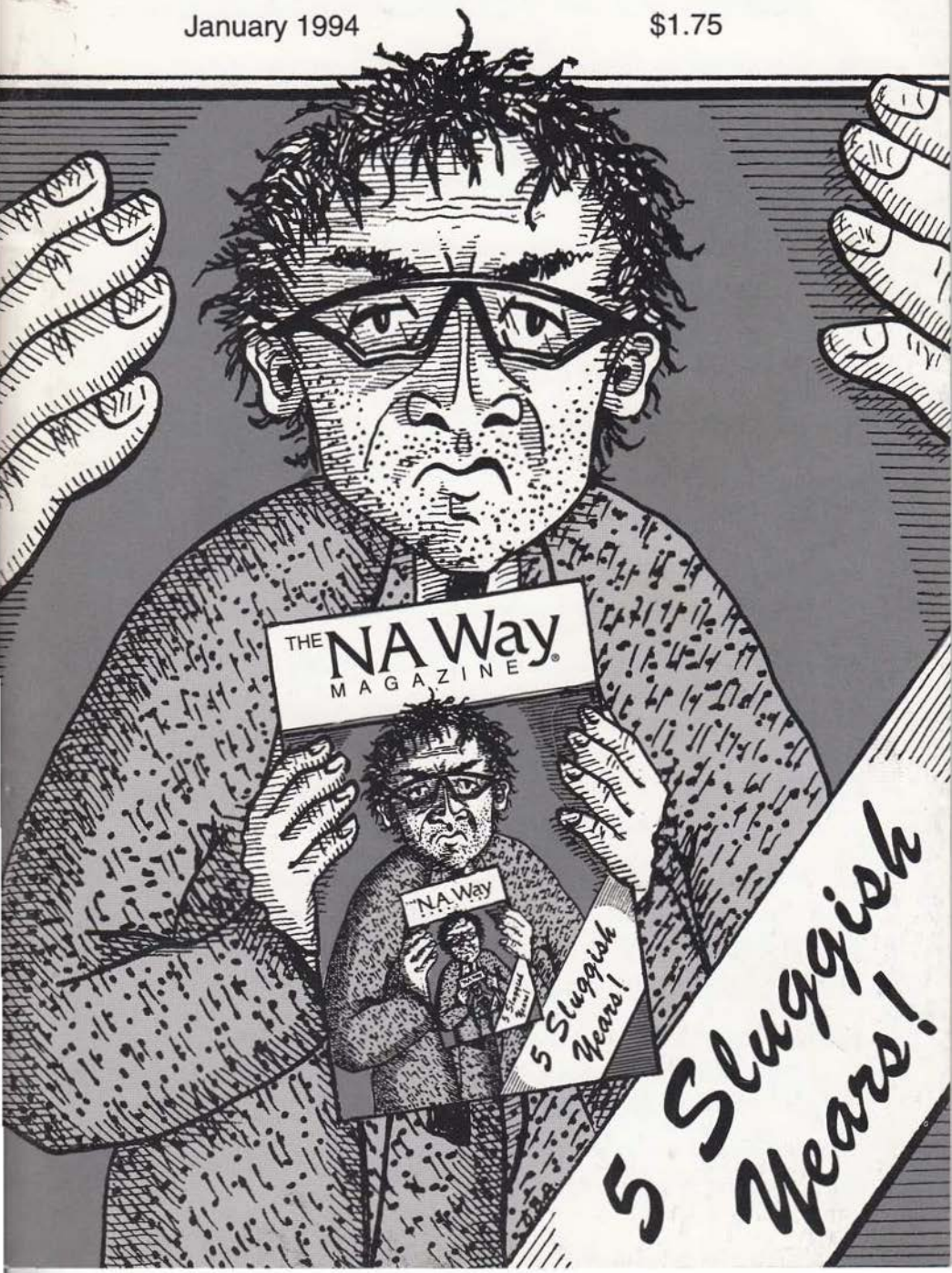


THE NA Way MAGAZINE®

January 1994

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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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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.

The NA Way Magazine presents the experiences and opinions of individual members of Narcotics Anonymous. The opinions expressed are not to be attributed to Narcotics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by Narcotics Anonymous, The NA Way Magazine, or World Service Office, Inc.

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From the editor



A tribute to the home group

Though we know he'll hate it, we're making Slugg the center of attention this month. (Cheer up, Slugg! You don't have to endure the spotlight alone.) This month marks the five-year anniversary of the Home Group comic strip. As a result, we are featuring a retrospective on the Home Group which includes reminiscences from the never-before-heard-from creative duo—identified as XX and XY—who bring Slugg and his friends to life each month.

I was talking to XY the other day and told him I thought Slugg had become a part of NA's culture. "Germ culture, you mean?" he replied, adding that he thought I was exhibiting my usual tendency to overdramatize.

But I haven't changed my mind. The "Home Group" characters have begun to slip into our language. Our contributors have begun to refer to them in their articles, usually in the tone one uses to speak of a dear friend. To top it off, one of our friends recently mailed us a convention flier from the Midwest featuring Slugg himself.

Slugg, Gretta, Jake, Robert, Serena, Marge, and Eddie—sometimes they make us laugh out loud, sometimes just smile in recognition—best of all, they usually teach us a lesson about the importance of developing camaraderie, that sense of community that is the essence of belonging to a home group.

Many of you have contributed articles about your home group, and we've been saving them especially for this issue of *The NA Way*. We're pleased to feature

home groups this month; we hope you enjoy it.

Motion #39

Again this month, we are printing your views on motion #39. To date, we've received about a dozen letters on this topic; some are still in the review process.

If you have thoughts about motion #39 and haven't yet written an article, we'd like to encourage you to do so. It's very important that we as a fellowship discuss this issue thoroughly over the next two years so that our elected representatives will know how NA as a whole feels about changing our steps and traditions.

Writers wanted

Recently we sent letters to over a thousand NA members who have contributed articles in the past. The letters we sent invited our past contributors to try their hand at writing for us again.

Although the number of people to whom we sent letters is equal to about one-fourth of our current subscriber list, we suspect that many of our readers aren't aware of the ongoing need for stories.

The NA Way Magazine staff are always happy to work with new and unpublished writers. Articles for "Meeting in Print" or "From our Readers" must focus on recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. Articles for "Viewpoint" must express opinions only on issues of concern to NA as a whole.

We'd like to hear from you.

CS, Associate Editor

Going home

Last weekend I went home. Although I saw my family of origin, that is not the home that I am speaking of. After a year of living away from where I got clean, I went back to visit at an area function. It was wonderful to see the faces of my friends from early recovery.

I miss "my" people. The ones who hunted me down when I stopped looking for them. The ones who helped me get strong enough to pick up that five-hundred-pound telephone receiver. And yes, those who loved me when I spent the group's money when I had my first treasurer's position. The sponsor who nurtured me in my darkest hours and taught me how to laugh at myself. The members of my first home group where I put Denilah to shame. The ones with whom I've done clean-up detail after a campout as well as those I've gone into prisons with as a member of H&I. Those who watched me collect my chips and medallions and held me as I cried. And especially those who endured some of my antics at ASC.

Today I can honestly say that when I think of the "good ol' days," I am reflecting upon my first few years clean. I am grateful to the

God of my understanding that I was able to experience these events. I am also glad that the Twelfth Tradition (and a small working knowledge of it) has gotten in the way of a few petty resentments that I might have held through the years.

Please don't misunderstand, I am grateful for my new friends in recovery. It was great to move away from where I found recovery and find that my network of fellow addicts had saved me a chair. They were even willing to include me in service work. It was wonderful to be the new kid on the block.

Most of all, I want to thank the people from both areas for helping me to feel "a part of" rather than "apart from." Thanks for enduring the comparisons that I've put you through in the process of adjustment. Most of all, thanks for being there for me.

LK, Indiana



My home group

I have heard many speakers and many people say that if your home group is not the best in the world then you need to change it. For a long time I agreed with that philosophy. Then something happened—a new experience in recovery—that changed my belief.

I have been in the program since 1982. For many years I lived in large towns, which were close to even bigger cities. The type of NA meetings I went to had plenty of members with plenty of enthusiasm toward recovery. I have always loved Narcotics Anonymous.

Four years ago I moved away from my enthusiastic NA community to a small town with little NA participation. I found that I did not think my home group was the best home group in the world. In fact there were many times I didn't want to attend because the meeting wasn't the same; it wasn't as big; the members weren't as involved.

I was in a dilemma because there was no apparent way for me to join a different home group. The next-closest group was fifty miles away. Because of my family commitments, making that group my home group was not practical.

I found myself having to face my issues. I had to let go and let the people in my home group grow according to their Higher Powers' plans, not mine. I learned the hard way that I teach people by example, not by telling them the way things should be. I am sure I ran off some willing participants with my closed-mindedness.

I eventually made a decision to focus on my recovery. I applied the principles of the First Tradition in my own life: My recovery depends on NA unity. I had a responsibility to that unity. I had a responsibility to be a part of the solution. I stopped fighting; I surrendered.

I began working the steps with the people I sponsored instead of haranguing them about how NA should be. I shared about my personal recovery at meetings. I let go of much that I disagreed with.

Today my home group has several members approaching two years of recovery. We have several people with one year clean and many newcomers. There is an enthusiasm in my home group about Narcotics Anonymous that makes me warm inside. I see people recovering and getting better. Many members are organizing campouts, potluck suppers, and much more. There is a real sense of fellowship. Today there is very little controversy.

Instead of choosing a new home group I became a part of the home group I was in already. Today I am grateful to say that my home group is the best home group in the world.

Anonymous

Belonging

When I was a child, I belonged to a lot of groups. I took dance lessons, flute lessons, played bugle in a drum and bugle corp, and was in church whenever the doors were open, but I never felt as if I belonged no matter where I was. Today I belong to Narcotics Anonymous. I feel like I belong. I act like I belong. I do belong. I knew I was in the right place from the beginning; I don't remember ever questioning my right to be here.

The first meeting I went to was like one of our public service announcements. I had to walk down a long hallway to a room at the end. I chose to sit in a comfortable stuffed chair in the corner. Someone told me that I was in Lisa's chair. They laughed but I didn't get the joke. I moved to a metal chair on the other side of the room. Today I say I earned my seat in Narcotics Anonymous, but not a specific chair, of course!

That first meeting was a long time ago. This Saturday I will celebrate nine years clean with my home group. This is a new home group for me, since we recently moved to this area of the state. But it still feels like home. I've been a member of four different home groups since I got

clean. Each new group has taught me something about being at home.

I belong because I choose to belong. I keep coming back because I enjoy making a home for others to come to and belong. We don't need to be without a home any longer. We have each other.

I can go to meetings now and not hear anything profound, or even new. But the feeling I have for the newest member of the NA family is the same as welcoming a new baby into my birth family. Hope springs eternal!

It's not a perfect home. Home groups have character defects just like individuals. I believe a group can work the steps as well as the individual can. We struggle with our powerlessness, we turn things over, we discuss our problems, we try to improve. Most of all we try to see our Higher Power at work in every meeting.

I've seen many addicts who have significant clean time leave the rooms. Some even stay clean; they just stop coming to meetings. I am concerned by this because I know so many other addicts could have benefited from their presence if they had stayed. The rooms aren't the same without them. Narcotics Anonymous isn't the same without each and every one of us being there for each other and the addicts yet to come.

Bring your body, your mind will follow. See you there!

KAG, Georgia

My part

I came to NA one day, not knowing what to say or what to do. I sat there quietly, just waiting for someone to say "Get out," or "You don't belong here and we don't want your kind here."

I waited, but no one said those words to me. I did hear some people who I had never seen before say, "We will love you until you learn to love yourself," and, "You never have to use again if you don't want to." They told me to come back! Didn't they know who I was? What about my background?

As I sat there at my first meeting, I started to feel better. Wanting to feel like that again, I decided to return the following day.

I came in and sat down. There was a person speaking who talked about things that had happened to me. That person talked about becoming "a part of," not "apart from." The speaker went on to share about how to be successful at staying clean: make sure you help with all of the things that go on in NA.

I thought about this statement in relation to me. What could I do to make NA better for all of us?

I began with setting up the chairs and making the coffee. I had wondered who did all of this when I came to that first meeting.

Was this what I was supposed to do, or was there more? I heard acronyms and words like GSR, RSR, world service committee, regional H&I chairperson. "Who are these people?" I wondered. I didn't know that there was more to this fellowship than the meetings. I thought that those few people who had allowed me to come in were all that there was to this.

Those people let me stumble through the reading of "Why Are We Here?" When I made the mistake of saying something about another fellowship, some spoke up and shared with me that we were "clean and serene"; that when we identified as addicts we included all forms of using.

I wondered if I was supposed to let new people in on this thing. Should I go over there and give them a hug? Should I buy them a Basic Text? Has anyone invited them for coffee later? What is my responsibility? I wonder if they feel like I used to feel when I first got here? Do they know where the meeting is tomorrow? I hope they keep coming back.

I think I will go give them a key tag, a meeting directory, my phone number, a smile, a ride, and some encouragement. I might even tell them they don't have to use.

When I take my inventory, at least I can say, "I did my part."

MG, Indiana

Distant, not alone

Hello family! It's a beautiful day in Panama, my new home. I'm a city girl from Virginia, and I had never lived anywhere else. In addition, this is the first time I've found myself a loner member of Narcotics Anonymous. Through living here, I've experienced gratitude and humility on a level unknown to me in the States.

The desperation and devastation that brought me to NA continues to be a vivid image in my mind even after four years clean. I hope to always remember what it was like. I experienced three years of institutions and chronic relapsing before I surrendered.

My surrender came along with a glimmer of understanding of our First Step. I admitted I couldn't do this on my own. I needed help from people who had been where I was, people who were staying clean, people who knew a little more about recovery than I did. I was heard. People understood my plea. People were there to help me, to show me it works. I am grateful for those painful, enriching experiences I endured in my early recovery.

During the past year, God has allowed me to experience life in ways that I never had before. The last time I wrote to *The NA Way*, I shared how I had become homeless, jobless,

and penniless. It was one of those ordeals that I never thought would happen to me! With the help of God, the program of Narcotics Anonymous, and some valuable members of the fellowship, I made it through. God lovingly allowed me to fall more than once. There were times when I had just about given up hope. I had never before weathered personal humility at this level. Nonetheless, I was given a starting point and I became willing to work from there. My destination was unknown to me, although I knew I was striving for better conditions in my life. I got a job, found a roommate, and saved money. I survived, learning in the process that I'm not exempt from life on life's terms.

Throughout this process, I enhanced my relationship with the God of my understanding. As a result, God has blessed my life in ways I had not expected. God has shown me that I can be comfortable in my own skin today. That was not the case in my active addiction. I remember always having to have noise—a television or radio blaring—so that I wouldn't have to be alone with myself. I had to have a way to avoid hearing the madness going on inside my head.

Today, I can be comfortable in a room where there is total silence because there is no madness going on inside my head. You can't put a price on the serenity with which I am blessed thanks to God and Narcotics Anonymous.

As a little girl, all I ever wanted to be when I grew up was a wife and mother. Other kids wanted to be doctors, lawyers, nurses, etc. I had a vision and had no doubts as to what

I wanted. Through working the steps, I have learned that what I thought was a desire to be a wife and mother was only a cover for desperately wanting to be loved.

When my desires are not in sync with God's will for me, pain is sure to follow. It has taken me time to comprehend the meaning of love. I've learned to love myself unconditionally. To me, "unconditional love" means that I don't live my life according to your standards, I am entitled to my own. For years I've been saying that I only have to answer to the person looking back at me in the mirror. Now I live that belief. I learned how to allow others to love me, even when I didn't feel deserving. I learned to depend on a Power greater than myself.

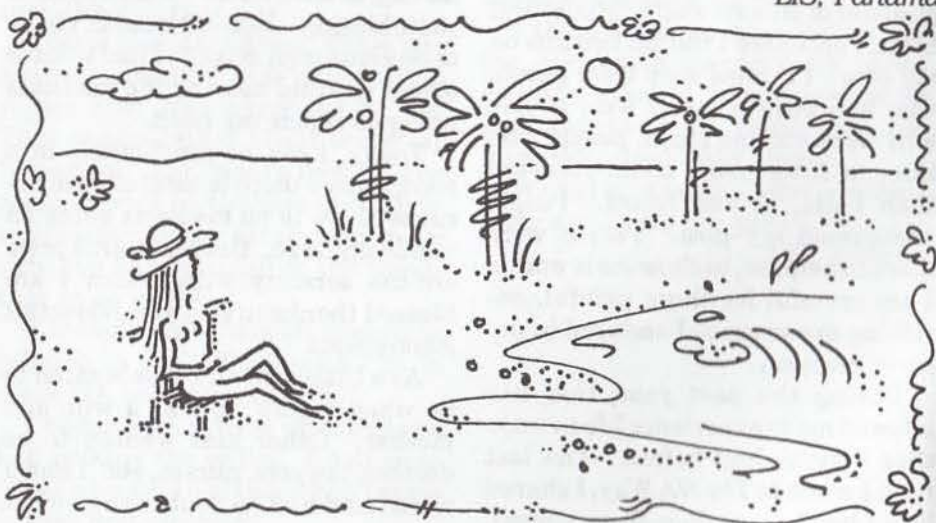
As a result of the lessons presented to me and my commitment to recovery—no matter what—God has enriched my life once again. The blessings I receive consistently surpass my expectations. I have a partner in life whom I recently married.

We became friends through this fellowship. Years ago we would never have entertained the thought of being married, but we found our goals for the future identical and our desires in sync with God's will, which brought us together. Miracles happen, and we are living our dreams. I am glad that I learned to love myself, to allow someone else to love me, and to depend on a Power greater than myself who had much in store for me.

My surroundings may be different than those to which I am accustomed. I may be temporarily distant from the fellowship, but I am never really alone. Recovery has given me what active addiction didn't come close to giving me. I don't have to live with desperation or devastation, as I did in the beginning of this beautiful process.

Thank you for letting me share some of my experience, strength, and hope. Thank you for welcoming me into this fellowship. It may be a small world, but NA is unquestionably a big family!

LIS, Panama



“So, you think you need a sponsor...”

Probably every one of us in NA (at least those of us who actually have a sponsor today) can recall that transcendental moment when we looked that certain someone in the eye, screwed up our courage, put on our most willing face, and blurted out, “Will you be my sponsor?” like we even had a clue what we were asking for.

Well, the man I asked to sponsor me looked deeply into my eyes with love, compassion, and understanding and answered “Yes, oh yes! I’d love to be your sponsor!”....Not! Honest to God he looked me square in the eyes and told me, “No,” a flat-out “No.” No Way. Not Now. Not Ever. No.

So, like any self-absorbed, self-obsessed newcomer who just happened to be suffering from a near-terminal case of “hip, slick, and cool,” I ignored his response. Honest, I really did. I couldn’t imagine anyone not wanting to work with me! After all, I was obviously the most motivated, open-minded, honest, and willing addict to ever grace an NA meet-

ing with his presence, and anyone should feel honored that I would want him to be my sponsor. (Whatever this sponsor thing was, anyway.)

So, I ignored his negative response and continued to pester him with my hip, slick, and cool ways. I began showering him with copious amounts of self-obsession, self-deception, delusions of grandeur, and as much mendacity (look it up in your Webster’s, I did) as any human being could ever want in his life.

Weird, huh? Funny thing is, it’s been about a year now, and he’s still working with me in my recovery. He also won’t let me forget how I was when I first came into this program and first asked him to sponsor me. He tells everyone else, too (but that’s another story), about how hip, slick, and cool I was when I got here. I was slicker than whale snot, hipper than God, and cooler than the south end of a northbound penguin on a polar ice flow. The ice-man. No sweat. Doin’ it. Move over Clint Eastwood and let a real man show you how it’s done. Terminal.

Now, you may be wondering what character defect my sponsor possessed that allowed him to continue to work with me even after he told me, in no uncertain terms, to beat it. Hit the road. Go away. Scram! Good question. In fact, I asked him the very same thing a couple of months ago. All he had to say was that it was my persistence; I just wouldn’t go away.

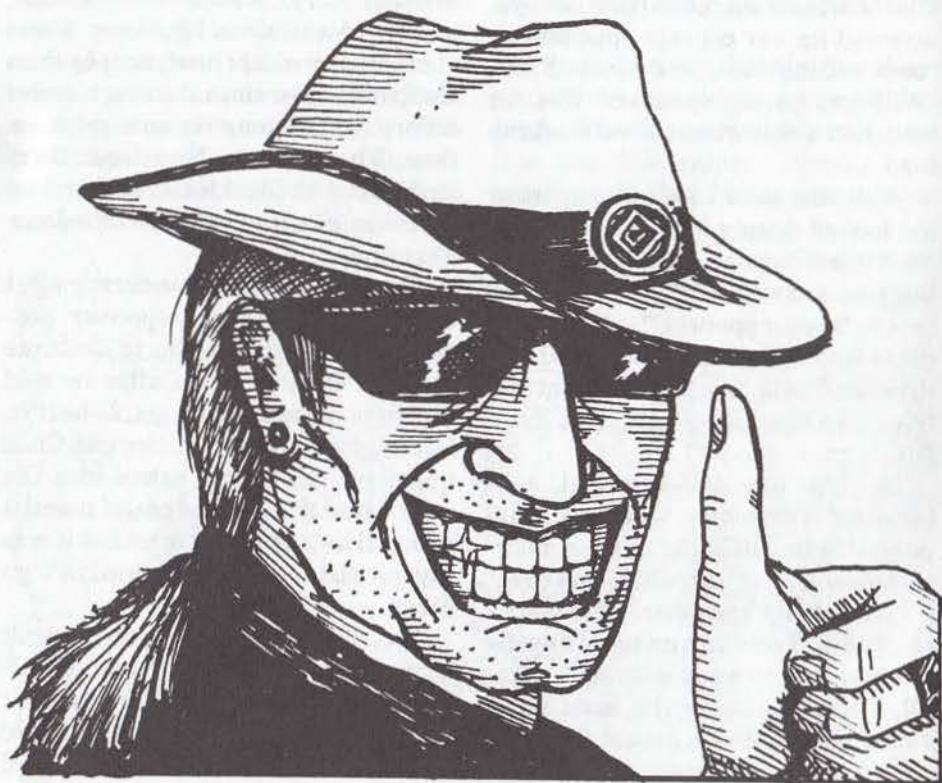
You see, getting a sponsor isn’t some long, drawn-out, romantic affair to begin with. Gosh darn it anyway, the object of your desire doesn’t even have to like you! And

surely you don't expect someone to come up to you and ask you to be their sponsee, do you? After all, if you take a look at "How it Works," you'll find that it doesn't say: "If I have what you want, and I'm willing to put forth the effort to give it to you, then I am ready to take certain steps that will enable me to cram my recovery down your throat!" (This may come as a shock to some of you, like it did to me, but that really isn't the way it's written in the Basic Text.) Getting a sponsor is strongly suggested, highly advisable, and darn near a mandatory requirement for us hip, slick, and cool types. Sure, you don't *have* to get a sponsor. Hell,

you can keep right on advising yourself like you always have. I mean it. Really. After all, look how far you brought yourself in life with your own counsel; why stop now? Probably the worst you could do is end up killing yourself. Think about that for awhile, and then hoist your tired keester up out of your chair, screw up your courage, put on your most willing face, look that certain someone you admire in recovery right in the eye, and ask away. What have you got to lose?

Take it from me. They'll probably look you right back with love and compassion and say, "Yes, oh yes! I'd love to be your sponsor!"

RU, Iowa



Message received

Who in the hell did she think she was, asking me why I cursed while sharing at my home group meeting in Central Oklahoma?

On top of that, she had the audacity to count my words. "You said seven cuss words during the meeting," she said as she walked up, shoving six fingers and a thumb in my direction.

She kept it up: "Why do you cuss?" My stomach flip-flopped. I was flabbergasted. She stood before me—unassuming, green-eyed, her arms folded, waiting for an answer.

"Foul!" I thought to myself. "This ain't no @#*\$#@ church, you know. I didn't come here to be lectured or shamed about the way I speak."

She remained before me, waiting for an answer to her question. Luckily, addicts noisily shuffled chairs and wiped down tables, unaware of my ordeal. I wanted to hide from her, but at the same time I wanted to assert myself and have a rightful cuss fit about my freedom to curse.

She softly repeated her question, "Why did you cuss during the meeting? It's not nice."

"Holy *@##!!!, she is pushing it," I thought, but my stomach released its

knot and I ended the long pause between us by remembering I was a member of Narcotics Anonymous.

"I'm trying to learn how to stop doing that," I said finally. "I will do better next time, okay?" She closed one eye and cocked her head, still holding my gaze. My answer circled in her brain and she smiled.

"Okay," she said quickly, jumping into my lap to hug me. "Can I ask you another question?" she said. "Sure," I said, without thinking. "Will you play patty-cakes with me?" she asked.

We spent the next ten minutes playing patty-cakes until her mother came and led her away, with the green-eyed girl smiling back and waving. As she disappeared from sight, I realized I do the right thing sometimes. Before NA I would have been indignant, calling the girl a rude brat, hurting her feelings for sure. But not this time.

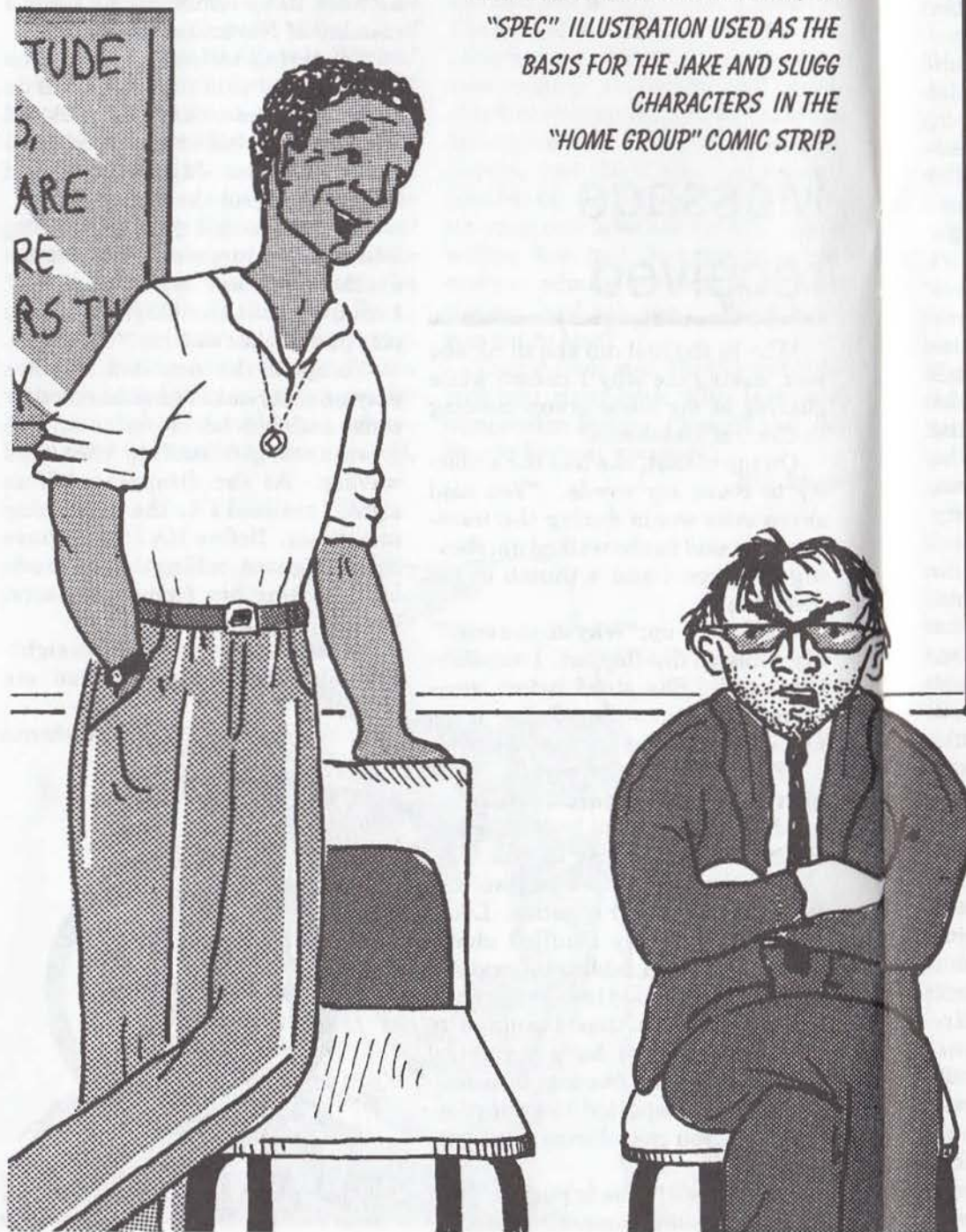
My thanks goes to Nikki, an eight-year-old woman who helped me change.

OG, Oklahoma



THANK YOU!

THIS DRAWING IS THE ORIGINAL 1988
"SPEC" ILLUSTRATION USED AS THE
BASIS FOR THE JAKE AND SLUGG
CHARACTERS IN THE
"HOME GROUP" COMIC STRIP.



Five Sluggish years

The NA Way's "Home Group" comic strip celebrates its fifth anniversary this month

Jake: Good looking, even-tempered, everyone's sponsor, 327 years of continuous abstinence, the Higher Power's golfing partner.

Slugg: The perpetually angry, the eternally resistant, the extraordinarily miserable member.

Denilah: "But NA? I'm not that bad!"

With those words, *NA Way* readers were introduced in January 1989 to a new recovery-oriented comic strip. "You probably already know these people," observed the strip writers. "You see them every week in your own home group. Now you'll be seeing them every month in *The NA Way's* new comic strip . . ."

"Home Group" development began in mid-1988 when *NA Way* editors started looking for ways to make the magazine's contents more interesting and varied. They combed their

archives of local newsletters from around the world and examined the various comic strips already being published, borrowing the story lines and characters they liked and embellishing as they went. By the time they'd finished they had seven characters and a year's worth of "Home Group" strips.

All in all, 1989 was a very funny year for *The NA Way*. Not only did Slugg make his first appearance, but a half-dozen prose humorists surfaced in the pages of the NA Fellowship's international journal. Comic strips combined with stories like "Oldtimer's Disease" and "Computerized Recovery Instrumentation" to produce strong reactions, both positive and negative.

"Our subcommittee is deeply concerned with an article," one editorial letter read. "It is the opinion of this subcommittee, after two hours of discussion, that this article . . . is a slap in the face of recovery."

On the pro side of the humor debate, another reader wrote that "when someone talks or writes in a humorous vein about" the circumstances addicts commonly encounter in recovery, "I can't help but laugh at myself. In my program, that's right up there in importance with calling my sponsor and working with newcomers."

"I am saddened by the way many addicts pick apart and analyze almost everything that is printed," wrote another *NA Way* reader. "It seems to me that too many addicts take too many things too seriously."

Even given this kind of support, the *NA Way* staff grew progressively more anxious about humor pieces in

general and the "Home Group" comic series in particular. In December 1989, the acting editor of the magazine announced the strip's suspension.

The "Home Group," however, would not die. In its short eleven-month life, the comic strip seemed to have squarely hit the funny bone of many an *NA Way* reader, building a large and loyal following. It wasn't long before numerous fan letters started arriving in the magazine's editorial offices, all containing variations on the same simple theme: "Bring back Slugg." Finally in the July 1990 issue of *The NA Way*, the "Home Group" strip returned to the pages of our fellowship's magazine, where it has appeared almost every month since.

The most recent development in the "Home Group" has been the creation of the Slugg Mugg and the "Home Group" calendar. The mug, featuring Slugg's portrait on one side (enough to put ordinary addicts off their breakfasts, one might think, but a popular seller nonetheless) and the words "Slugg Mugg" on the other, was initially manufactured in very limited quantities. First offered for sale in the February 1993 WSO *Newsline*, it was then marketed at a couple of major conventions that winter with mixed results. More than one convention-goer simply didn't recognize Slugg as a comic-strip character from *The NA Way Magazine* and wondered why a coffee cup with a picture of an ugly white guy was being sold at their fellowship event. Mug sales grew stronger after the World Service Conference that April when the sixteen-month "Home

Group" calendar was added to the *NA Way* merchandise inventory.

All told, there have been sixty "Home Group" strips produced to date, including favorites like "The Anal Retentive GSR," Denilah's divine encounter with a kiwi fruit ("Green is, like, a Godcolor"), "Slugg's Bonfire of Lust," Marge and Eddie's "First Dance," and "Jake's Dream."

Some strips will appear only in the "Home Group" calendar, mostly those considered either too risqué or too bizarre for publication in *The NA Way* itself. Watch for Slugg in "The Caustic Psychic," Robert in "Always Serene Guru," and "Denilah in Space" in the 1995 calendar being offered for sale beginning this June.

What's in store for the "Home Group"? Well, probably much the same as in *your* home group—and that, as far as we can tell, is what makes the "Home Group" comic strip such a hit in our fellowship. The joys that motivate us, the challenges that strengthen us, the doubts that plague us, the questions that puzzle us, the epiphanies of insight that enlighten us, the love that unifies us, the odd twists and turns of life and recovery in Narcotics Anonymous—these are the typical cues for comedy in the "Home Group," *The NA Way's* long-running comic strip celebrating its fifth anniversary of publication in this month's issue.

What's next? Almost anything!

"Home Group" creative duo shares a few personal impressions

We asked the two NA members who produce the "Home Group" to share a few of their thoughts on the

continuing development of *The NA Way* comic strip as we commemorate its fifth anniversary. Partly in the interests of anonymity, partly for sport, we'll identify the two simply as XX and XY.

XX: It seems like a lifetime ago, yet it could have been yesterday. I sat at a table at a recovery house, maybe five months clean. I had very little sense of who I was or what I wanted. I was just beginning to catch a hint of what self-worth was about.

The one thing I knew was that I could do art and do it well. Someone approached me and asked me to do a design for our regional convention. I was thrilled and flattered. My design stank and wasn't used, but I remember realizing then that my dream was to do art for the fellowship someday.

Sometimes you get what you ask for. Here it is seven years later and I have had the privilege of contributing artwork to NA on an area and regional level and working under contract to the WSO drawing the "Home Group" comic strip. Through providential timing, a little talent, and a lot of luck, I came to be creatively involved with the silly, exaggerated, yet very human characters found in the strip.

Call them character defects or just evidence of human nature, I believe each of the "Home Group" characters display one or another aspect of most addicts' personalities. From Slugg's cynicism to Gretta's idealism, from Marge and Eddie's innocence to Robert's perfectionism, from Jake's spirituality to Denilah's spaciness to Serena's good-natured strength, I can identify with all of them.

Regardless of whatever insight into

ourselves we may get from the antics of the "Home Group" characters, I believe the strip's true value is the opportunity it offers us to laugh at ourselves. Though our disease is deadly, recovery is sometimes a bitter pill to swallow; the combination of perspective and pleasure provided by humor makes that pill a little easier to stomach.

I believe that our sense of humor is a gift from a loving Higher Power and that laughter is truly the best medicine. My Higher Power loves it when I laugh—and the way my life goes sometimes, HP must have quite a sense of humor Itself. Though I take both my disease and my recovery seriously, I pray that I may always take myself lightly and laugh as much as possible while I still can.

Just for today, I'll embrace the Slugg within and thank him for helping me face life squarely—with a snicker.

XY: Well, enough of this long spiritual doo-doo. Why do we enjoy Slugg so damned much? Because he's *outrageous*. He says the kinds of things we all think sometimes but probably wouldn't say out loud for fear of hurting someone or giving the wrong impression.

Slugg sits in a meeting where someone's talking about hearing God speak through other people, and he says to himself, "I can identify with that. My only problem is that I *hate other people*." We read this, and our eyes grow wide, and we say to ourselves, "Omigod, am I really reading this in the international journal of the NA Fellowship?" Then we smile a twisted little smile, and we enjoy

the perverse kick we've gotten out of the whole thing, and we laugh.

And then we get it. God really does speak through other people, and the only thing preventing us from hearing God's voice is our arrogance, our ignorance, our insensitivity to others.

Truth is a kind of nasty, kind of funny, kind of bizarre kind of thing. If you find Slugg entertaining or enlightening, that's fine with me. But what I'm really grateful to Slugg for is the ability he's given me to find that nasty, funny, bizarre kernel of truth within myself and give it voice.



Newsletters



What are your resolutions?

From *Inside Connection*, the American River area newsletter: I was thinking about the way my life has changed since I have been a member of Narcotics Anonymous. There are so many ways that my world has improved: I sleep at night; I do not suffer from paranoia, at least not all the time; I do not live in constant fear; I am a productive member of society. The list goes on and on.

This is the time of year when I clean house and think of making personal commitments that will allow my life to get even better. There are several resolutions I will be making. Some of them apply to my working certain aspects of the Twelve Steps of our program. Others deal with making plans for my future and taking steps toward that future one day at a time.

In making my New Year's resolutions and considering my future, I realize the biggest resolution I make on a daily basis is to remain clean. I have considered the type of life I want to lead, the dreams I would like to realize, and the contribution I would like to make to the world. Thanks to this program, the mark I leave on this world does not have to be the legacy of another drug addict dying needlessly.

This is not how my loved ones will remember me and no longer the way I view myself. This program has shown me another way to live. Thanks to Narcotics Anonymous and my Higher Power, I anticipate many joyous new years to come.

Life may be imperfect but I am aware of the chances I have been given and the opportunities before me. I grab onto this with everything I am. I experience hope. The future is only the beginning.

Happy New Year! May all your resolutions become real miracles.

SR

Self-centeredness

From *The Clean Sheet*, the Dallas area newsletter: Self-centeredness has been on my mind since it was discussed at a recent meeting. I have seen changes in myself in the time I've been in NA. Sometimes I wonder what, really, did I do to change. Did I just passively allow it to happen? Our Basic Text tells me, "The spiritual part of our disease is our total self-centeredness" (p. 20) and "Self-obsession is the core of our disease" (p. 53). I know now that these things are true for me. I began to believe when I read that "Personality change was what we really needed" (p. 15).

In the essay on the Eleventh Step, where it talks about God's will for us, the text tells me that, at times, "our egos are so self-centered that we won't accept God's will for us without another struggle and surrender" and tells me to "pray for God to remove any distracting influences."

My ego is a great block to seeing and accepting God's will for me. That self-centered ego is coupled with other defects: self-deception; my own altered sense of reality even without the use of drugs; self-obsession that puts me as Number One; an inflated self-image; and self-will and my need to be right at any cost, which leads to self-pity when my will is not achieved.

The text tells me, "Gradually, as we become more God-centered than self-centered, our despair turns to hope" (p. 92). As this God-centeredness begins to become a reality, whether through my own actions or through the grace of my Higher Power, all of those negative actions and feelings begin to be replaced by such things as self-esteem, which tells me I am a worthwhile human being. I begin to develop a positive self-image that helps me care for my insides as well as my outer appearance. Self-respect is gained with my God helping me through each crisis I get through without using. I grow and learn that I am a positive part of society. When I respect myself, I can respect you. Along with self-respect comes a realistic sense of self-worth, where I recognize that I am only a part of the world, not the world itself. I become humble, knowing that without the help of my Higher Power and the fellowship of NA, I will go back to my old self-centered ways.

All of these positive actions and feelings lead me to self-acceptance, something impossible when acting on my old behavior. I know that, relying

on my God and the spiritual principles of NA, I can accept myself today, defects and all, just as you accepted me when I came into the program. Thanks, NA.

Anonymous

Where do I know you from?

From The Clean Sheet, the Dallas area newsletter: A few months ago I had some involvement with the H&I subcommittee in carrying a meeting into the county jail. I developed a relationship with a group of men who were locked up in that facility and found it to be a rewarding and satisfying experience. Many of these men responded well to the meeting, asked questions, and seemed to be interested in the program of NA.

I dropped out of H&I activities due to my own personal problems, and went on to other areas of service.

Last night I went to a meeting where there was an ask-it basket. Many topics were discussed. The last topic to be discussed was service and how you get started.

The chairperson looked at me and I shared. As I began to share I made eye contact with another man from across the room. He looked familiar. He kept looking at me and after the meeting he came over and asked if I remembered where we had met. He was one of the men to whom I had helped carry the message in jail. I could not believe my eyes. There is an indescribable joy in realizing that my actions may have helped another addict find recovery just for one day.

Anonymous

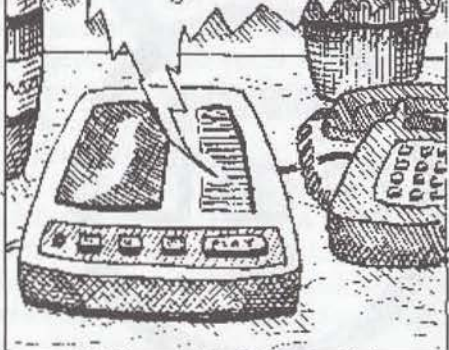
Home Group

This is a recording

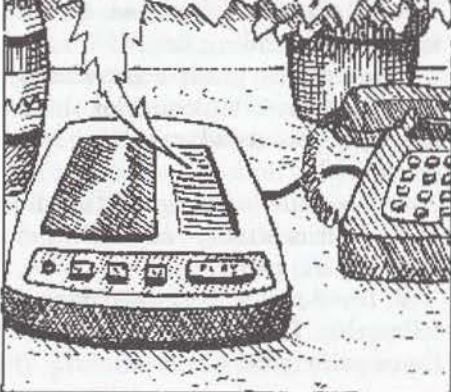
Hi! This is Jake. If you're a sponsee... please press one, followed by the pound sign.



If you're trying to manage your life, press one, followed by the pound sign... If you think you're sane, press two, followed by the pound sign....



If you think you're in control, press three, then the pound sign... Any other messages, wait for the beep. Thank, and have a great day!



Oh joy - I get to sum up my whole miserable existence in thirty seconds... let the good times roll!



A fellowship forum on motion #39



What is motion #39?

What has come to be known as "motion #39" is, in actuality, an entire set of complex issues surrounding the wording in our steps and traditions where God is referred to as "He" or "Him."

Motion #39 itself was presented by the Australia Region and discussed at last year's World Service Conference. It stated:

"To make the following changes to our steps and traditions: *Step Three:* We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of a God of our understanding. *Step Seven:* We humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings. *Step Eleven:* We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with a God of our understanding, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out. *Tradition Two:* For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as may be expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

As you can see, what has been suggested in motion #39 is that where God is referred to as "He," we instead just say "God."

After some discussion by a conference working group, it was decided that the issues expressed in motion #39 are bigger than the language used in motion #39 and should be discussed in depth by the fellowship for a period of time. Conference participants decided to send both the motion and the working group's recommendations out to the fellowship, hoping to encourage the fellowship to talk about this motion and the issues surrounding it.

The working group recommended that the fellowship consider the following questions when talking about motion #39:

1. Does the language of the steps and traditions truly reflect the principles of the program?
2. If not, what language does the fellowship feel would better reflect those principles?

The NA Way Magazine wants to know how you feel about this issue. The staff and trusted servants responsible for this magazine have pledged to keep the access to this column as open as possible. We will publish your thoughts and feelings on the specific wording in motion #39, other suggestions for changing the steps and traditions, or opinions that the steps and traditions should not be changed at all. Please share with other NA Way readers your views on this very important matter.

The Twelve Steps, Fifth Edition?

It's been over three years since I've written, although I've wanted to many times. Working a program of recovery presents many opportunities to see change and experience powerful emotions, so powerful that I sometimes want to share them with the world.

I will soon celebrate nine years of recovery in the NA Fellowship, and I love our program dearly. I have never heard of or seen anything so certain to split our program into splinters as changing the steps.

I mean no disrespect to the third of our program that is female or to those who would secularize NA. NA is a God-centered program of recovery and, I believe, it is working in the lives of many addicts throughout the world. I came to NA to have the program change me, not vice-versa; I tried other ways to find recovery.

There are many programs that aren't centered on God as the source of power and change. These programs are usually short-lived and have a founding person who supposedly provides answers. People go

away; God is always present.

When we read in our literature that "anyone may join us regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion, or lack of religion" I sometimes wonder if we realize that we are excluding the ones not mentioned in this "list." Our fellowship requires only a desire to stop using, no other considerations can be more inclusive than that.

Changing the steps is not an option. We change our text, but I'd hate to see the Twelve Steps of NA, 5th Edition. We can change our formats and our literature, but the steps and traditions must remain constant. They are the foundation on which we build our recovery.

Political and social issues come and go. Reform is often beneficial. As addicts we are rebels and have difficulty with acceptance, change, and control. It's sometimes hard for us to see that it's we who need to change, not the program.

I would strongly urge each addict in NA to take this issue to God in prayer and listen for the answer. The steps work, don't fix them.

AC, California

Enough!

I am a woman writing in response to your request for opinions about changing our steps and traditions.

I have been in conflict about responding, about spending my time and energy on such a small-minded issue. Surely those who are troubled about this are nurturing their differences instead of focusing on our similarities.

Shall we also say "God," "Buddha," "Confucius," "Great Spirit," "Jesus," "Allah," "Mohammed," so as to in-

clude everyone's Higher Power of choice? Maybe we could call God "it," so as to include those who believe in a force.

I believe the Basic Text was written by a group of inspired individuals. I've been fortunate enough to meet a few. It was completed, done, and finished. In fact, it was done in such a spiritual way that it has saved many lives, mine included.

Have you done a book study lately? I have the Third Edition and it's funny because it's very different from what's being read these days. Oh yeah, I just got a copy of the meditation book and each meditation starts with a quote from the Basic Text with a page number on it so you can refer to what you're reading. The trouble is it doesn't say which edition of our Basic Text that you should be using.

I say enough! I resent changes in a program that works the way it is. Everyone has a better idea. Can you imagine where the disunity comes from?

I was taught that recovery is an inside job. I thank God that I'm open-minded enough to realize what the book talks about when I read "God," "He," or "Higher Power." See, for me the creator is the Great Spirit, not a he or she. Maybe we could put "it!" Just joking. My vote: Don't fix it if it ain't broke!

SA, California

Editor's note: In its foreword, Just For Today: Daily Meditations for Recovering Addicts cites the opening quotations as coming from Narcotics Anonymous, Fifth Edition.

Supports changes

Hello NA Way, and my my brothers and sisters in recovery. My name is Oscar. and I'm an addict—thanks to NA, a very grateful one. I am very glad you asked to hear the thoughts of the fellowship on the topic of changing the language in three of our steps and our Second Tradition.

I'd like to say that I truly love Narcotics Anonymous, all of it—the steps, the traditions, the literature, everything.

I was raised with a God from church so, naturally, I am accustomed to referring to my Higher Power as "He" or "Him." However, I don't believe God has a gender, nor do I feel it's fair to impose my beliefs or customs on another. Perhaps the one thing I love most about NA is that it is a spiritual, not religious, program. I have nothing against churches and/or religion today, but I don't participate in them.

I simply can't relate to any "one way" of believing in a God. I know I'm in the minority, but I believe changing the language in our steps and traditions is one of the greatest changes we can make for the addict who still suffers, for the addicts who have yet to arrive, and even for those of us already in recovery. The most important relationship we can build in recovery is a relationship with our Higher Power. This is a God of each and every member's individual understanding, not God as I understand God, not God as America understands God, not God as the majority understands God.

In discussing this topic with the recovering men and women in my

area, I've found only one person who feels as I do, my sponsor. The argument I've heard most has been the ever-popular "If it ain't broke, why fix it?" I wonder where all of us would be if those incredibly open-minded members of AA, who so lovingly helped our founders start NA, would have had that attitude. They knew changes in the steps, traditions, and literature would be necessary so that we could get the message. Yes, "He" and "Him" work for me but, in NA, I've learned that "Our common welfare should come first" because my "personal recovery depends on NA unity."

If changing the "language" in our steps and traditions can benefit one person by facilitating his or her experience in finding and thereby developing a relationship with a God of his or her understanding, then we all benefit. We have all known addicts who have had problems to some degree with the concept of God. I truly believe these changes would lessen the sometimes difficult process of "coming to believe in a Power greater than ourselves," by allowing members the freedom to believe in "a God" instead of "Him."

One man said he felt those changes would only take meaning away from the God concept and that idea was just from a bunch of addicts who ultimately want to remove the word "God" from all our literature. I very kindly pointed out that these would add the word "God" twice. He replied, "Well, I still say if it ain't broke, why fix it?"

Finally, I would just like to remind us all that NA is a program based on spiritual principles, not

magic words. In "How it Works" it says, "These are the principles that made our recovery possible." It's the principles found in every step and tradition that set us free, not specific words. The changes in language would in no way change those principles. All these changes would do is truly allow all of us the freedom to find a God of our understanding, whether it's a He, a She, or Neither.

Again, I have no problem with the steps and traditions as they're worded now, but this is not a "me" program, this is a "we" program and I would like all my brothers and sisters to feel just as comfortable with their understanding of God as I do with mine. I've learned that this is a program of change and I must practice open-mindedness always. Open-mindedness is one of those indispensable principles.

I've learned that complacency in my personal program can be deadly. I'm sure the same holds true for NA as a whole. When we start thinking there's no need to change, when we stop trying to find better ways to carry the message, we're all in trouble. Whatever we as a fellowship eventually decide on, I hope it will serve to better carry the message to the addict who still suffers and not to create resentments among us.

OX, California

Viewpoint

A response to "Priorities Change"

For the past several months I have really been disillusioned by the so-called oldtimers in my area. It has been my observation that our priorities do indeed change. That's reality. However, reality is not thinking that, once we have eight, ten, twelve years clean, we do not need to attend NA meetings on a regular basis.

When I came to NA four years ago, it was my understanding that we would never be cured from this disease. So that leads me to believe that my disease will always need to be treated with meetings.

I have heard people with time sharing that they do not want to share in meetings due to their insecure feelings. They think they need to share some profound wisdom. I do not think that way at all. I enjoy hearing people sharing honestly at meetings. Maybe they have seventeen years clean but at times they are not spiritual and do not always do what is ethical. I think oldtimers have set themselves up to feel uncomfortable in meetings. We in the earlier stages of recovery do not think that we can only learn from oldtimers. Oldtimers do not have to perform at meetings.

I know my life has changed, as has my perception of God, spirituality,

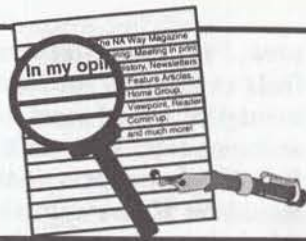
and sponsorship. However, I feel it is imperative that I remember how I gained all of my self-awareness, self-love, and self-respect. It has been through sharing in meetings, doing written step work, and being involved in service.

Does the "Priorities Change" article mean that once your life is full, your priorities different, and meetings no longer have a place in your life, you have been cured? I am not being sarcastic, I am dead serious because that is what it sounds like to me. We attend NA meetings until we get all these wonderful gifts from God, then no longer have the time to attend NA. So does this mean there is hope that one day we can use successfully?

LH, Florida

Priorities change: another view

I just read the article "Priorities Change" from the May 1993 issue of *The NA Way*. I relate to many of the thoughts and feelings the writer expressed. I began going through many of the same experiences and awarenesses at around eight to nine years clean. NA was no longer the center of my life; I was becoming involved in my community, my ca-



reer, and my family. I found myself going to fewer meetings and NA functions.

It is wonderful to reap the benefits of recovery: becoming integrated into society and living life. I too believe NA cannot meet all of my needs, just like that special person cannot meet all my needs or that job cannot meet all of my needs, and so on. One "thing" is not going to fix me and make me feel better.

The writer made a statement about having not made a commitment to stay in NA forever. I occasionally wonder if I'll still be going to meetings when I have twenty years clean. I have no way of knowing, but part of me certainly hopes not. I remember wondering if I would still be going to meetings at ten years clean. Here I am with over eleven years clean and I still go to meetings, not as many as I used to, but I still go.

I have had a hard time the past couple of years with going to meetings; I just haven't wanted to go. My sponsor told me to go as often as I could, but at least go! So I have. Sometimes I have gone several weeks without a meeting, but I made an effort during those times to stay in contact with my friends in recovery.

Many times in my life I've taken an all-or-nothing attitude. Either I'm totally committed to this relationship or I'm outta here, either I run the whole show or I'm not involved at all, either I go to several meetings a week or I don't go at all, either NA meets all of my needs or it doesn't meet any of them.

I've had very little balance in my life. Today I'm attempting to find balance in my life, or maybe "allow"

balance in my life. It's frightening for me to allow gray areas in my life; I prefer black and white solutions. Living in gray areas is difficult for me but it's also a big part of my Third Step: developing trust that my needs will be met when I'm open to my Higher Power.

The underlying principle that keeps me going to meetings is that I have to give it away in order to keep it. I no longer believe that I must get something from a meeting in order for it to be a "good" meeting. I simply go to share my recovery with the newcomer.

This doesn't necessarily mean verbally sharing during the meeting. Many times a hug, a smile, or a knowing look means a lot. One addict helping another is still the basis for my recovery and the best place I can find addicts to share with is in NA meetings, especially H&I meetings.

I don't know why it works like this. I've been told that if I could figure it out I would probably try to control it, package it, and recover in isolation so I wouldn't have to go to meetings. I hate to think I'll be going to meetings for the rest of my life, so I continue to go just for today.

BH, Ohio

Awakenings through NA

I am writing this on 29 May 1993 right after reading the May 1993 issue of *The NA Way*, which was sent to me by my wife.

One article, "Priorities Change," captured my undivided attention, moving me enough to write this. I sincerely hope this is printed so other addicts will not be led to believe that priorities change away from NA principles, as was written in that article.

Before I elaborate any further, I want to say that I have great respect for the writer's longstanding service to NA newcomers, and high regard for his or her years of clean time. Because I have yet to achieve any of the writer's goals, I find he or she a remarkable individual, particularly in light of the nonbelief in God or a Higher Power expressed in the article. Yet the author has stayed clean, allowing his or her priorities to change away from NA principles, fellowship, etc.

I was introduced to NA in late 1992. Before that, I used drugs for two decades. I was aware of the destructive lifestyle. On several occasions, I tried to quit.

Now, through NA and its literature of truths, I know those periods were not quitting, only periods of not using, because of various manipulating personal reasons.

I was spiritually and emotionally bankrupt. Just like many others, I tried various religions—no Higher Power, no God as we recovering addicts understand such things.

It's utterly impossible to have any spirituality while consuming drugs. It's a great self-perpetuating lie that we can stop and stay clean without living the NA program and maintaining NA priorities. I write from a lot of personal and painful experience.

We as recovering addicts are dif-

ferent from normal people who never come face to face with raw drug addiction. Our disease is forever present, only in remission. Keeping our disease in remission—that priority never changes. I believe recovery is a lifetime process of applying NA principles.

Normal people don't use drugs. Normal people don't need sponsors, NA meetings, etc. I agree that we, as recovering addicts, don't have a monopoly on emotional difficulties, but NA has a monopoly on keeping recovering addicts clean. For NA to keep doing this, our priorities must not change.

A quote from "Priorities Change": "We risk becoming dogmatic and rigid, believing that ours is the only 'true' way to recover, that people who stop attending meetings inevitably relapse, and that those who do not remain abstinent forever are doomed to jails, institutions, and death."

Believe me, "jails, institutions, and death," isn't just a shallow cliché or a theory; it's real. Think! How many of your friends are in jails or institutions, or dead from drugs, and how many have been saved through recovery in NA?

In the beginning of this article, I shared that my *NA Way Magazine* was sent to me by my supportive wife. She sends the magazine to me every month at the federal institution in which I live because I deviated from NA principles and priorities.

However, through NA, I now have spirituality, love, and a priority to recover the NA way, the only way for me.

JS, Indiana

From our readers

Eyes and ears

"We are each others eyes and ears. When we do something wrong, our fellow addicts help us by showing us what we cannot see."

Basic Text, p. 100

I have used these lines to justify coming down hard, with a big stick, on those who I think are not behaving appropriately, according to my understanding of how people in recovery behave. I find myself saying things that are abusive and harmful, only because of my emotional reaction. This has caused several cases where another person and I no longer share or even talk to each other anymore. In some cases, because of my behavior, they do not attend the meetings to which I go.

Painfully, I have learned that there is a different meaning to those words than I first thought. Through the isolation of losing relationships that were dear to me and losing the hope of closeness with other addicts, I realized something was wrong. When I looked closer at my behavior, the problem was clear. I was judging and condemning people for doing things that I had done, expecting them to change in areas I was unwilling to change myself.

Then I started looking for a solution. I talked with addicts trying to find an answer. Through honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness it

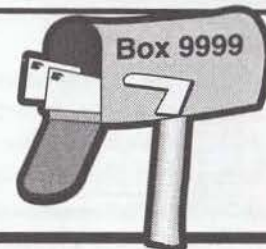
soon became clearer. When I am being someone's eyes and ears, I tell them what I see, describing the behavior, not the motive. In this way I can show them my perspective in a loving and caring way.

RR, Indiana

The principles of sharing and caring

Today marks two years and four months clean for me and I am grateful. I am currently on the Tenth Step, which is why I am writing you all via *The NA Way Magazine*. In my program, I have found that certain spiritual principles embody each of the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous. The following is a list of what I've experienced in my recovery.

1. We share about powerlessness and care about one another's pain.
2. We share about sanity and care for one another's Higher Power.
3. We share about surrender and care about God's guidance.
4. We share about fear and care about faith.
5. We share about honesty and care about open-mindedness.
6. We share about defects and care about their removal.
7. We share about shortcomings and care about humility.
8. We share about harm and care about forgiveness.
9. We share about amends and care about not hurting others.



10. We share about trust and care about change.

11. We share about spirituality and care about direction.

12. We share about freedom and care about the addicts who still suffer.

These principles are gifts that have been freely offered to me. It is my choice to keep what I have by giving it away. Just for today, I choose to give away what has been so freely given to me.

At the end of April, my sponsor will be flying out to California. He is planning to visit his sponsor in LA and also attend the WSC. Once I heard of my sponsor's plans, I started thinking about what kind of gift I could give to my grandsponsor. I talked to my sponsor tonight. He said that he would take a copy of the above passage to his sponsor.

My sponsorship family is important to me. I feel empowered when I hear about our sponsorship family lineage. I share a special relationship with my sponsor's sponsees. I get overwhelmed with the total amount of clean time that our family has accumulated. It is evidence that this program works.

SC, Florida

On the Second Step

I admitted my thinking was no good, unhealthy, sick, and distorted—but *insane*? Sounded a bit drastic to me. I had to look openly and say, "If I choose to alter my natural state of mind, I am choosing not to be of a sound, natural state of mind." In other words, insane! Rationalizing and justifying were symptoms of this form of insanity.

One year later, I look at the places and situations I had put myself into as a result of my insanity: the things I would do for drugs; the people I would claim to love yet find myself hurting; the self-destruction, of which I did such a thorough job. I never would have allowed anyone to send me where I was going or do the things I was doing to myself.

I knew no person could keep me clean and I couldn't keep myself clean either—then what or who could? My only other option (from all I'd heard) was to believe that God could. I never believed I was capable and still don't, but God is!

Today I look for His messages and try my best. I try to accept and believe that everything happens for a reason—His reason. By His loving grace, I feel my sanity is being restored little by little. God is keeping me clean one day at a time and I'm extremely grateful.

Anonymous



Comin' up

Calendar												
	1	2	3	4	5							
6	7	8	9	10	11	12						
13	14	15	16	17	18	19						
20	21	22	23	24	25	26						
27	28	29	30	31								

ARKANSAS: Mar. 12-14, 1994; 1st Northwest Arkansas Area Convention; Fort Smith, AR; info (501) 783-2766; rsvns. (800) 356-7046; Convention Committee, PO Box 23, Lowell, AR 72745

CALIFORNIA: Feb. 11-13, 1994; 3rd San Diego/Imperial Regional Learning Conference; info (619) 469-6490; SDIRLCNA, PO Box 16505, San Diego, CA 92176

2) Feb. 11-13, 1994; 2nd Annual Central California Regional Convention; info (805) 566-1261; CCRCNA-2, 1409 Kuehner Dr. #116, Simi Valley, CA 93063

3) Jun. 10-12, 1994; San Diego Imperial Regional Convention; San Diego; info (619) 272-7005; rsvns. (619) 239-4500

CONNECTICUT: Dec. 31 - Jan. 2, 1994; 9th Annual Connecticut Regional Convention; Forestville, CT; info (203) 585-1704 or (203) 585-7033; CRCNA, PO Box 9615, Forestville, CT 06010-9615

ENGLAND: Apr. 8-10, 1994; 5th London Convention; Holland Park School, London; LCNA-5, PO Box 1980, London, England, N19 3LS

FLORIDA: Jan. 21-23, 1994; 5th Annual Palm Coast Area Spiritual Retreat; West Palm Beach; info (407) 966-6113; Spiritual Retreat, 2148 Sherwood Forest #3, W Palm Beach, FL 33415

GEORGIA: Jan. 14-16, 1994; 6th Georgia State Regional Anniversary; Augusta, GA; info (800) 282-2419; rsvns. (800) 325-3535; GSRA, PO Box 15863, Augusta, GA 30919

HAWAII: Mar. 25-27, 1994; 10th Annual Gathering of the Fellowship on Oahu; info (808) 676-7763; Oahu Gathering Committee, PO Box 75271, Honolulu, HI 96836

ILLINOIS: Feb. 18-20, 1994; 3rd Rock River Area Convention; Rochelle, IL; info (815) 967-9010 or (815) 626-7210; RRCNA-3, PO Box 1891, Rockford, IL 61110

INDIA: Jan. 21-23, 1994; 2nd Bombay, India Convention; Madh Island; Malad (west), Bombay; BACNA-2, PO Box 16489, Mahim, Bombay, India 400 016

INDIANA: Feb. 26, 1994; Multiregional Service Learning Day; Fort Wayne; info (219) 422-0825; NEIASC, PO Box 12737, Fort Wayne, IN 46864

2) Mar. 4-6, 1994; Indiana State Convention; Indianapolis; info; ISNAC, PO Box 17106, Indianapolis, IN 46217-0106

IOWA: Jan. 29, 1994; 11th #2 Peace Area Wild Game Feed; Algona; info (515) 295-5826

KANSAS: Apr. 8-10, 1994; 11th Mid-America Regional Convention; Great Bend, info (316) 343-7740 or (913) 823-3854; MARCNA-11, PO Box 242, Salina, KS 67402-0242

KENTUCKY: Jan. 14-16, 1994; 4th Louisville Area Convention; info (502) 451-7548; rsvns. (800) 626-2708

LOUISIANA: May 27-29, 1994; 12th Annual Louisiana Regional Convention; Alexandria; rsvns. (318) 442-9000, (800) 523-9724; LRCNA-12, Program Committee, PO Box 762, Montgomery, LA 71454

MARYLAND: Apr. 8-10, 1994; 8th Annual Chesapeake/Potomac Regional Convention; Ocean City, MD

2) Sep. 1-4, 1994; WCNA-24; Need main speakers, clean time requirement—5 years, deadline—Jan. 31, 1994; workshop speakers needed, deadline—Apr. 1, 1994; submit tapes to; WCNA-24, c/o WSO Inc., PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409

MASSACHUSETTS: Jan. 7-9, 1994; 2nd Boston Area Convention; Boston, MA; info (617) 424-7868; rsvns. (617) 445-0930; BACNA-2, 398 Columbus Avenue, Suite 278, Boston, MA 02116

2) Jan. 15, 1994; 3rd New England Regional H&I Awareness Day; Maynard, MA; info (508) 256-6735 or (508) 460-9873; NERSC, PO Box 2364, Woburn, MA 0188-2364

3) Mar. 4-6, 1994; Just For Today Group Cape Cod Convention; Hyannis, MA; info (508) 540-4505 or (508) 563-5715; JFTCC, PO Box 590, N Falmouth, MA 02556

MICHIGAN: Dec. 30 - Jan. 2, 1994; 2nd Annual Urban Retreat; info (313) 730-4550; rsvns. (800) 333-3333; MSO, 407 E 9 Mile Road, Ferndale, MI 48220

2) Mar. 31, - Apr. 3, 1994; 2nd Detroit Area Convention; Detroit; info (313) 361-4214; rsvns. (800) 228-3000; DACNA, Tickets and Registrations, PO Box 241221, Detroit, MI 48224

MINNESOTA: Apr. 22-24, 1994; 1st Minnesota Regional Convention; Saint Paul; info (612) 926-7341; MNNAC-I, PO Box 14152, Minneapolis, MN 55414-0152

MISSOURI: Feb. 18-20, 1994; Cabin Fever Prevention Convention; Hosted by Mid-Missouri Area; info (314) 496-3752 or (314) 642-0175; Looking for speaker tapes; Cabin Fever Convention, PO Box 7114, Jefferson City, MO 65109

NEW JERSEY: Dec. 31, - Jan. 2, 1994; 7th Annual New Years Eve Convention; Hasbrouck Heights, NJ; info (201) 340-4238 or (201) 807-1082; Convention, PO Box 918, Garfield, NJ 07026-0918

2) Jan. 28-30, 1994; 2nd Greater Camden Area Convention; Cherry Hill; rsvns. (609) 662-1234; Greater Camden Area, PO Box 149, Camden, NJ 08101

NEW MEXICO: Mar. 25-27, 1994; 5th Rio Grande Regional Convention; Albuquerque; info (505) 836-2329; rsvns. (505) 869-6574; M G, 13 Church Road, Peralta, NM 87042

NEW YORK: May 20-22, 1994; 9th Greater New York Convention; info (718) 398-0012; rsvns. (800) 431-3850

NORTH CAROLINA: Mar. 18-21, 1994; 7th NCCAFRNA; Raleigh, NC; info (919) 231-8104; rsvns. (919) 872-2323; NCCAFRNA-7, PO Box 818, Carrboro, NC 27510

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

2) May 27-19, 1994; 12th Annual Ohio Convention; The Ohio convention is in Kentucky, five minutes from downtown Cincinnati; info (513) 820-2947; OCNA-12, PO Box 0541, Cincinnati, OH 42501-0541

OKLAHOMA: Jan. 14-16, 1994; 4th Norman Winter Convention; Norman, OK; info (405) 631-8649 or (405) 521-8531; Norman Winter Convention, PO Box 1455, Norman, OK 73070

PENNSYLVANIA: Feb. 4-6, 1994; 10th Mid-Atlantic Regional Learning Conference of NA; Redding; info (215) 375-9724; rsvns. (800) 383-9713; MARLCNA-10, PO Box 6233, Wyomissing, PA 19610

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

2) Feb. 25-27, 1994; CCANA Just For Today 5; Hilton Head Island; info (803) 791-9591; rsvns. (803) 699-0717; Just For Today 5, PO Box 23534, Columbia, SC 29224-3534

VIRGINIA: Jan. 7-9, 1994; 12th Annual AVCNA; info (804) 385-8774; AVCNA-12, PO Box 28, Lynchburg, VA 24505

2) Jan. 29, 1994; New River/Roanoke Valley Learning Day; Dublin Army Reserve Center; info (703) 552-8665; Learning Day, PO Box 566, Radford, VA 24141

WISCONSIN: Apr. 15-17, 1994; 9th Mid-Coast Convention; Delavan; info; MCC-9, PO Box 1621, Janesville, WI 53545

WYOMING: Sep. 23-25, 1994; Unity Convention; 3 speakers needed, respond by February; info (307) 789-7746; Unity Convention, 855 Sundance Ave, Evanston, WY 82930

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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.

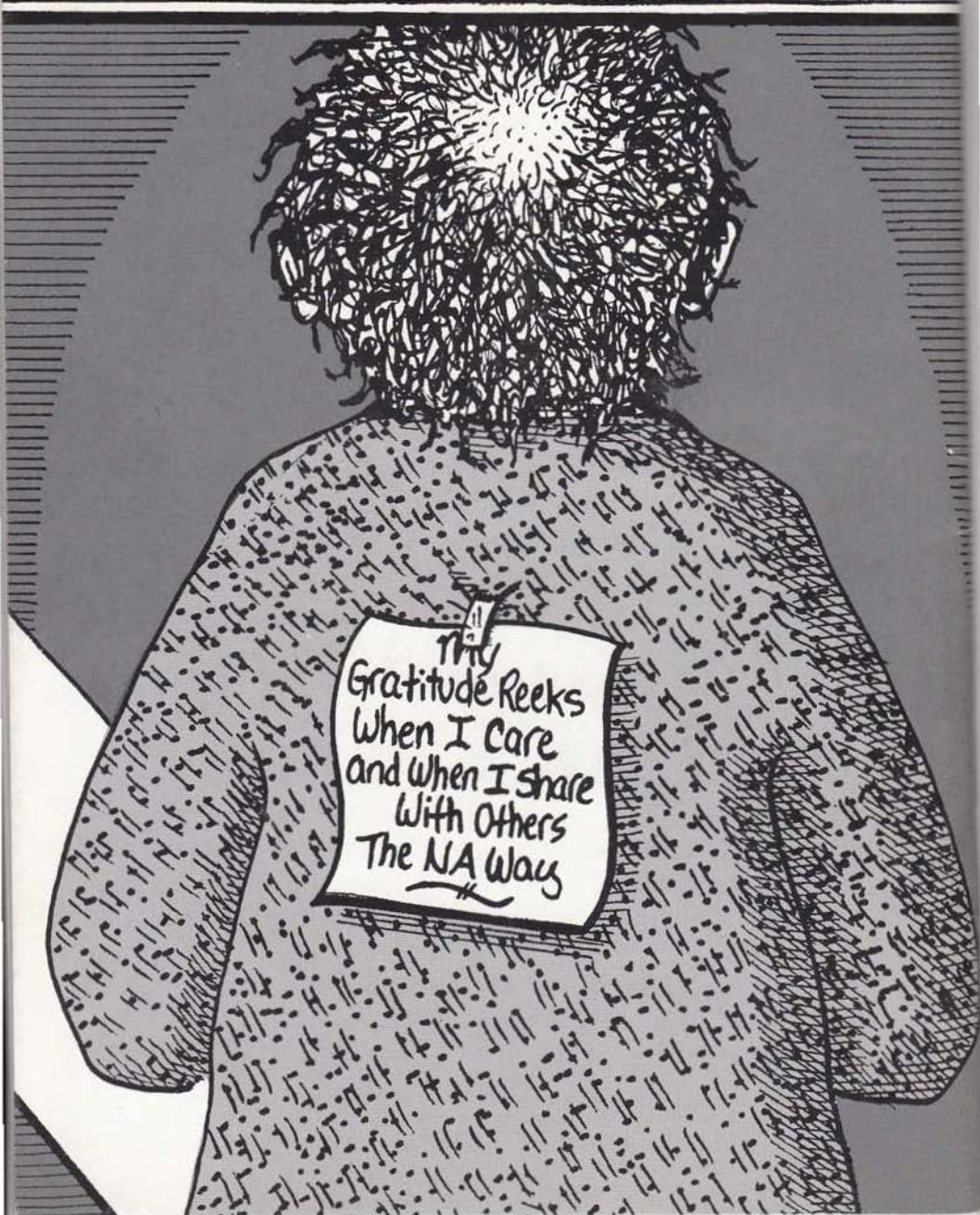
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What is Narcotics Anonymous?

NA is a 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.



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