renewing my subscription at this time nor at any time in the near future. I do not believe I can continue to read this magazine under the magazine's current policy of deception. What exactly am I referring to? I am referring to the current policy on "semantics."

I am a person who suffers from a disease of body, mind, and spirit. I attend Narcotics Anonymous meetings and have been a member of Narcotics Anonymous for many years now. When attending Narcotics Anonymous

meetings, I identify myself as an addict and always have. I have identified myself in this manner by choice, not by demand. When I share my experience with others, I share all of my experience, not only the deception of allowing people to think that Narcotics Anonymous meetings or Narcotics Anonymous words are the only things I use in my life today. I am very much a human being and will offer myself—all of myself—to anyone in need with honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness.

I believe it is inexcusable to deceive people by denying entries in "our" magazine because of a different type of speech! It is even more sacrilegious to change a member's grammar to provide an illusion for the reader that there is only one standard language and that this is the only language used by all of the members of this precious fellowship. Let us also remember that we are members when we say we are, and that NA membership is offered freely and indiscriminately, to be disallowed by no one.

Is it not time that we rise above these feeble fears of so-called "disunity" to allow our fellowship to grow and prosper spiritually???

Anonymous

Editor's response:

Our editorial policy calls for three or four standard cuts. Explicitly sexual references, references to excretion, and vulgar language are generally cut as a courtesy to our readers. Other cuts are made to keep faith with our understanding of NA's steps and tra-

ditions. Where "sober," "sobriety," "addict/alcoholic," or other similar terms are used, we substitute standard NA language such as "clean," "recovery," and "addict." Mentions of specific drugs and comments on outside issues and enterprises, including other twelve-step organizations, are usually deleted. As for grammatical editing, we do this so that stories are as easily understandable to as many readers as possible.

Should we change these policies? Should we keep them? We'd be happy to hear what you think about this subject or any other. Please write us:

The NA Way Magazine
Box 9999
Van Nuys CA 91409
USA

Self-help program?

I have been an NA member for five-plus years as I am an addict and I have a desire to stay clean today. Over the time I have been here, one thing has puzzled me over and over again. Today, I have come to an understanding of why this confusion exists, where it comes from, and what I want to understand about it.

I have been involved with my area's

efforts with the public through the public information subcommittee for three-plus years. How outside enterprises and related facilities (if there really is such a thing) view us as a fellowship is of great interest to me because it affects how we, both as a local and worldwide fellowship, carry the message of recovery to the still-suffering addict.

Where the devil did the term *self-help* come from? Why do outside organizations insist on calling us a self-help group? Does it ever appear in any of our literature that we are a self-help program? I think not, but maybe I need to read the informational pamphlets, White Booklet, Basic Text, *Just For Today*, and the *Introductory Guide to NA* again. My point is that, in our literature, the emphasis is on *we*. "We admitted," and so on and so on, up to "having had," on through the "spiritual foundation of all our traditions." The program makes little mention of "self." The only way it could be considered a self-help program is if one falsely (in my opinion) interprets *ourselves* in the Fourth Step to mean each one's self.

So we have this dilemma or, I should say, I do, mostly because I feel that it is not "I" who helped myself. I am hardly capable of helping myself. We did it. You helped me. We did it together. Many days all I was capable of doing was just showing up. Yet I stayed until the miracle happened.

I've rambled on long enough and I'm just about getting to the point. Somehow, as sick as I was when I came to NA, I've found some peace of mind. I've grown into some self-esteem, some self-love, and some

self-acceptance. It's through love and by the grace of God that this has happened. I'm not dead anymore, and I don't have to use today.

I've gotten myself a heaping helping of NA recovery. It is available to us all. Help yourself. (I hope no one has been offended by my equating NA recovery to a bowl full of mashed potatoes, but that's the best I could do with this one.) Thanks again for letting me share. Keep coming back.

Anonymous

On racism

I am a recovering addict who makes meetings on a regular basis. One of the things that is starting to bother me is racism in recovery. All my life I have been looking for a place to feel at home, to feel welcome, and I thought I had found it in the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous. Now to my great surprise racism has caught up with me in the fellowship. What happened to "regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion, or lack of religion"? What happened to change? What happened to a loving God? What happened to the therapeutic value of one addict helping another?

One area in my region wants to get away from the rest of the area because too many blacks seem to be in control. I believe no one controls anything or

anyone in NA. This is a "we" fellowship. I think it is very sad that we have forgotten the primary purpose of this fellowship. It is as if the so-called minority does not have a right to recovery without white approval. It seems to me that if some people are not in control, they cannot deal with others.

Recovery is not about these things. It is about bringing people together under one common roof. That is the NA way. We have traditions that tell us that our common welfare comes first. If we bring our own personal feelings into the rooms of NA and into service, then we are breaking the traditions and what NA is all about. God did not say blacks with blacks and whites with whites, and this is a God-given program.

We are each others eyes and ears. I hope that this issue will be dealt with at the next conference.

Anonymous

From our readers

Anonymous
Box 9998
San Diego, CA
92109



NA Way
Box 9998
San Diego, CA
92109

Dear NA Way,

I first found my way into the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous in 1979, but I've done a lot of giving up and going back out since that time. I am in prison right now because I picked up and used. A friend from the fellowship sends me *The NA Way Magazine* each month. I find myself sitting here in all this noise and madness wondering how, after seven years plus of clean time, I could have gotten into this mess. The answer is clear: I picked up. While reading *The NA Way* August 1992 issue on page twenty-eight, I read an article called "NA Religion," and it is signed with love. So with love I want to express my feelings.

As an addict I am never really happy with the way things are. I always seem to have the need to change things, except myself. Some of the things I have heard in the rooms are things like, "if it works, don't fix it." Another thing I've heard is get a sponsor. I've also heard that all I really need to know about God, my Higher Power, is that I *ain't*.

I have always had low self-esteem, so a good shot of ego has always been a quick fix for me. When I found that NA was started in 1953, the year I was born, I knew right away NA was formed just for me. What a great shot of ego that was. What a bummer it was when a fellow addict told me ego means "Ease God Out." I hope and

pray that we as a fellowship of recovering addicts don't ease God out.

Today, I know the fellowship doesn't need me, I need the fellowship. I must work the Twelve Steps and apply the Twelve Traditions to my life. I also know that my friends don't need me, I need my friends. My sponsor doesn't need me, I need him. You don't need me, I need you. God doesn't need me, I need God. I sure hope God is still in the rooms when I get out of this prison because you, the people in the rooms of NA, are God as I understand Him, for one addict can best understand and help another addict. Just for today,

W.S., Virginia

A foundation in recovery

To me, having a foundation in recovery supports me when things don't go well. I recently had a very disappointing experience when, after seven months of being unemployed, I was offered a good job. The starting date and salary were set and I was relieved and very happy about the thought of working again. Then, through reasons beyond my control, the job fell through. My self-esteem immediately dropped. I wondered, was it something they didn't like about me? Had they discovered something about my past? Then, I started questioning recovery. I thought to myself, "why

bother? Is this really worth it?"

Then I stopped. I got still and thought about it. I remembered something I often hear in the rooms: Just because I'm clean and working my program doesn't mean that all the other events in my life are going to go as I'd like them to. I remembered that NA promises only one thing: freedom from active addiction. It doesn't promise job security, financial security, or the solution to my family problems. Most of my past problems stemmed from my using drugs, and my only chance today at solving any of my problems is putting first things first and not picking up the first one. I do this by making meetings regularly and talking about what's going on. By maintaining a foundation, I'm reminded that I can take my feelings of self-doubt, anger, and disappointment to a meeting and share them with others to get valuable input and support. Then I see that I'm not the only one that bad things happen to, and using will only make it worse. It's those meetings that I really don't want to bother with that I need the most and get the most from.

My foundation in recovery is something I feel really good about. It means I don't have to use in rough times. I have my network and the support of the fellowship. I know that if I keep working my program to the best of my ability and stay connected, many more good things will definitely follow.

L.F., New York

Just get it

I began my Eleventh Step work a couple of weeks back, and this has given me pause to reflect:

I remember real well when my

Higher Power was a drug, and its will for me was clearly to use it. I never felt any remorse or shame about what I was doing because I believed that the only way someone as sophisticated, urbane, and intellectually honed as myself could get through this naive, provincial, dense world was by staying as loaded as possible as much of the time as possible on my favorite substance.

For the longest time I was quite prepared to pay the tab for this rather jaundiced view of the world. The tab was big, too, make no mistake about that. I paid with regular hangovers, constantly bouncing from loadedness to withdrawal, a sort of shocked, suspended existence where time, great deals of time, would pass with almost no acknowledgement from me. I maintained a general sense of detachment from the hem and haw of the work-a-day world out there.

Over the last five years, I've worked the first ten steps with my sponsor. Today, I feel good about being at Step Eleven because I really want to increase my conscious contact with my Higher Power. I'm not just pretending to want to work Step Eleven; I'm living my intent to work Step Eleven. There's nothing more important to me. I feel good about this. I feel comfortable about this, and I somehow feel growth from this.

Yeah, it's true I pretty much wasted twenty-five years of my life, but that was then, this is now. If someone doesn't get what this program is all about until the last day of their life, it is still OK. The point is, just get it. Get it? It seems to me that no addict should have to die without knowing that it works. What is very sad to me is that some do die.

Some people get it as they walk in

the door. I wasn't one of those. I faked it for quite a while and watched and listened, and finally it started sinking in. Here I am today, working my Eleventh Step. The trip has been long but beautiful, and I wouldn't trade it today for anything in the world. I'm happy right here, right now, just for today.

Anonymous

On the move

Recently my husband and I moved from West Virginia to North Carolina. I have been clean for two-and-a-half years, and this is my first time moving in recovery. We were very excited about the move and getting to know my new recovering family. I thought the move would be relatively easy (what else would an addict think?) but I was wrong. We have been here for a month now, and it does get a little better each day. The job I had worked at for a couple of months before the move did not work out when I arrived. Money problems came fast, and I was homesick for my recovering family. I wondered if we had made the right decision.

I was scared about going to the meetings and sure that I would not be accepted. My sponsor in West Virginia suggested that I go to a meeting and talk with someone as soon as I arrived, so I took my HP and we went to a meeting. When I got to the meeting I did not want to go in, but "we" did. When they asked if there was anyone at the meeting from out of town I raised my hand, stated my name, and said that I had just moved. They welcomed me and said to keep coming back. I got some phone numbers and actually started to call people.

This is a thank you to the family I left. Had it not been for the spirit of recovery, their prayers, suggestions, and comments still in my head, their unconditional love, caring, and giving away to me what they had, I don't think I would have made it this first month. Thank you all for your love letters. I now have a new home group and a sponsor, and I am starting to get involved. I feel "a part of" and not "apart from."

It still hurts and I still miss my family, but through the Twelve Steps, HP, lots of prayer and writing, and trying to take one day at a time, it is getting better. Only time will tell if it was the right decision to come here. I believe that I am here for a reason and that, each day, more will be revealed.

I love you all.

C.S., North Carolina

Feelings

When I was introduced to Narcotics Anonymous, I was very lost in my own self. Very self-centered, angry, and not knowing what to do, I just wanted to stop hurting. After attending a few meetings and being abstinent from drugs, I experienced feelings that I had never felt before. I started to understand what this program was meant to do for me.

The feelings would overwhelm me because I did not know what was going on inside of me. I experienced fear, doubts, insecurities, anger, loneliness, and pain. I lived in my own head negatively until I came to a point of desperation.

I knew that holding all these feelings inside of me, not sharing them with someone that I can trust, would kill me. I needed to humble myself

and finally reach out. I needed to drop my false pride and self-centeredness and allow someone to know that I was hurting and needed help. Finally, at six months clean, I found a sponsor with whom I shared openly and started working the steps. Reading, writing, and sharing with her help me to better understand the program and apply it in my life on a daily basis. Sometimes, this is not easy.

Today, I can look at my feelings and experience them in a different way with the help of the steps in my life. I try to practice the principles. I do not need to run from feelings. All I need to do is walk through them, accept them for what they are, and do the best I can. Today, I believe in a Power greater than myself.

R.G., New Brunswick

Number one priority

I am grateful to be a clean member of Narcotics Anonymous. I spent time in institutional treatment centers from 1972 through 1986. I got clean on the streets when I came back to NA after a six-week relapse. Prior to my relapse I had stayed clean for six months as a member of NA. This was my first real experience with recovery. Needless to say, God brought me back. I surrendered, completely this time, to my new way of life, my new associations in the fellowship, and to recovery being my number one priority.

My life had always seemed to be a maze of confusing paths which always ended in despair. No matter how many degrees I attained, how many material possessions I accumulated, how many women I slept with, how many drugs I substituted for one another, I always wound up where I started: alone without a clue as to how to like, love, and be myself.

I recently celebrated my fifth year of recovery and I do not have the time or ability to describe the blessings I have been graced with. Through working on our spiritual principles in service, in fellowship, in society, and with my sponsor, I have received and been restored to a sanity I cannot recall ever having experienced before.

I arrived here with a grocery bag which held some dirty clothes and nothing more, inside or out. Today, I have an occupation, a home, a wonderful wife, loving recovery friends, automobiles, cats, and a dog. But these gifts pale in comparison to the one thing that eluded me for so long: acceptance of myself. I have grown to like, love, and approve of who I am now and who I am becoming. The future holds nothing but open doors along any path my life takes, so long as I remain connected to my new way of life in Narcotics Anonymous and keep recovery as my number one priority.

I have had so many friends and loved ones leave the fellowship after getting what they thought they came here for: health, spouses, cars, jobs, and financial security. Today I realize that what I came here for was to keep from dying spiritually, emotionally, and physically. The only way I know to attain that goal is to stay here and stay active in the fellowship.

There is another reason I stay: to say thank you—thank you for giving me life. The only way I know to say that is to show up, just like the person who opened up the meeting that kept me clean my first day back. "So long as I follow this way I have nothing to fear." With gratitude and recovery as my number one priority,

Anonymous

Comin'up

LET US KNOW!

We'll be happy to announce your upcoming events. Just let us know at least three months in advance. Include dates, event name and location, NA office or phoneline number, and a post office box. (Sorry, but we can't print personal phone numbers or addresses.)

The **NA Way**
MAGAZINE

PO Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409
(818) 780-3951



CALIFORNIA: Feb. 19-21, 1993; San Diego Imperial Regional Learning Conference; Travel Lodge Hotel, 1960 Harbor Island Drive, San Diego, CA 92101; rsvn.s (619) 291-6700; info (619) 433-1285; SDIRLC, PO Box 16505, San Diego, CA 92176

2) Apr. 15-18, 1993; 15th Northern California Regional Convention; "Out of the Fog"; Civic Center, 99 Grove Street, San Francisco 94102; Host Hotel, Cathedral Harold Hotel; rsvn.s California only (800) 622-0855 or Continental US (800) 227-4730; NCCNA XV, 6116 Merced Avenue, Box 142, Oakland, CA 94611

CONNECTICUT: Apr. 2-4, 1993; Connecticut River Valley Twelve Step Retreat; "Became Willing VII"; A closed retreat for members only, sponsored by Powerless, Clean and Serene, Miracles on Main St., Saturday Night Sanity NA Groups; Ivoryton, CT; info (203) 347-3324; Retreat, PO Box 1056, Middletown, CT 06457-1056

GEORGIA: Mar. 18-21, 1993; 12th Annual Georgia Regional Convention; Radisson Hotel, Augusta, Ga; info (404) 382-5657; rsvn.s (706) 722-8900

HAWAII: Mar. 26-28, 1993; 9th Annual Gathering of the Fellowship on Oahu; Camp Mokuleia, North Shore, Oahu, HI; info (808) 947-0828; Oahu Gathering, PO Box 75271, Honolulu, HI 96836

IDAHO: Apr. 2-4, 1993; 4th Annual Southern Idaho Regional Convention; "Surrender The Gateway to Recovery"; Howard Johnson Hotel, 1399 Bench Road, Pocatello, ID 83201; info (208) 233-0965; SRVNA, PO Box 4342, Pocatello, ID 83201

ILLINOIS: Feb. 26-28, 1993; 5th Annual Chicagoland Convention; Hyatt Regency, 151 E. Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60611; rsvn.s (312) 565-1234; info (708) 848-2211; Convention, PO Box 872, Oakpark, IL 60302

2) Mar. 5-7, 1993; 2nd Rock River Area Convention; Ramada Inn, 7550 E. State Street, Rockford, IL; rsvn.s (815) 398-2200; RRAC-2, PO Box 1891, Rockford, IL 61103-0391

KANSAS: Apr. 2-4, 1993; 10th Mid-America Regional Convention; Red Coach Inn, I-135 & US-56, McPherson, KS; MARCNA-10, PO Box 208, Emporia, KS 66801-0208

KENTUCKY: Apr. 9-11, 1993; 7th Kentucky Regional Convention; Executive Inn, 600 Walnut Street, Evansville, Indiana 47708; info (502) 827-0476; rsvn.s (800) 457-3841

MARYLAND: Apr. 2-4, 1993; 7th Chesapeake & Potomac Regional Convention; Ocean City Convention Center, Ocean City, Maryland; info (301) 890-8187; CPRCA VII, PO Box 472, Burtonsville, MD 20866

MASSACHUSETTS: Mar. 5-7, 1993; 5th New England Regional Convention; Tara Inn Hotel, Massachusetts; info (617) 647-1470 or (617) 782-0130; NERC-5, PO Box 1245, Waltham, MA 02254

MICHIGAN: Apr. 8-11, 1993; 1st Detroit Area Convention; Western Hotel Renaissance Center, Detroit, MI 48243; rsvn.s (800) 228-3000; info (313) 841-5194; DACNA I, PO Box 241221, Detroit, MI 48241

NEVADA: Feb. 26-28, 1993; 7th Annual Southern Nevada Convention; Hacienda Hotel, Las Vegas, NV; info (702) 451-2768; rsvn.s (800) 634-6713

NEW JERSEY: Feb. 19-21, 1993; Third Annual Cape/Atlantic Area Convention; Holiday Inn Diplomat, Chelsea Avenue and The Boardwalk; rsvn.s (800) 548-3030; info (609) 391-2144; CAASONA, Convention Committee, PO Box 7386, Atlantic City, NJ 08404

NEW YORK: Apr. 16-18, 1993; Greater New York Regional Convention Freedom Eight; Concord Resort Hotel, Kiamesha Lake, NY 12751; info (718) 638-2866 or (718) 398-0012

NORTH CAROLINA: Mar. 19-21, 1993; 6th North Carolina Capital Area Family Reunion; North Raleigh Hilton and Convention Center, 3415 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh, NC 27609-7330; rsvn.s (800) 872-1982; info (919) 755-5391; Registration NCCAFRFA, PO Box 818, Carrboro, NC 27510

OHIO: Apr. 2-4, 1993; 3rd Annual Buckeye Multi-Regional Learning Conference; Beachwood Holiday Inn; Beachwood, OH; rsvn.s (216) 831-3300; Convention, PO Box 35348, Cleveland, OH 44135

OKLAHOMA: Mar. 26-28, 1993; 7th Oklahoma Regional Convention; "The Light of Recovery"; Grand Lake, Afton, OK; RSO, 419 South Magnolia, Newkirk, OK 74647

SOUTH CAROLINA: Feb. 19-21, 1993; 4th Annual Just For Today Convention; Hilton Resort at Palmetto Dunes, Hilton Head Island, SC; info (803) 791-9591; JFT-4, PO Box 23534, Columbia, SC 29224-3534

TEXAS: Feb. 26-28, 1993; 9th Annual Texarkana Area Convention; Best Western Northgate, I-30 & Stateline, Texarkana, TX; rsvn.s (903) 793-6565; info (903) 832-6257; TAC-9, Route 15 Box 113, Texarkana, TX 75501

2) Apr. 9-11, 1993; LSRCNA VIII; Hyatt-Regency, Town Lake, Austin; LSRCNA VIII, PO Box 19444, Austin, TX 78760

UNITED KINGDOM: Mar. 12-14, 1993; 1st Northwest England Area Convention; Castlefield Hotel, Liverpool Road, Manchester; rsvn.s (061) 832-7073; Narcotics Anonymous, Northwest England Area, PO BOX 57, Manchester, England, UK M60 1HP

2) Apr. 16-18, 1993; 4th London Convention; Holland Park School, Arlies Lane, Holland Park, London W10; UK Service Office, PO Box 772, London N19 3LS, ENGLAND

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The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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What is Narcotics Anonymous?

NA is a non-profit 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 stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only one requirement for membership, the desire to stop using. We suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. 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.

My gratitude speaks
when I care
and when I share with others
the NA way