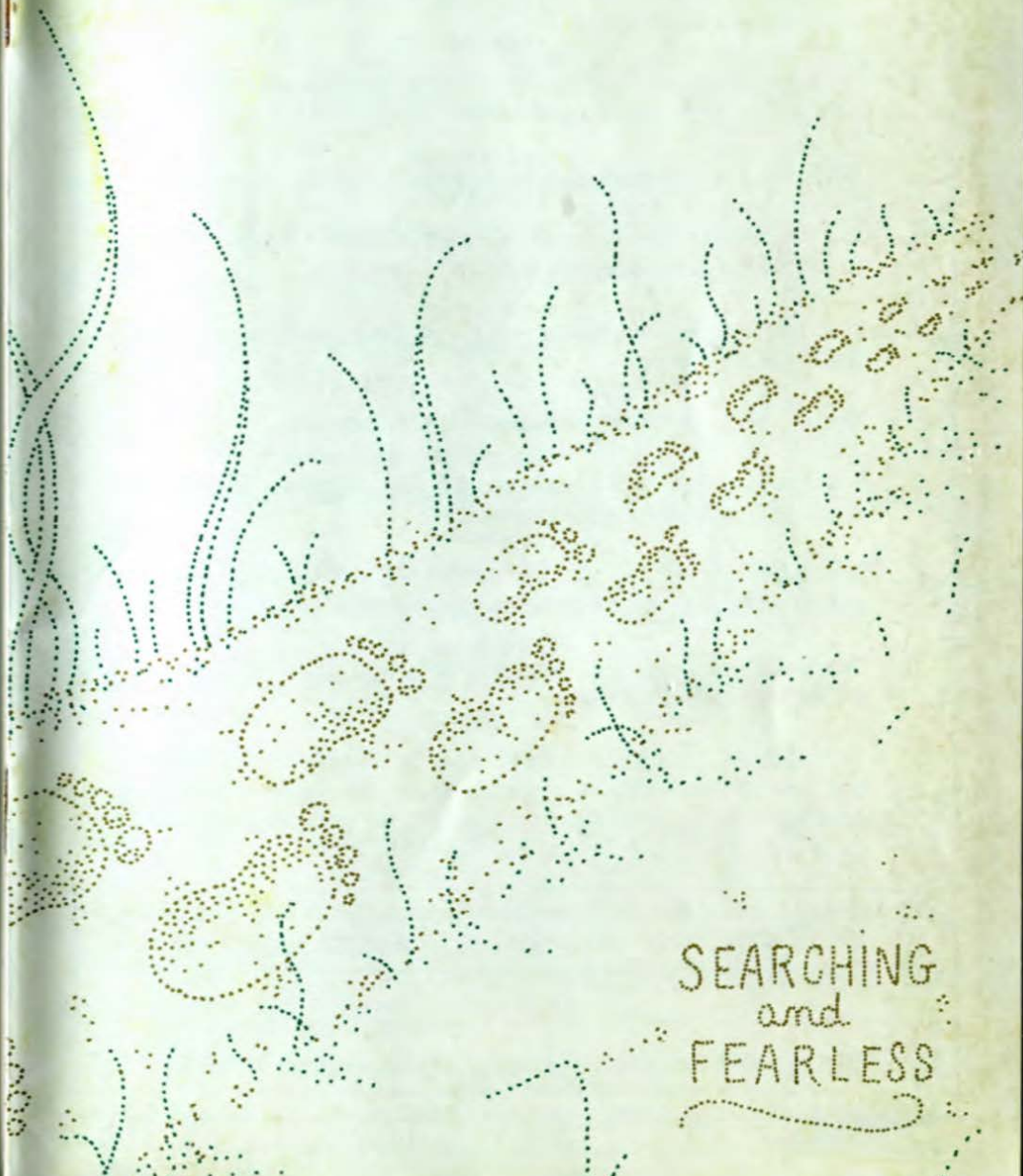


THE NA Way[®] MAGAZINE

September 1993

\$1.75



SEARCHING
and
FEARLESS

TWELVE STEPS

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®

Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999
(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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Subscription rates, please remit in US or Canadian currency: 1 yr. \$15, 2 yrs. \$28, 3 yrs. \$39, single copies \$1.75. Please inquire about bulk rates.

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The NA Way Magazine is published monthly by World Service Office, Inc., 16155 Wyandotte Street, Van Nuys, CA 91409. Second class postage paid at Van Nuys, CA and other points. **POSTMASTER:** Please send address changes to *The NA Way Magazine*, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999.

Fourth Step story

Yesterday I visited my sponsor at his home, which is nestled in the mountains. We live about 250 miles apart, and our visits are less frequent than they would be if we shared the same home group or lived within the same area of Narcotics Anonymous. Though this distance may seem to be an obstacle, I find that what I learn about the Twelve Steps on those visits helps me stay happier than I would be otherwise. Even when I am in pain, it is usually less intense.

I spent time last night at my home group with several of the people I sponsor. Most interesting to me was their eagerness to begin their Fourth Steps. Sharing my experience with them reminded me not only of how important all the steps are but how particularly important it is to write a searching and fearless moral inventory. Whenever I describe how I have written my inventories, I recall how much each one of them helped in my recovery. Each time I work it, the Fourth Step is a turning point for me.

On three separate occasions I have sat down and put to paper my personal inventory: my fears, my pain, my joy. Although each inventory was entirely

different and certainly reflected different levels of honesty, they all had a common theme. Also, I've used different guides, so there has been a somewhat different result simply from that. Early in my recovery I rarely saw beyond my self-obsession, so it was very difficult for me to identify my wrongs. As I looked at my relationships, my denial and self-righteousness clouded my view (as it still does, though less often). I used *Working Step Four in Narcotics Anonymous* for this inventory and the part on assets was completely foreign to me. When I was new in the fellowship, I thought I had no assets whatsoever.

I think that the three most necessary things for an inventory are honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness. No matter what else was happening as I was writing, I found it extremely difficult to lie on paper. Something about seeing a lie there, right in front of me, made it impossible to continue without correction. There was also a certain amount of open-mindedness required. I had to believe that this Fourth Step would help me. As for willingness, I think this step requires a significant effort on my part and does not always bring instant results. To this addict, the idea of working without immediate and guaranteed reward was pretty difficult to swallow at first, so I asked for the willingness to sit down and write.

My inventories have helped in various ways. Just as different things are appropriate to different times in our recovery, so are different things appropriate to personal inventories.

I did not come straight into the program from the streets. I was in an institution prior to attending NA meet-



ings. It was there that I sat down for the first time and thought about my life and addiction. I had known for a long time that something was wrong, but never thought it could be addiction. However, once I realized it was addiction, I wrote my first inventory. To be honest, it was not very thorough. It was an assignment with a fourteen-day deadline. Considering that I had been using for over ten years and that my defects were older still, that felt somewhat rushed. I focused excessively on the reading of my wrongs and how my listener would view me afterward. I thought about possible criminal repercussions because I simply did not understand the nature of recovery and this business of one addict helping another. I thought about what my family would think when they learned what I had done. However, none of these things occurred; the addict I shared my inventory with told no one.

Despite being only marginally thorough and predominantly fearful, it did

help me to write an inventory and share it. Looking back I can see how it helped me go forward, because I did let some secrets out. I know now that a Fourth Step isn't merely a list of secrets, but there were some things I needed to tell about just to begin feeling human. I still have that inventory, and looking back on it from time to time has reminded me where I come from and how much I've grown.

The second inventory I wrote was more thorough and fearless. I did it with the old NA guide and with the guidance of a sponsor. When I think back on my recovery and the Fourth Step, this particular inventory stands out as the one I got the most help from. This one was written with the help of three or four recovering addicts (my sponsor and roommates), after my head had cleared a little. It was not a forced, contrived exercise. All the coincidences our Basic Text refers to came to light. Every meeting I went to seemed to be on inventories. I ran into people I

hadn't seen in years and have not seen since. Events occurred that jarred my memory. In short, this inventory was done with the help of my Higher Power and the NA Fellowship.

I wrote every day. I could not write in a room full of people, so I wrote in my bedroom alone. I would ask for guidance from my Higher Power and then take out my Fourth Step guide and my notebook. At first I could not follow the suggestions in the guide because the words seemed to pour out of me all at once. I would write for long periods of time before my mind would relax. Often I finished in tears and had to leave my bedroom and join my roommates in the living room. Occasionally I spoke, but most often I just sat with them and healed. I sat in the company of fellow addicts and knew everything was going to be alright.

I wrote about resentments. I walked around unusually upset as all my angry feelings came up. At times, I really needed to divert myself by going to extra meetings, talking at length with my sponsor, or doing strenuous physical exercise. I was short with people, and I needed the unconditional love of other addicts. Now when I see people writing about resentments and going through what I went through, I try to return the unconditional love I was given when I was in their shoes.

I wrote about many other things as they came to mind. Toward the end of the inventory, I wrote about assets. During this time, I experienced incredible confidence, bordering on arrogance. Again, I needed the love of the fellowship to put me in touch with reality. As the text so wisely states, we are neither as good nor as bad as we think we are. Finally, I reached the end. My sponsor

and I agreed that I had been sufficiently thorough. I really needed his guidance on this because at first I was being overly perfectionistic and trying to write the greatest Fourth Step ever written. My sponsor brought me around to reality.

There were significant changes in my life after this. Some of these I saw right away; others I didn't notice till years later. Mostly my self-esteem grew, and I ventured into formerly terrifying areas of life. While I think the details of this part of my story are too specific to my recovery to tell, the message is not. The steps had an effect on my life, and I began to see the rewards of taking positive action. As I see it now, this Fourth Step was a turning point in my life.

My most recent Fourth Step was very different in content but similar in results to the others. At the time I had been clean for over five years and much of my writing was focused on clean time. The realizations were not as shocking because I had been getting to know myself for some time. Overall, it was neither as devastating nor as enlightening as my previous inventories had been. Thank goodness, because this meant my life had become more balanced and I was not living at the extreme edge of everything anymore.

I wrote about assets. This time, my inventory seemed to be divided equally between assets and defects instead of eighty percent defects and twenty percent assets. The tears that came this time resulted from thinking about my joyful experiences in the fellowship. I described in detail the love and gratitude I had for NA. I included how I had gotten my family back, my life back, and most importantly my self back. I

wrote with greater clarity about the things I was able to do and things I no longer had to do. I wrote about the lives that were intertwined with mine and the depth of love I felt for my friends in NA. I wrote about those miracles we hear about, the main one being the fact that so many people who had been so hopelessly addicted to drugs were now clean. I included H&I service, new member, and sponsorship stories. I wrote about a young man I sponsored who, despite all the efforts of people in the fellowship, chose to take his own life. Even in the face of incredible sorrow and anguish, I was grateful to be feeling my feelings rather than numbly surviving. As I see it now, this Fourth Step was a turning point in my life. I became more committed than ever to staying here in NA and living out my life, just for today.

In the time that has passed since that latest Fourth Step, I have been able to face areas of my life that used to

terrify me. If I had made a list of things I wanted from recovery when I was new, I wouldn't have included what I'm doing now. Recovery has taken me beyond anything I could have conceived of on my own. I do not mean to sound cocky; I am not so sure of myself as I once was. It turns out that I don't know what I thought I knew. Changes in my life come unexpectedly, and I cannot say with certainty what lies ahead. I can count on sponsorship, the steps, and this fellowship. Needs, priorities, and understandings of reality change, but the principles remain a vital part of our everyday living—and the Fourth Step, "a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves," is an integral part of those principles. By the way, if you're thinking about writing a Fourth Step and you think reading this article is just a coincidence, think again.

Anonymous



What can I do?

Did you know the suggestions of the NA program really work?

Have you heard this one yet? Choosing and supporting a home group is an important part of recovery! As it says in our Basic Text, "Our work can begin with simple actions: emptying ashtrays, making coffee, cleaning up, setting up for a meeting, opening the door, chairing a meeting, and passing out literature." And sponsorship "is the heart of the NA way of recovery from addiction—one addict helping another."

Read the literature for yourself, and if you still have some doubt then go to a meeting, say a prayer, don't pick up, and you won't get high. Or keep it simple, keep coming back, and you will begin to recover.

Now check this one out: Our area subcommittees all help the addict who still suffers. Whether it's hospitals & institutions, phonelines, public information, activities, or a newsletter subcommittee, choose one and get involved, because otherwise that suffering addict in need just could be you!

From the very first day I walked through the doors of NA, I felt that I belonged with you people. The identification of myself in others, hearing people share the same feelings I was having, was so strong it often brought me to tears. I wanted the feeling of being a part of the fellowship so badly that I began to do service work almost immediately: giving another member a ride to a meeting, joining a home group, and helping to set up and clean up. By doing these types of things I found I had something to give even back then. From our literature: "If we keep what we have to share, we lose it. Words mean nothing until we put them into action." It has always been the action I've taken in this fellowship that has brought me the greatest gift: that sense of worth to myself and to another human being.

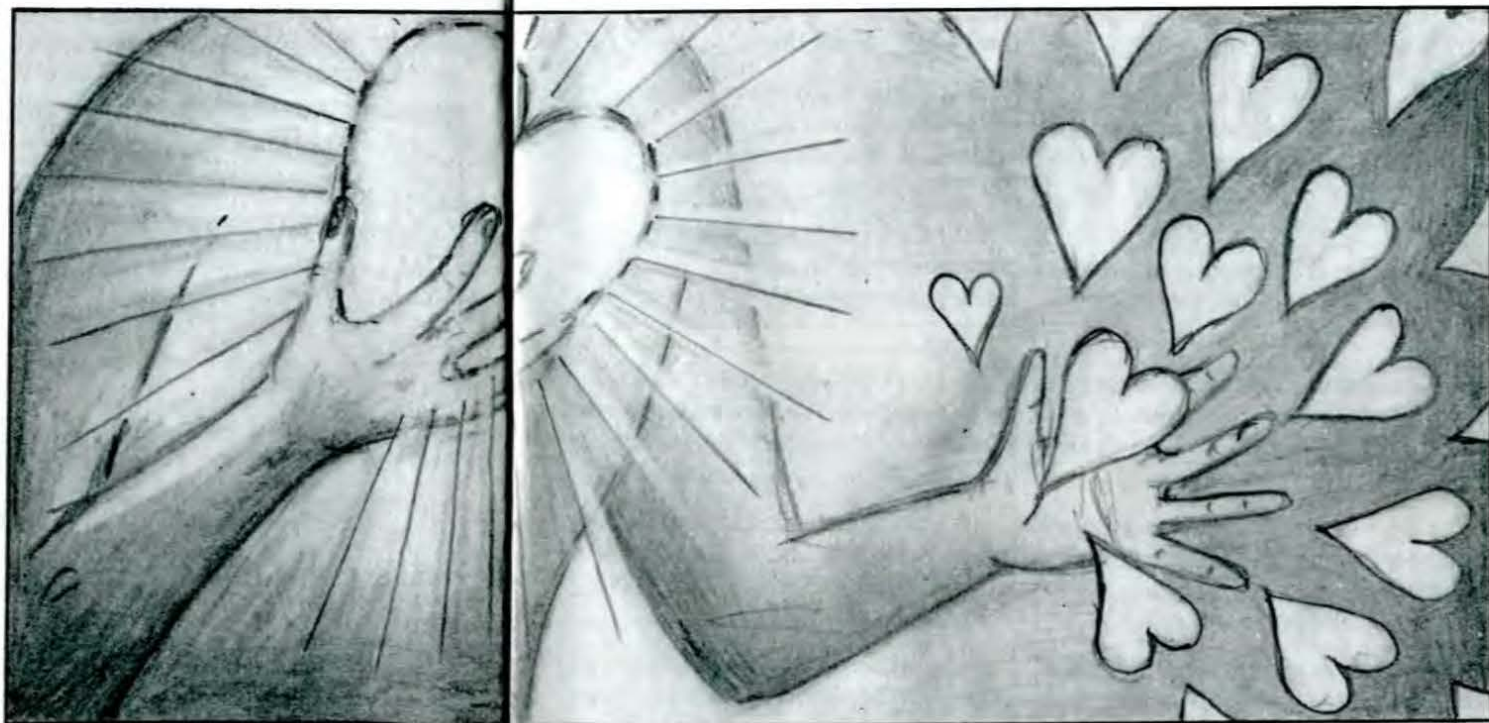
I always wanted to do good for myself and others, but my desire to be accepted often found expression in the wrong circles of society and for the wrong reasons. It was only after coming to NA that I discovered I could be accepted as I was, with my good points as well as my bad ones. This was a freedom I never let myself experience before I began to recover. My negative outlook and self-centeredness had taken control of my life to the extent that doing anything for anyone without my own selfish reasons was out of the question.

Today I am concentrating on the positives in my life, things like staying clean, helping others, seeking the will of my Higher Power rather than my own self-centered will, and taking direction from my sponsor and others in the program whose experience and

actions have brought them the change and growth that I desire for myself. Commitment to change through working the steps has helped me face my past and look at what I need to keep and what I need to get rid of in order to live today. Staying involved in service to the fellowship helps me get out of myself, ever improving my outlook on life. The strength of my personal program of recovery today is a direct result of doing what I always believed in but could never practice in my active addiction. All of this is embodied in NA service and helping the addict who still suffers.

Again, from our Basic Text, "This way we keep what we have by giving it away."

Anonymous





The humility checklist

It seems to me that humility is one of the key ingredients in working the steps and applying the traditions. I'd like to share the following checklist, which was put together to remind those of us who are interested where we are at with humility.

1.) Do I go to meetings on time and make myself available to visit with new people before and after the meeting? Yes__ No__ Sometimes__

2.) We are here on a matter of life and death. Do I show respect to the group by taking my personal conversations outside during a meeting? Yes__ No__ Sometimes__

3.) Am I quiet and respectful around the entrance doors so as not to disturb the meeting? Yes__ No__ Sometimes__

4.) Do I enter a recovery meeting in progress with respect so as not to disturb the atmosphere of recovery in any way? Yes__ No__ Sometimes__

5.) Have I ever started a meeting off with a topic and asked for input only to leave the meeting before it was over? Yes__ No__ Sometimes__

6.) Do I have a habit of coming into a meeting late, asking what the topic

is, then jumping in to share only to leave the meeting early? Yes__ No__ Sometimes__

7.) Am I one who, by habit, always turns to see who has just come into a meeting? Yes__ No__ Sometimes__

8.) Do I have the overwhelming obsession to share at all the meetings I attend simply to hear myself talk? Yes__ No__ Sometimes__

9.) Do I normally share too long each time I share, knowing that many other addicts have a need to share? Yes__ No__ Sometimes__

10.) Do I ramble on and overshare consistently in an effort to inflate my ego or get attention? Yes__ No__ Sometimes__

11.) Do I feel the need to share the same event over and over at different meetings to give myself the maximum attention? Yes__ No__ Sometimes__

12.) Do I realize the impact any inconsiderate behavior has on a newcomer during a meeting? Yes__ No__ Sometimes__

Suggestion: For a best results, go over these questions with your sponsor.

Home Group



NA history

The twentieth anniversary dinner celebration — 18 August 1973

As part of our series celebrating the fortieth anniversary of Narcotics Anonymous, we are featuring a talk given by Jimmy K at NA's twentieth anniversary celebration. Because of its length, we've separated this talk into two parts. Part Two will be printed next month. The following is the first part of a transcript of the tape recording made at that celebration. As such, both Bob B's introductory remarks and Jimmy K's talk contain incomplete sentences. Due to the historical significance of this talk, we didn't feel as though we could make any edits whatsoever, even to fill in missing words. We have used punctuation to make this transcript as reader-friendly as possible. Otherwise, it is printed verbatim.

Bob B: The twentieth anniversary is, I think, a good occasion for me in terms of I was not around for the twenty years because I was still playing crazy. But about fifteen years ago, when I did come around, I met some people that . . . something happened in the process. And it wasn't to happen for another three years, before I was to get clean at the insistence of the state. And then to find out that I could come out after a couple of years and to stay clean over a period of over ten years . . . It wouldn't have been possible if there wasn't people like the people in this room that kind of insisted, kind of pushed, kind of bad-rapped me, that kind of held me up. They gave me all the things that were necessary, the things that I needed.

And, at the same time, one person that I became very close to, at that time, stayed in close touch with me over the years, giving me some confidence that I could do it if I would only try. And we've been through many trials of error in my growing up. And, at the same time, we've shared a lot of heartaches and pleasures, also. I'm going to let him tell you his own story in terms of what happened . . .

At this time, I've been going through papers. Our offices and things have been in trunks of cars and backs of garages, in cardboard boxes, in old filing cases, and what have you. And many of these things that we keep as mementos as to times gone by. And one of these mementos that I've kept over a period of years is an original set of bylaws that were adopted in 1953 on August the 17th, which was yesterday, today is like a year (twenty years) and one day. This set of guides were set down in order to determine, to run, or to govern NA as a whole. Some particular guides . . . There have been many, many additions and changes since then. But at this time I thought it would be appropriate that I put these here bylaws in some kind of archives for safekeeping. And who better is there to give this and put it in safekeeping but the person who helped put it together, kind of shepherded it around, kept us all tied in some manner together? And I put them in a binder so that he can probably put them away with the rest of his treasures as a remembrance of, say, oh, that's where it started and this is how it is today. And I would like to, at this time, to introduce and present this here set of bylaws as a token of safekeeping and a token of whatever. I

can't . . . don't even know the words to express it to Jimmy K, one of the founders of NA, and one of the people who has been a mainstay, and one that keeps it together and has kept it together through many of the years that it has been around. So, this is the bylaws, an original set, and I'm going to give these here to Jimmy. And at this time Jimmy probably can give a little more background and highlight as to where it came from, what happened, and what's happening right now. I'm gonna turn it over to Jimmy K.

Jimmy K: My name's Jimmy Kinnon. I'm an addict and an alcoholic. I've been on the verge of tears for about one hour here and that almost did it. But I'm not ashamed of tears anymore, providing they're that kind that are shed for something that's worthwhile. That just about wiped my brain clean. I can't even remember what I was going to say now. However, in our fellowship, at any time, our main purpose has to be always foremost in our lives, whether we're socializing with each other in our individual homes or whether we're at a gathering of this kind, particularly this kind. What I have to remember, personally, is that I'm here and possibly all of you are here because of people who'll never be here. The newcomer is the lifeblood of this organization; always has been, always will be.

Bob pointed out a few people who are here tonight and some people who couldn't make it tonight. Those people we call "trusted servants" of Narcotics Anonymous. Mostly, anyone who takes a position or any kind of leader—whether it's chairman of a group representative of a group, GSO representa-

tive, trustee, or anything else regarding this organization—just lets himself in for a lot of work, a lot of criticism, and a lot of those things that go on. But you see, we have to grow, and our shoulders get broad enough to carry these things because the life that is given to us makes everything worthwhile. If it wasn't meaningful and worthwhile, I wouldn't be here tonight. If this program didn't lift me higher, carry me further, and make me feel better than anything else I ever did in my life, I wouldn't be here. That's for damn sure!

are a few pictures over there on that case. These are some of the pictures of the beginnings. We started long before NA was a reality, even in name. We grew out of a need and we found . . . Those of us who were members had come into AA and found we could recover. In AA we found out that many addicts were still going down the road of degradation and death. And we thought it was right that we should try to do something, but you know, we're funny people, the more we try to do things together, the more we fight each other and the more we tear each other

**If this program didn't lift me higher,
carry me further, and make me feel better
than anything else, I wouldn't be here.**

I sit up here in this chair. I've always admired these chairs but never thought I'd sit in one. I say, "Ye Gods! Shades of Peter Lorrie, you know, where's the fat man?" But first things first they tell us. You know, this is part of a dream come true and a dream envisions great changes but progress demands many small actions. A dream doesn't come true because of one group of people, or one man, or two men, or three men. It comes true because a lot of people work at it, because a lot of people put effort into it, because a lot of people buy the idea and carry it forward. That's one of the reasons we're here.

Most of you have noticed that there

apart, tear down the very thing we try to build. And that's been the history, up until a few short years ago, of Narcotics Anonymous. We tore down as fast as we built. That's the kind of people we are, and we must recognize that to recover all of us must know the nature of the illness, the nature of the addict, and the nature of recovery. All these things are necessary to grow, and to live, and to change. And we started from resentments. Resentments made us grow.

Before NA there was HFD, Habit Forming Drug groups. These were hidden. These were one or two or three people meeting in apartments, here and there. Nobody knew where they

were. They demanded certain things and were dominated by one or two persons. You know, you and I don't go for authority. We don't like authority. A few of the people I met down on the Skid Row years ago from East LA formed another group known as Addicts Anonymous. They infringed on the AA name and they died very quickly because they too were dominated by one man. We had another group started in the [San Fernando] Valley then that also called itself HFD and was dominated by one man. So, we found out very early, and our experience has taught us, that we can have no bosses, no big shots in Narcotics Anonymous.

For a while after we formed a lot of things happened that I'm not going into tonight, but due to some things that happened and due to the nature of the addict, the nature of our illness, some people were put in a position where they became the leaders again, the Great White Father. You know, we can't have a Great White Father or a Big Momma. You know, it doesn't work in this organization. And NA died once more, and the friends of ours in AA helped to pick us up, and said, "Don't let it bother you." These were the real friends we had in the beginning; members of AA who believed in us, members of AA who themselves had a dual problem at that time and recognized that; they came and helped us get started again. But again and again this happened in this organization. One person would try to dominate the whole movement.

And every time it happened we began to die. Because the traditions go down the drain when we try this. And one of the first things that we said when we met as a group in that house—

Number One up there—where we formed those bylaws that Bob was talking about, where we sat together trying to iron out some of the things we wanted to do. We came down to very simple ideas: Number One, that we believed that this program of Twelve Steps would work for addicts as well as for alcoholics. Two, that the traditions must be followed if we were to grow, and grow as a fellowship that could stand on its own feet aside from and away from Alcoholics Anonymous. We could take our own place as a fellowship, and not be dominated by or affiliated with anything or anybody else. And we said we would keep a place open for at least two years and if, in two years, one or two showed that this program could work for them we would have felt that it had been worthwhile.

That, fundamentally, was what we started with. But we argued about it for about six weeks before we put those bylaws on paper, and then we didn't want the bylaws. The sooner I figured we could get rid of the bylaws, the better off we'd be. Because the policies of the traditions are enough to guide us in what we have to do. The traditions will save us from ourselves. And this is what is so necessary for a fellowship like ours. This is life, the other way is death as we know it. But how hard and how difficult it is not to go back. How difficult?

The first big order of business we had when we got together was the name. I was the first chairman of what we then called . . . ah . . . nothing. AANA, that's what it was called and I said, "You simply can't do that. You made me your chairman. We're gonna have to find another name. We can't call ourselves AANA or NAAA." And

the committee who voted me the chairman immediately vetoed what I said. Right, that's a good start. I wasn't going to get away with any horseshit from these people. They were going to find out what was right to do. And so the first order of business was to contact Alcoholics Anonymous to find out if we could use their name; and they found out that you couldn't do it. So I got the satisfaction, at least, of being right on the first thing that they vetoed. That made me feel a little better, you know, because—I got news for you—I get my own way most of the time. I know you recognize that because so do you. That's the kind of people we are.

But we had a lot of trouble when we first got together because I'm just like you are and you're just like I am. You're going to have to show me that what you say is going to work or I ain't going to go along. And thank God we are like that. I think that's what makes this program work eventually.

It was very hard to find a place to meet, after we got together and agreed what we were going to do. You couldn't find a hall to meet in. Nobody would allow us in. They didn't trust us in any way, shape, or form. And it's pretty sad when you go from one place to another after you've got something real good going and nobody will let you use their hall. You know! Eventually we did find a Salvation Army hall and they allowed us to use it for five dollars a month. You know, that's pretty good, but there were no facilities there. There was one little restroom with a hand basin and a bowl in there and that was it. There was no kitchen, so we had to go out and buy a little electric stove and some coffee pots, some cups, which I

still have at home. I found them just this week. I've had them all these years. We used to give them to each other because this week you might meet at my place—which is the second picture up there—and next week we might meet at your place. So you took the cups with you so everybody would have a cup to get their coffee in. You know, not many of us had more than a couple of cups in our houses then; in fact, not many of us were working. But that's the way it was. I still have those things.

On the table here is the copy that we drew up, or rather Doris drew up, and Guildia, for the newspaper as our announcement that we were now in business. You know, we now had a hall, we now had a set of bylaws, and we now had a purpose.

At this point, Jimmy read "Our Purpose" and the announcement for NA's first meeting. A reprint of both these items can be found in the August 1993 issue of The NA Way.

Next month we'll hear more about NA's beginnings, the first recovery meetings, and events leading up to 1973. The second part of Jimmy's talk describes how our early members grappled with issues such as informing law enforcement agencies about the new group and includes the story of what could be called NA's first public information work.

Newsletters

Our primary purpose

From *Free Spirit, the Calgary, Alberta area newsletter*: At first reading I found the Fifth Tradition quite surprising. The primary purpose of the group, it says, is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. The Basic Text itself suggests that the addict might well react by saying something like, "I thought we were here to get clean." It goes on to point out that groups aren't addicted and don't recover.

That's true, of course, but isn't there a more fundamental truth behind this tradition? It's the same one that's behind the Twelfth Step—that our social situation sets the scene for our addiction to develop. I'm sure that was true of myself, and it's one of the reasons I don't need the company of practicing addicts. It seems there are two requirements for becoming a practicing addict. One is having the "disease of addiction." The other is being in the right—or perhaps I should say the wrong—situation so that the disease is activated.

My disease was activated later in life than seems to have been the experience of most addicts. It developed in the context of a relationship with an addict. (I sometimes wonder what would have happened if I had not chanced to get into that relationship, but perhaps it wasn't really chance at all.) My disease was "waiting to happen" and will never be "cured." I will always have it, but it need not be active.

This means that I need to avoid social situations in which my disease might be reactivated. But that's a negative statement. Knowing what I must avoid doesn't say much about where I should actually be and what I should do.

One of the best places for an addict to be is at an NA meeting. But what happens at a meeting? We share about how our recovery is going. We talk of the challenges we have faced and how we have addressed them. We encourage each other in all kinds of ways. We study the NA literature. We celebrate clean time. We give one another our phone numbers. We talk about the service activities we have been involved in, and we tell each other about service opportunities.

All the above is fine. We need to do these things. But the meetings could become little more than gatherings of inward-looking, self-congratulating, complacent, self-centered people if our

emphasis was not on carrying the message.

As I see it, it's not just that we need, for the sake of our own self-respect, to repay some of what was given to us by those who created the Fellowship of NA. That's important, of course, but if my disease was activated in certain social settings, its "deactivation" also depends on my having certain social experiences. And "carrying the message" is one of the most powerful of these.

Carrying the message requires that we have a message that makes sense. I find that telling my story is a powerful way of defining my status as an addict—something I must never forget if I am not to relapse. (This, after all, is what writing out Step One and working Steps Four and Five are all about.) And the story we tell, our message, is that of our recovery from the effects of a disease.

I think that's why the Fifth Tradition's "primary purpose" is so central to recovery. And, of course, the members of a group do not just "carry the message" at their meetings. It becomes a way of life.

So hurray for Tradition Five!

Anonymous



Will I get my brain back?

From *Sanity*, the New Jersey regional newsletter: One week from tomorrow I will be celebrating five years clean. When I got clean at twenty-six years old I was clueless. I had no maturity or insight about this thing called life.

My first year of recovery was spent safely in the loving arms of NA. I got into it deeply: constant attendance at meetings and making new, clean friends. I fondly recall New Year's Eve 1987. With less than thirty days clean, I fearfully went with two women I barely knew to the miniconvention being held at a college in North Jersey. I was, quite frankly, terrified at the event. People seemed so at ease with themselves while I was struggling with the disease part of getting clean, not knowing what to say in those social situations and feeling like the biggest jerk in the world. I'm glad I went. I got the mug on the table which had the convention theme on it, "Staying Straight in '88." I still have that mug, and out of all the convention mugs I've collected over the last five years, it is by far the most cherished. I remember driving home after the convention. I started to feel some real joy at being clean. I

remember thinking that this was the first New Year's I could remember.

I took my first service commitment at eighty days clean. They had to waive clean time for me to become the secretary of the newsletter subcommittee. I was real nervous about fulfilling my new commitment, but I did it. I found service work to be a tremendous help to my recovery because it encouraged my interacting with other NA members that I probably would never have gotten to know. Service work also made me feel needed and wanted—feelings that were not familiar to me.

Five years later I am still involved in service work. In fact, I have never been without a commitment. I have found that service work has enhanced my life. My horizons have been broadened. I have met so many people who, like myself, are dedicated to the NA way of life.

I've had five sponsors in five years—not intentionally, it just happened that way. My first sponsor was tough and overbearing, and I really needed that then. But when she gave me total disapproval of my first clean relationship, at eight months clean, I moved on. And, yes, I paid dearly for not taking the "one year—no relationships" suggestion. My first relationship catapulted me into the world of codependency, settling into complete insanity. Mostly, I suffered. Not having anything to compare this relationship to also kept me in this painful situation for far too long. When it ended at almost two years clean, I had a tremendous amount of work, or cleaning up, to do. Although this experience was painful, I learned a lot about myself and my relationships with others. Today my romantic relationships hurt

less and are healthier, I hope!

The steps provide me with tools for living clean and give me the power to change. I've always been step-oriented, and I'm grateful for the guidance I've received over the years. I had to be willing to do the work and face the pain that, for me, accompanies change. Between my second and fourth years clean, I battled resentments. It seems I was catching them left and right. My biggest help with them were the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Steps. In Step Six I become willing through pain. In Step Seven I let God take my resentments. In Step Eight I forgave, and in Step Nine I was forgiven, perhaps by others but most definitely by myself.

Today I stay connected to NA and involved in the recovery process. I have a home group in which I'm active. I have close friends to whom I turn in both good and troubled times. I am a sponsor. When I'm away from home, I attend NA. Basically, we're all the same whatever part of the world we live in. NA has changed my life by changing me. Thank God!

Anonymous



World services takes its inventory

"It's time to slow the spinning world service juggernaut long enough to look at what we're doing and why we're doing it in light of our fellowship's primary purpose," said the Interim Committee's report to the World Service Conference, providing the strongest rationale for world services to engage in an inventory process.

The idea that something wasn't quite right in world services, or that carrying the message could be done more efficiently, with better communication, with more detailed planning, with a new structure, or just *something* different has been around for quite some time. This thinking has spawned many ideas, from plans to entirely change the structure of services in Narcotics Anonymous as proposed in *A Guide to Service* to both major and minor shifts in policy resulting in a newly revised *Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure* each year.

"You had people saying that if we could just get our structure right, everything would be okay," said Rogan A, a member of the group charged with implementing the inventory process. But it goes beyond merely structural problems according to various world-level trusted servants. "World services have grown to the point where we are overwhelming our world-level trusted servants, leaving numerous volunteers burnt out and disillusioned," said Mary Kay B. Poor communication, or a "deluge of detail" as it was so aptly described, has also been a major problem. Finally, many have pointed to the rapid growth of Narcotics Anonymous and its World Service Conference as the

major reason for our troubles. Not that it isn't good that NA is growing, simply that world services hasn't had time to "catch up" in its delivery of service to the fellowship.

In 1978, the World Service Conference had its first meeting in a community college classroom in North Hollywood, California. Nine "regions," or what passed for regions at that time, were represented. Most of the participants at that weekend meeting were from California. No one from outside the USA attended.

Fifteen years later, the World Service Conference is an eight-day event, held in a hotel with banquet rooms large enough to hold the ninety-six voting participants, their alternates, nonvoting board and committee members, twenty or so WSO staff members, and interested parties from all over.

Due to this growth, "there's been a tremendous amount of change in the volume of and the kinds of requests for services" the conference has received, said Steve Lantos, a WSO staff member assigned to the inventory project. "But on the other hand," he added, "there's long been a perception that our system for delivering services has remained unchanged for the last ten years."

With problems such as these in mind, trusted servants began calling for a "slowdown" at the Cincinnati workshop last October. But once the topic was opened up for wide discussion and everyone had their say, the idea of a slowdown seemed insufficient to deal with the problems at hand. It was decided that nothing less than a moratorium on all new projects was needed in order to successfully engage

in the comprehensive evaluation a world services inventory promised to become.

Once it had been decided that broad support for the idea of an inventory existed, the Interim Committee put together a basic proposal for such an undertaking and presented it as Motion #1 in the January 1993 *Conference Agenda Report*. The motion asked "that the World Service Conference engage in an inventory process, taking on no new projects during CY 1993-94."

Well aware that conference participants would want to see a formal plan attached to such a motion, members of the Interim Committee, the chairpersons or vice chairpersons of the WSC standing committees, the World Service Board of Trustees Steering Committee, the WSC Administrative Committee, and officers of the WSO Board of Directors met in February to begin developing a plan. Rogan, who attended that meeting as the WSC PI Committee chairperson, described that meeting as "one of the best we've ever had." Citing the use of a professional facilitator as one of the reasons for the success of that meeting, he added that the scope of the inventory as defined at that meeting "basically hasn't changed since."

"The inventory applies only to world services, not to the fellowship. The fellowship's fine. This has to do with world services taking a look at itself and staying clear with our purpose," he said of the projected scope.

Rogan felt that another reason the February meeting went so well was that all in attendance had been so deeply immersed in world services and become very familiar with the prob-

lems. "Everyone was ready," he said. But the discussions "didn't start with an inventory plan. We just said things like we've got to stop all this, you got craziness, you got money going everywhere, you got people burning out." Outlining the problems seemed to make the solution readily apparent. "We left with a plan," said Rogan. Though it took two more meetings to refine the initial plan to the shape it was in when presented to the conference, the basic parameters were acceptable to nearly everyone involved in developing the plan.

When Motion #1 was introduced on the floor of the World Service Conference, it was divided into two questions: first, whether to engage in an inventory at all; and second, whether or not to take on new projects during the next year. Nearly everyone voted their agreement that an inventory should be done, but many questions were raised about the plan that had been developed before the conference. In addition, many people were unsure what "new projects" meant. For instance, some members of the WSC Literature Committee wondered whether the step writing guides fell into the "new projects" category since some preliminary work had been done on the guides.

After a great deal of discussion, conference participants created a work group to examine the plan attached to Motion #1 and define what would be considered new projects. Once members of the work group had been appointed they gathered input, much of it in the form of substitute motions and amendments to Motion #1. The group met during lunch and dinner breaks and late into the night after the confer-

ence had concluded its business each day.

After reviewing the input and returning to the conference once at mid-week to seek direction, the work group presented a revised plan to the conference on Friday 30 April. The major changes were:

1. The administration of the project was given to two groups, the Support Team and the Composite Group, rather than the World Service Board of Trustees [see inset].

2. The timeline was divided more evenly over two years, the first year to be devoted to research, surveys, and internal inventory-taking, the second to fellowship forums, analysis, and recommendations for change [see inset].

3. A plan to hold multiregional forums for the purpose of gathering input was eliminated. It was decided instead that comprehensive surveys of groups, areas, and regions would better serve the purpose of the inventory. It was also decided that the administrators of the inventory would provide logistical support for locally held workshops and training for the trusted servants who would lead those workshops.

The work group also recommended that only basic services be provided during the two-year inventory process in order to leave as much money and time as possible free to devote to the inventory process.

Asked why he believed the changes to plan were necessary, Rogan responded, "One of the main things we're trying to do is save funds and not burn people out. [With] the plan as it was,

we'd burn people out and spend a lot of money."

The plan as revised was approved by the conference, although several concerns were voiced about the perceived rush in putting a new plan together. On the issue of what constituted "new projects," conference participants expressed their conscience very clearly on a priority list they were asked to fill out. The inventory was ranked first on the list. The next project was ranked, not number two, not number three, but number *six* on the priority list. Also, conference participants voted in a straw poll that all world service boards and committees place the inventory at the top of their respective priority lists.

"You had a clear conscience saying stop all this other stuff and take your inventory," said Rogan.

Does any lingering resentment exist within world service committees over having to put their projects on hold for two years? "There's a couple of big projects that people want to get going, but I think they've resigned themselves to not doing [those projects]. They're getting behind [the inventory]," said Rogan.

Guessing from the nature of tools developed thus far, the inventory is sure to be searching and fearless. Asked if it would also be moral, Rogan replied, "I think it has to be. People will have to ask themselves [about] the motives behind what we're doing."

The World Service Conference is also suggesting that each group, area, and region conduct an inventory of their own service efforts in addition to completing the fellowship surveys.

"You know, the inventory might even point out some good things about world services," said Rogan. "If nothing else,

I hope it will raise the awareness of the average addict. By contributing, they'll see their part in our worldwide fellowship. Taking responsibility for NA as a whole is just as important as taking responsibility for the addict walking into a meeting for the first time."



Inventory timeline

May: Support Team confers with WSO staff, selects consultant(s)

June: Composite Group has four-day meeting with consultant to begin developing fellowship surveys

July, August: Fellowship surveys completed, translated, and mailed

September: Composite Group meets to prepare world service board and committee self-assessment tools for world services meeting later in conference year

October: World services board, committee self-assessments

November-January: Support Team compiles fellowship survey and self-assessment information, forwards it to Composite Group

February: Composite Group meets to evaluate information, prepare report for WSC'94

April: WSC annual meeting, Atlanta—majority of time spent on inventory activities including review of second-year plan

Composite Group members

Bob S (Trustee), Jamie S-H (Trustee), Jane N (WSC Literature Committee)

Jeff B (RSR, Indiana), John H (WSC Policy Committee)

Leah H (RSR, Chesapeake-Potomac), Mandy F (WSC H&I Committee),

Paul T (RSR, Spain), Rogan A (WSC Outreach Ad Hoc),

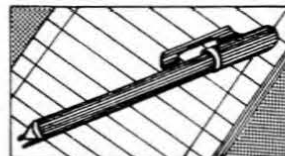
Susan B (WSC PI Committee), Tom R (WSO director)

Support Team members

Carol K (RSR, Michigan), Jim E (WSC 2nd vice chair)

Ron S (WSC treasurer), Vaughan K (RSR, Ontario)

Viewpoint



Tolerance equals unity

When I first came to Narcotics Anonymous, I often heard people share about the spiritual principle of tolerance. Today, it seems that all I ever hear is "So-and-So violated traditions; So-and-So is Thirteenth Stepping; and So-and-So is not working a good program." Our Basic Text tells us that we all need to come to our own understanding of the program. You do not have to work a program in the same manner I do, and vice versa. Some of us are sicker than others. What right do I have to tell you how to work the steps? Unless, of course, you have asked me for suggestions.

As an NA member, you have a right to a God of your own understanding. If that God is Jesus, you have the right to talk about your God at meetings as long as you do not try to force your beliefs on others. Where do people get off telling others that they may not talk about Jesus at meetings? It's OK, though, if you want to talk about your cigarette lighter being your Higher Power! Personal sharing is personal sharing. Your God is your God. No, I am not Christian. But I was taught to

practice tolerance when I began working the steps.

Some say, "The Lord's Prayer is not appropriate for use at NA meetings." Why not? "It's a Christian Prayer," they answer. Actually, that's wrong. It started out as a Jewish prayer. I don't care where a prayer came from. I don't care who wrote the damn thing. If the prayer says what I want to say to my God, I will use the prayer. Spiritual principles are spiritual principles. Our reading, "How It Works," states: "There is one thing more than anything else that will defeat us in our recovery; this is an attitude of indifference or intolerance toward spiritual principles." If we cannot use the Lord's Prayer because of its origin, why then are we using the Serenity Prayer? According to many, this prayer was written by Francis of Assisi, a Catholic saint; others say it was written by Reinhold Niebuhr, a Lutheran theologian. Either way, how Christian can you get? But it's a good prayer. We need these common prayers, prayers that even a newcomer usually knows, in order to maintain our unity.

It seems to me that it's usually the addict screaming "Unity!" who creates the most disunity. Where has our tolerance gone? There are those addicts who tell us we must quit smoking cigarettes and quit drinking coffee in order to find "true" recovery. That's how they did it. It worked for them, so the rest of us must follow their lead. Excuse me,

but isn't this *Narcotics Anonymous*? It's not *Smokers Anonymous*, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, *Overeaters Anonymous*, or *Shoppers Anonymous*. We all have our issues to deal with, and we can share how we are dealing with them at meetings and at "coffee" after the meeting, but your issues are not necessarily my issues. I plan to stop smoking some day (in God's time, not mine, and certainly not yours), but caffeine isn't an issue for me. I have my issues, my character defects, and my program of Twelve Steps to deal with those issues and defects. That program is *Narcotics Anonymous*, and I love NA.

I love the Twelve Traditions as well, and I have faith that NA will survive. I accept the fact that you will not work the steps in the same manner that I do, and I have faith that you can recover, also. Spiritual principles are spiritual principles.

"The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using." Period. Where, then, is the tolerance for the newcomer, fresh out of a treatment center where they are required to identify as addict-alcoholics, codependants, adult children, overeaters, sex addicts, etc? Let's teach them by example, and show them by our love and tolerance that they too can "stop using, lose the desire to use, and find a better way of life."

"We must keep our fellowship pure!" I hear this time and time again. If you do not believe that everyone at one of our dances is a member of NA, can't you at least think of them as potential members? If they are welcomed, our fellowship only grows.

Where is faith, when a tradition is "violated" (I hate that word) by a radio

show that uses NA literature to imply that they are connected with NA? Accept your brothers and sisters in recovery and let go of intolerance. We have the disease of addiction in common, but we are individuals; we've lived individual lives. Be tolerant of my program and my character defects, and I'll be tolerant of yours. Keep the faith, baby. NA will survive. Peace.

MM, Iowa

My recovery, my program

We hear a variety of conversations, both inside and outside our meetings, about "program." What is program? We hear about our program, your program, the NA program, and the other fellowship's program. We hear people talking about belonging to a program, having a program, and working a program. But what is a program? The dictionary defines a program as "a plan of what is to be done."

As I understand it, the NA Fellowship has a plan. This plan consists of Twelve Steps, a list of twelve suggestions, principles, beliefs, actions, or combinations thereof. Whatever term I choose to use to identify the Twelve Steps is irrelevant. The word "program" works for this plan. The NA Twelve Steps make up a program that

has been designed to help addicts face life on its own terms on a daily basis without the use of drugs. It has been designed to help the addict have the obsession and the compulsion to use drugs removed, and to find and maintain a healthier lifestyle.

I recently had an opportunity to hear a recovering addict express concern about how we sometimes get off-track in public-information speaker engagements. During these engagements, we are usually talking to potential newcomers or individuals who know very little about NA or recovery from the disease of addiction. I believe our responsibility is to carry the message of NA to these events, not the message of our recovery from growing up in unhealthy family environments, or how we deal with our sex and relationship problems, or that we attend two or three other twelve-step programs. I have to remind myself that we are talking to people who are expecting to hear about recovery from the disease of addiction and remember that all I wanted when I came through the doors was to stop using drugs. The rest came later.

I need to remind myself from time to time what it was like for me in the beginning. I remember when I got that first rush of gratitude for being clean, and how much the NA program meant to me. I wanted to shout it from the rooftops. I wanted to give it all to everyone I knew who needed it. I tried, too. I also remember that it didn't work. None of those people followed me to a meeting. The same thing applies when sharing the NA message with a newcomer or any other interested person. We need to carry the NA message in a very clear and simple

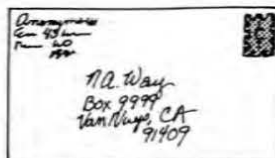
form and allow God to manage the timing of everyone's recovery.

I sometimes find myself getting confused about the difference between the NA program and my personal program of recovery. The use of the NA Twelve Steps is but a small part of my overall well-being. Though I identify the Twelve Steps as a small part, they are the most important part because they are the foundation of my well-being. They are the platform on which I choose to rebuild my life. Like all structures, unless it has a solid foundation, it will crumble in time.

I have grown beyond just staying clean today. Through following the program of the Twelve Steps of *Narcotics Anonymous*, the obsession and compulsion to use have been removed from me. My style of living has improved and become healthier. Today I am clean and serene and working on becoming just a little bit better than I was yesterday. I have a strong desire to be healthy in all areas of my life. I work on my physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being on a daily basis and in God's time. This is my recovery program, of which NA is the foundation but which also includes many other tools on which NA has no opinion. NA teaches me to be honest, open-minded, and willing to use those tools that my Higher Power provides for me to deal with the daily ups and downs of life, both past and present. Through honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness we will grow. We can do together what I can't do alone. I thank you all for my experience, strength, and hope with the fellowship.

Anonymous

From our readers



Working on anger

For me, anger has been a particularly hard defect to work on. It was something I had woven into every aspect of my behavior. More than just a release for my frustration, anger was a way for me to manipulate others. With anger I could keep people at bay, and then I could do my own thing without intervention. The threat of anger and various degrees of anger was a fine-tuned skill in my toolbox for life. For me anger was a symbol of power, and the demonstration of it was a right reserved only for the powerful.

From time to time, my anger would create problems in my life. Again and again I was warned and told to curb my anger. Invariably I'd stifle my anger in one setting, then overreact in another, blowing everything totally out of proportion, often hurting those close to me. My failures led me to spend a lot of effort on damage control. I was often surprised at how angry I would get and how quickly it would happen, and I wouldn't even be sure why. At one point I had things so backward that I thought my anger was brought on by other people and was therefore not my fault. Trying not to be angry was like trying to build walls around an explosion.

To deal with my anger I used the same approach our program taught me for my addiction. Quit first, change the behavior, trust my Higher Power, then let understanding come through revelations over a period of time. I'd substituted one drug for another in my

using; quitting drugs meant the disease would trade off substances for behavior. When I quit using, some behaviors got better and some dug in deeper. I was not able to work on anger by trying to be patient. Patience was one of those walls trying to contain what I knew was going to blow up anyway. No amount of psychological understanding was going to change my behavior by itself. By itself, knowledge and understanding of why I got angry just left me frustrated and ashamed after the fact. What I've learned is that addiction does affect all aspects of my life, with or without drugs. It manifests itself in my behavior, judgment, and feelings. Our program is not just a trade-off for our disease; instead, it is a God-inspired release from addiction in all its forms.

Using a structured approach of dealing with the behavior in the same context in which it occurs has proven successful for me. I started repeating the words "not angry" to myself regularly. Whenever I sensed tension, surprise, or anything that might set me off, I'd repeat to myself the words "not angry." At first, this gave me the will to back down after my anger had already surfaced. With practice, I found myself able to catch my anger and calm myself as it was happening. Then, over time, I was able to anticipate my anger and head it off before it displayed itself. I was surprised when a situation that used to make me angry didn't. In short, I had actually begun to experience a fundamental change. I could

observe this, and I didn't have to convince myself of it—it just was. It was a relief to discover that anger did not have to control me.

When my inner fear of anger started to subside, I began to see some things differently. The pamphlet, *The Triangle of Self-Obsession*, led me to understand anger as self-serving resentment or self-centered fear. If anger was self-centered fear, then I could ask myself calmly what I was afraid of. To be honest most of the time I didn't know or the response didn't seem to fit the question. What did work was to approach anger as manipulation (which it was for me) and check my motives. This angle brought the first real answers. I was then able to start changing my behavior. I avoided circumstances that would encourage manipulation.

I try not to get too wrapped up in the psychology, though, because I know I'd rationalize myself into justification and then I'd be worse off. Continuing to say "not angry" still helps. For me, the simplest wording is important because it states what I'm striving for with the fewest number of words.

After the first few "biggies" were out of the way, the work became much less specific. It does seem our character and style choices do affect each other. Our changed behavior can uncover defects we hadn't noticed before and highlight subtleties of old defects. I spent six months looking for and noting some of the subtle side effects of my anger, and then felt beset with results and choices that seemed no better than what I'd started with. The perspective gained from sharing is a tremendous asset during these epiphanies of hopelessness. Often I'm the last one to realize how much I have grown. With each improvement in behavior I not only became more willing for God to

remove the shortcoming, I also became more discriminating about my behavior. Confidants and my sponsor helped me to find balance and have some compassion and patience with myself.

Working on anger has also meant having to let go of a lot of feelings, resentments, and fears, but I'm not always able to let go as quickly as I'd like to do. A lot of my frustration from working on character defects has come from trying to plan the results or having expectations of what the results should be. Sometimes, this frustration causes my willingness to falter. I have to realize again that my focusing on results means I am seeking to control the outcome. My frustration is born of my fear that God's will may not satisfy my expectations. Our Basic Text describes fear as a lack of faith. This leads me to realize that my job is to do the footwork to become entirely ready. By working on my behavior rather than all the whys, what ifs, and outcomes, it has become easier for me to focus on my part and let Higher Power make the changes in me.

VS, Oregon

Speaking of service

Cleaning was one of the ways I made things alright when I had hurt people because of my drug addiction. I would clean the house or apartment in which I was living until it sparkled, and I thought that somehow made everything okay. I was indignant when it didn't work.

I thank my God for the opportunity to be of service in Narcotics Anonymous. To give to a fellowship and not feel that I owe but instead am giving a gift to the folks who saved my life is an astonishing turn-around. I am glad I can see that about myself.

Service has a lot of advantages besides the obvious. In the very beginning of my recovery, it gave me a reason to stay after the meeting and watch the circles of people hugging, laughing, and talking to each other while I washed an ashtray, put a chair away, cleaned the coffeepot, or scrubbed the floor. I didn't have to talk to anyone, but I could still soak up that feeling of togetherness before I got too fearful and had to leave. Putting down tables by myself got me attention from the men for a while. I desperately needed those kinds of strokes at the time. They were all I could identify as important. I had no idea that it was an inside job and that I could make myself happy.

I read everything I could get my hands on regarding the program—the stories, the history, everything except “How It Works”; that took me some time to get to. After a while, I became secretary and started sharing what I thought. I didn't know what I felt except anger. Showing up at the same meeting every week and being responsible to a whole bunch of people was a new way of doing things for me. In the past, I had been the one who would commit to several different people and then break all of those commitments. I would have to hide away, loaded, angry, and not caring at all, feeling nothing.

It is phenomenal that the service structure in Narcotics Anonymous works even when we are in control. God lives in NA and NA lives within me today.

PS, California

Spirituality and spare ribs

After my regular Friday night meeting tonight, I went to my favorite Chinese restaurant to get some spare ribs for a late night snack. I haven't been to a meeting since last Sunday. I just got home, and my emotions are so strong that I'm willing to delay the gratification of eating the ribs in order to write down my feelings. Each day I missed a meeting this past week, the noise of my own thinking became louder and more distracting. I delved into my work, which felt good, but when I left work I went home instead of to a meeting. Just sitting and listening to other recovering addicts tonight restored much of my spirituality and serenity, so much so that as I stood waiting for my ribs, memories of my father came flooding through me.

He loved discovering new Chinese restaurants, and considered a good one a valuable find. I remember that shortly before he died, in a rare show of affection, he took me to one of his favorites. The smell of this restaurant brought all this back, and I wept. Anger had been my main emotion when I thought of him until tonight. I miss him so very much. I miss my father.

What has this got to do with Narcotics Anonymous and the importance of making meetings? Everything! I took drugs to avoid facing unpleasant emotions. Making meetings and listening to others gives me the courage and the peace of mind to feel and accept my own emotions.

NA showed me how to stop using drugs. It has taken me three years to grieve my father's passing. Tonight I learned that the ability to grieve is a God-given necessity, and so is active participation in recovery.

LF, New York

Comin' up



ALBERTA: Nov. 5-7, 1993; Alsask Regional Convention; Red Deer; hotline (403) 342-1444; Alsask Reg. Conv, Central Alberta ASC, PO Box 472, Red Deer, Alberta, T5N 4G1

AUSTRALIA: Oct. 1-3, 1993; The Combined Sydney Area Convention; Glebe High School, Taylor St, Glebe; info (02) 565 1875 or (02) 560 2213

BAHAMAS: Nov. 5-7, 1993; 6th Bahamas Area Convention; Paradise Island, Nassau; info (809) 361-4292 or (809) 326-2819; rsvn.s (809) 363-2011; fax (809) 363-3900; Celebration VI, PO Box SS 5934, Nassau, Bahamas,

BRITISH COLUMBIA: Sep. 24-26, 1993; 14th British Columbia Regional Convention; NanOOSE Bay; info (604) 754-3673 (evenings) or (604) 758-8048 (days); BCRCNA 14, Box 118, 67 Victoria Crescent, Nanaimo, BC, V9R 5B9

COLORADO: Oct. 22-24, 1993; 7th Annual Colorado Regional Convention; Glenwood Springs; info (303) 894-0450; rsvn.s (800) 332-2233; CRCNA VII, PO Box 2115, Englewood, CO 80150

CONNECTICUT: Sep. 3-5, 1993; Connecticut River Valley Twelve Step Retreats; Ivoryton; A closed retreat; info (203) 347-3324; Retreat, PO Box 1056, Middletown, CT 06457-1056

FLORIDA: Sep. 24-26, 1993; 5th Annual River Coast Area Campout; Hernando County; info (904) 799-5528 or (904) 799-1690; River Coast ASC, PO Box 10053, Brooksville, FL 34601

2) Oct. 7-10, 1993; 1st South Florida Regional Convention; Miami Beach; info (305) 651-5024 or (305) 791-7743; SFRCA I, PO Box 70155, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307

3) Oct. 15-17, 1993; Awareness Weekend for PI, Helpline, H&I, Literature Review and Conference; Melbourne; info (407) 969-7070; FRSO, 709-B Brookhaven Drive, Orlando, FL 32803

4) Nov. 11-14, 1993; 12th Palm Coast Area Convention; West Palm Beach; info (407) 686-6760; rsvn.s (407) 689-6400; Palm Coast ASC, PO Box 3151, W. Palm Beach, FL 33402

HAWAII: Nov. 4-7, 1993; 2nd Hawaii Regional Convention; info (808) 329-6956; Hawaii Reg. Conv, PO Box 461, Kailua-Kona, HI 96745

ILLINOIS: Sep. 2-5, 1993; 23rd World Convention for Narcotics Anonymous; info (818) 780-3951; WCC, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409

INDIANA: Sep. 18, 1993; 7th Annual Gratitude & Unity Dance; Concord Center, 1310 South Meridan, Indianapolis, IN; Central Indiana ASC, PO Box 661, Indianapolis, IN 46206

KENTUCKY: Sep. 24-26, 1993; 6th Annual Western Kentucky Area Convention; Golden Pond, KY; info (502) 898-6054; WKANA, PO Box 2866, Paducah, KY 42002-2866

LOUISIANA: Oct. 29-31, 1993; 1st New Orleans Area Convention; rsvn.s (800) 627-4500; info (504) 254-2791; New Orleans Convention, PO Box 52212, New Orleans, LA 70152-2212

MEXICO: Oct. 15-17, 1993; 1st Baja California Convention; info (66) 80-90-80 or US 011-52 (66) 80-90-80; rsvn.s (800) 582-3762; BCNAC, 1329 Third Avenue #116, Chula Vista, CA 91911-4396

MICHIGAN: Oct. 29-31, 1993; 2nd Kalamazoo Area Convention; KACNA II, PO Box 50822, Kalamazoo, MI 49005

MINNESOTA: Sep. 10-12, 1993; 9th Annual Camp Vermilion Recovery Retreat Weekend; info (218) 720-3800; Northern Lights NA, PO Box 16934, Duluth, MN 55816-6934

NEBRASKA: Sep. 17-19, 1993; 10th Annual Nebraska Regional Convention; McCook; rsvn.s (308) 345-3700; info (308) 345-5839; NRC-10, PO Box 633, McCook, NE 69001

NEW YORK: Sep. 10-12, 1993; 4th Recovery in the Catskills; Su Casa, 99 Mill Road, Accord NY 12404 rsvn.s (914) 626-2036

2) Oct. 29-31, 1993; 4th Annual Multi-Regional Learning Weekend; New York City; info (908) 225-9353 or (718) 891-5324; rsvn.s (800) 231-0405

NORTH CAROLINA: Sep. 10-12, 1993; 2nd Central Piedmont Area Convention; Salisbury; rsvn.s (704) 638-0311; info (704) 278-9536; Central Piedmont ASC, PO Box 282, Landis, NC 28088

OHIO: Sep. 10-12, 1993; 7th Serenity in the Woods; Camp Campbell Gard; info (513) 829-3915 or (513) 422-9505; HAMASCNA, PO Box 18430, Fairfield, OH 45018

2) Jan. 7-9, 1994; 5th Central Ohio Area Convention; Columbus, Ohio; info (614) 888-7615 or (614) 252-2501; rsvn.s (800) 405-4329; COACNA V, PO Box 8013, Columbus, OH 43201

PENNSYLVANIA: Sep. 10-12, 1993; First Williamsport Area NA Convention; Williamsport; rsvn.s (717) 326-9701; info (717) 321-0356

2) Nov. 12-14, 1993; 11th Tri-State Regional Convention; rsvn.s (800) 445-8667; info (412) 391-5276; TSSRO, Inc., PO Box 110217, Pittsburgh, PA 15232

QUEBEC: Oct. 8-10, 1993; 6th Quebec Regional Convention; St-Hyacinthe; info (514) 327-2297; QRCNA 6, CP 51047 Centre Domane, 3365 De Granby, Montreal, Quebec, H1N 3T8

SOUTH CAROLINA: Nov. 18-21, 1993; 11th Serenity Festival; Myrtle Beach; rsvn.s (800) 845-0658; Planning Committee, PO Box 1198, Myrtle Beach, SC 29578

2) Jan. 28-30, 1994; 14th Annual Upper South Carolina Anniversary Convention; info (803) 282-0109; USCANA XIV, PO Box 4407, Greenville, SC 29608

TENNESSEE: Nov. 24-28, 1993; 11th Annual Volunteer Regional Convention; Nashville; info (615) 883-7501 or (615) 228-3133; VRC XI, PO Box 121961, Nashville, TN 37212

TEXAS: Oct. 8-10, 1993; 1st Fort Worth Area Convention; Fort Worth; info (817) 921-4414 or (817) 429-5843; Convention Committee, PO Box 20093, Fort Worth, TX 76102

VERMONT: Nov. 5-7, 1993; 4th Champlain Valley Area Convention; info (802) 863-2620 or (802) 865-3657; CVACNA 4, PO Box 64714, Burlington, VT 05401

WASHINGTON: Sep. 24-26, 1993; North Puget Sound Area 10th Anniversary; Oak Harbor; info (206) 428-4385; North Puget Sound ASC, PO Box 1001, Mount Vernon, WA 98273

2) Oct. 22-24, 1993; 16th Pacific Northwest Convention; PNWCNA XIV, PO Box 5233, Everett, WA 98201

WISCONSIN: Oct. 15-17, 1993; 10th Annual Wisconsin State Convention; rsvn.s (800) 558-9573; info (414) 549-0825; WSNAC X, PO Box 4010, Waukesha, WI 53187-4010

WYOMING: Sep. 24-26, 1993; 2nd Annual Wyoming Unity Day; Rawlins; info (307) 789-7746; Unity Day, PO Box 2792, Rock Springs, WY 82902

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TWELVE TRADITIONS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA 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 NA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every NA 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. NA, 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 NA 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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Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

What is Narcotics Anonymous?

NA is a nonprofit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs has 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

