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CHAPTER ONE

WHO IS AN ADDICT

Most of us do not have to think twice about this question. WE KNOW! Our whole life and thinking is centered in drugs in one form or another, the getting and using and finding ways and means to get more. We use to live and live to use. Very simply an addict is a man or woman whose life is controlled by drugs. We are people in the grip of a continuing and progressive illness whose ends are always the same: jails, institutions and death.

Those of us who have found the program of Narcotics Anonymous do not have to think twice about the question: Who is an addict? We know! The following is our experience.

As addicts, we are people whose use of any mind-altering, mood-changing substance causes a problem in any area of life. Addiction is a disease which ~~manifested itself in us at some point. Our ad-~~
~~dition~~ involves more than simple drug use. Some of us believe that ^{our} the disease was present long before the first time we used.

Most of us did not consider ourselves addicted before coming to the Narcotics Anonymous program. ~~The problem was that~~ The information available to us came from misinformed people. As long as we could stop using for awhile, we thought we were ^{all right}. We looked at the stopping, not the using. As our addiction progressed, we thought of stopping less and less. Only in desperation did we ask ourselves, "Could it be the drugs?"

We did not choose to become addicts. We suffer from a disease which expresses itself in ways that are anti-social and make detection, diagnosis and treatment difficult.

Our disease isolated us from people except for the getting, using and finding ways and means to get more. Hostile, resentful, self-centered and self-seeking, we cut ourselves off from the outside

world. Anything not completely familiar became alien and dangerous. Our world shrank and isolation became our life. We used in order to survive. It was the only way of life we knew.

Some of us used, misused and abused drugs and still never considered ourselves addicts. Through all of this, we kept telling ourselves, "I can handle it." Our misconceptions about the nature of addiction conjured up visions of violence, street crime, dirty needles and jail.

When our addiction is treated as a crime or moral deficiency, we become rebellious and are driven deeper into isolation. Some of the highs felt great, but eventually the things we had to do in order to support our using reflected desperation. We were caught in the grip of our disease. We were forced to survive anyway we could. We manipulated people and tried to control everything around us. We lied, stole, cheated and sold ourselves. We had to have drugs, regardless of the cost. Failure and fear began to invade our lives.

One aspect of our addiction was our inability to deal with life on its terms. We tried drugs and combinations of drugs in an effort to cope with a seemingly hostile world. We dreamed of finding a magic formula that would solve our ultimate problem--ourselves. The fact was that we could not successfully use any mind-altering or mood-changing substance. ~~The addict who used non-narcotic drugs, including marijuana and alcohol, was in as much danger as the narcotic user.~~ Drugs ceased to make us feel good.

At times, we were defensive about our addiction and justified our right to use, especially when we had "legal prescriptions." We were proud of the sometimes illegal and often bizarre behavior that typified our using. We "forgot" the times we sat alone consumed by fear and self-pity. We fell into a pattern of selective thinking. We only remembered the "good" drug experiences. We justified and rationalized the things we had to do to keep from being sick or going crazy. We ignored the times when life seemed to be nightmare. We avoided the reality of our addiction.

Higher mental and emotional functions, such as conscience and the ability to love, were sharply affected by our use of drugs.

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Living skills were reduced to the animal level. Our spirit was broken. The capacity to ^{feel} ~~be~~ human was lost. This seems extreme, but many of us have been in this state.

We were constantly searching for "the answer"--that person, place or thing that would make everything all right. We lacked the ability to cope with daily living. As our addiction caught up with us, many of us found ourselves in and out of institutions.

These experiences indicated there was something wrong with our lives. We wanted an easy way out and some of us thought of suicide. Our attempts were usually feeble, and only helped to contribute to our feelings of worthlessness. We ^{were} ~~trapped ourselves~~ in the illusion of "what if", "if only" and "just one more time."

We have regained good physical health many times, only to lose it by using again. Our track record shows that it is impossible for us to use successfully. No matter how well we may appear to be in control, ^{using} ~~drugs~~ always brings us to our knees.

When we did seek help, we were really looking for the absence of pain. Like other incurable diseases, addiction can be arrested. We agree that there is nothing shameful about being an addict, provided we accept our dilemma honestly and take positive action. We are willing to admit without reservation that we are allergic to drugs. Common sense tells us that it would be insane to go back to the source of our allergy. Our experience indicates that medicine cannot "cure" our illness.

Although physical and mental tolerance play a role, many drugs require no extended period of use to trigger allergic reactions. Our reaction is what makes us addicts, not how much we used.

Many of us did not think we had a problem until the drugs ran out. Even ~~though~~ ^{when} others told us we had a problem, we were convinced that we were right and the world was wrong. We used this belief to justify our self-destructive behavior. We developed a point of view that enabled us to pursue our addiction without concern for our own well-being or that of others. We began to feel the drugs were killing us long before we could ever admit it to anyone else. We noticed that if we tried to stop using, we couldn't. We suspected we had lost control over the drugs and had no power to stop.

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Certain things followed as we continued to use. We became accustomed to a state of mind common to addicts. We forgot what it was like before we started using; we forgot the social graces. We acquired strange habits and mannerisms. We forgot how to work; we forgot how to express ourselves and show concern for others. We forgot how to feel.

While using, we lived in another world. We experienced only periodic jolts of reality or self-awareness. It seemed we were at least two people instead of one, like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. We ran around trying to get our lives together before our next run. Sometimes we could do this very well, but later, it was less important and more impossible. In the end, Dr. Jekyll died and Mr. Hyde took over.

~~Each of us~~ ^{we} has a few things ~~they~~ ^{we} can say ~~they~~ ^{we} never did. We cannot let these things become excuses to use again. Some of us feel lonely because of differences between us and other members, and this makes it difficult to give up ~~our old friends and old habits.~~ ^{old habits,}

We all have different tolerances for pain. Some addicts needed to go to greater extremes than others. Some of us ~~may find~~ ^{found} we ~~have had~~ had enough when we realized that we ~~are~~ ^{were} getting high too often and it ~~was~~ ^{was} affecting our daily lives.

At first, we were using in a manner which seemed to be social or at least controllable with little indication of the disaster which the future held for us. At some point, our using became uncontrollable and anti-social. This began when things were going well and we were in situations that allowed us to use frequently. This was usually the end of the good times. We went from a state of drugged success and well-being to complete spiritual, mental and emotional bankruptcy. This rate of decline also varied from addict to addict. Whether it ~~was~~ ^{is} years or days, it ~~was~~ ^{is} all downhill. We may have tried to moderate, substitute, or even stop using. Those of us who don't die from the disease will go on to prison, mental institutions or complete demoralization as the disease progresses.

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We had to reach our bottom before we became willing to stop. We were much more motivated to seek help in the latter stages of our addiction. It was easier for us to see the destruction, disaster and delusion of our using. It was harder to deny our addiction when ~~the problems caused by drug usage~~ were staring us in the face.

Some of us first saw the effects of addiction on the people we were close to. We were very dependant on them to carry us emotionally through life. We felt angry, disappointed and hurt when they had other interests, friends and loved ones. We regretted the past, dreaded the future, and we weren't too thrilled about the present. After years of searching, we were more unhappy and less satisfied than when it all began.

Our addiction had enslaved us. We were prisoners of our own mind, condemned by our own guilt. We had given up ever stopping. Our attempts to stay clean had always failed, causing us pain and misery.

We feel that each individual has to answer the question, "Am I an addict?", for themselves. How we got the disease is of no immediate importance to us. ^{we are} ~~that~~ concerned ^{us} ~~us~~ with recovery.

As addicts, we have an incurable disease called addiction which is chronic, progressive and fatal. However, it is a treatable disease. ⁹ We begin to treat our addiction by not using. Many of us sought answers but ~~we~~ failed to find any workable solution until we found each other. Once we ~~are able to~~ identify ourselves as addicts, help becomes possible. We can see a little of ourselves in every addict, and a little bit of them in us. This insight lets us help one another. Our futures seemed hopeless until we found clean addicts who were willing to share with us. Denial of our addiction was what had kept us sick, and our honest admission enabled us to stop using. The people in N.A. ^{spout} told us that they were recovering addicts who had learned to live without drugs. If they could do it, so could we.

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The only alternatives to recovery are jails, institutions, dereliction and death. Unfortunately, our disease makes us ~~suscepti-~~^{deny}~~ble to denial~~ of our addiction, ~~instead of dealing with it~~. If you are an addict, you^{too} can find a new way of life through the N.A. Program that would not otherwise be possible. We have become very grateful in the course of our recovery. We have a disease from which we do recover, daily. Our lives have become useful, through abstinence and by working the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous.

We realize that we are never cured and carry the disease within us all our lives. Each day we are given another chance. We are convinced that there is only one way for us to live, and that is the N.A. way.

CHAPTER ONE

WHO IS AN ADDICT?

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CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IS THE N.A. PROGRAM?

N.A. is a non-profit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovered 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 honest desire to stop using. There are no musts in N.A. but 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".

There are no strings attached to N.A. We are not affiliated with any other organizations, we have no leaders, no initiation fees or dues, no pledges to sign, no promises to make to anyone. We are not connected with any political, religious, or law enforcement groups, and are under no surveillance at any time. Anyone may join us regardless of age, race, color, creed, religion or lack of religion.

We are not interested in what or how much you used or who your connections were, what you have done in the past, how much or how little you have, but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help. The newcomer is the most important person at any meeting, because we can only keep what we have by giving it away. We have learned from our group experience that those who keep coming to our meetings regularly stay clean.

1 Narcotics Anonymous is a Fellowship of men and women who are
2 learning to live without drugs. We are a non-profit society, and
3 have no dues or fees of any kind. Each of us has paid the price
4 of membership. We have paid dearly with our pain for the right
5 to recover.

6 We are addicts surviving against all odds who meet regular-
7 ly together. We respond to honest sharing and listen to the
8 stories of our members for the message of recovery. We realize
9 that, at last, there is hope for us.

We make if the tools that have worked for other recover-

ing addicts who have learned to live without drugs in Narcotics Anonymous. The Twelve Steps are positive tools that make recovery possible. Our primary purpose is to stay clean and to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. We are united by our common problem, addiction. By meeting, talking, and helping other addicts, we are able to stay clean. The newcomer is the most important person at any meeting because we can only keep what we have by giving it away.

Narcotics Anonymous has had more than twenty-five years of experience with literally hundreds of thousands of addicts. This mass of intensive, first-hand experience in all phases of illness and recovery is of unparalleled therapeutic value. We are here to share freely with any addict who wants it.

Our message of recovery is based on our own experience. Before coming to the Fellowship, we exhausted ourselves trying to "use" successfully, or trying to find out what was wrong with us. After coming to N.A., we found ourselves among a very special group of people, who have suffered like us and found recovery. In their experiences, freely shared, we found hope for ourselves. If the Program worked for them, it would work for us.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. We have seen the Program work for any addict who honestly and sincerely wanted to stop. We don't have to be clean when we get here, but after the first meeting, we suggest that newcomers keep coming back and come back clean. We don't have to wait for an overdose, or jail sentence, to get help from N.A.; nor is addiction a hopeless condition from which there is no recovery.

We meet addicts like ourselves who are clean. We watch and listen to them and realize that they have found a way to live and enjoy life without drugs. We don't have to settle for the limitations of the past. We can examine and re-examine all our old ideas and constantly improve on them or replace them with new ones. We are men and women who have discovered and admitted that we are powerless over our addiction. When we use, we lose.

When we discovered that we cannot live with or without drugs, we sought help through N.A. rather than prolong our suffering.

1 The Program works a miracle in our lives. We become different
2 people. The Steps and abstinence give us a daily reprieve from
3 our self-imposed life sentences. We become free to live.

4 We want the place where we recover to be a safe place, free
5 from outside influence. For the protection of the Fellowship,
6 we insist that no drugs or paraphernalia be brought to any meeting.

7 We feel totally free to express ourselves within the Fellow-
8 ship, because no law enforcement agencies are involved. Our
9 meetings have an atmosphere of empathy. In accordance with the
10 principles of recovery, we try not to judge, stereotype, or
11 moralize each other. We are not recruited and it doesn't cost
12 anything. N.A. does not provide counseling or social services.

13 Our meetings are a process of identification, hope and shar-
14 ing. The heart of N.A. beats when two addicts share their recovery.
15 What we do becomes real for us when we share it. This happens on
16 a larger scale in our regular meetings. A meeting is addicts
17 gathered together to help each other stay clean.

18 At the beginning of the meeting, we read N.A. literature which
19 is available to anyone. Some meetings have speakers, topic dis-
20 cussions or both. Closed meetings are for addicts or those who
21 think they might have a drug problem; open meetings welcome anyone
22 wishing to experience our Fellowship. The atmosphere of recovery
23 is protected by our Twelve Traditions. We are fully self-supporting
24 through voluntary contributions from our members. Regardless of
25 where the meeting takes place, we remain unaffiliated. Meetings
26 provide us with a place to be with fellow addicts. All we need
27 is two addicts, caring and sharing, to make a meeting.

28 We let new ideas flow into us. We ask questions. We share
29 what we have learned about living without drugs. Though the
30 principles of the Twelve Steps may seem strange to us at first,
31 the most important thing about them is that they work. Our
32 Program is, in fact, a way of life. We learn the value of such
33 spiritual principles as surrender, humility and service from
34 reading the N.A. literature, going to meetings, and working the
35 Steps. We find that our lives steadily improve, if we maintain
36 abstinence from mind-altering, mood-changing chemicals and work

1 the Twelve Steps to sustain our recovery. Living this Program
2 gives us a relationship with a Power greater than ourselves,
3 corrects defects, leads us to help others, and where there has
4 been wrong, teaches us the spirit of forgiveness.

5 Many books have been written about the nature of addiction.
6 This book concerns itself with the nature of recovery. If you
7 are an addict and have found this book, please give yourself a
8 break and read it.

CHAPTER THREE

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Before coming to the fellowship of N.A., we could not manage our own lives, we could not live and enjoy life as other people do. We had to have something different and we thought we had found it in drugs. We placed their use ahead of the welfare of our families, our wives, husbands, and our children. We had to have drugs at all costs. We did many people great harm but most of all we harmed ourselves. Through our inability to accept personal responsibilities we were actually creating our own problems. We seemed to be incapable of facing life on its own terms.

Most of us realized, that in our addictions, we were slowly committing suicide, but such cunning enemies of life are narcotics and sedation that we had lost the power to do anything about it. Jail did not help us at all. Medicine, religion and psychiatry seemed to have no answers for us that we could use. All these methods having failed for us, in desperation, we sought help from each other in Narcotics Anonymous.

After coming to N.A. we realized we were sick people who suffered from a disease like Alcoholism, Diabetes or Tuberculosis. There is no known "Cure" for these--all, however, can be arrested at some point and "recovery" is then possible.

In N.A. we follow a program borrowed from Alcoholics Anonymous. In the last forty years more than one million people have recovered in A.A., most of them just as hopelessly addicted to alcohol as we were to drugs. We are deeply grateful to the A.A. Fellowship for pointing the way for us to a new way of life.

1 We are addicts seeking recovery. We used drugs to cover up
2 our feelings, and did whatever was necessary to get them. Many
3 of us woke up sick, unable to make it to work, or went to work
4 loaded. Many of us stole to support our habit. We hurt the
5 ones we loved. We did all these things and told ourselves "We
6 can handle it". We were looking for a way out. We couldn't face
7 life on its own terms. In the beginning, using was fun. For us
8 it became a habit and finally was necessary for survival. The
9 progression of the disease was not apparent to us. We continued

1 on the path of destruction, unaware of where it was leading us.
2 We were addicts and did not know it. Through drugs we tried to
3 avoid reality, pain and misery. When the drugs wore off, we
4 realized that we still had the same problems and that they were
5 becoming worse. We sought relief by using again and again--
6 more drugs, more often.

7 We sought help and found none. Often doctors didn't under-
8 stand our dilemma; they tried to help by giving us medication.
9 Our husbands, wives and loved ones gave us what they had and
10 drained themselves in the hope that we would stop using or get
11 better. We tried substituting one drug for another, but this only
12 prolonged our pain. We tried limiting our usage to "social"
13 amounts without success. There is no such thing as a "social
14 addict". Some of us sought an answer through churches, religions
15 or cultism. Some sought a cure by geographic change, blaming our
16 surroundings and living situations for our problems. This attempt
17 only gave us a chance to take advantage of new people. Some of
18 us sought approval through sex or change of friends. This approval
19 seeking carried us further into our addiction. Some of us tried
20 marriage, divorce or desertion. Regardless of what we tried, we
21 could not escape from our disease.

22 We reached a point in our lives where we felt like a lost
23 cause. Our worth to our jobs, families and friends was little or
24 none. Many of us were unemployed and unemployable. Any form of
25 success was frightening and unfamiliar. We didn't know what to
26 do. As the self-loathing grew, we needed to use more and more to
27 mask our feelings. We were sick and tired of pain and trouble.
28 We were frightened and ran from the fear. No matter how far we
29 ran, we always carried the fear with us. We were hopeless, useless
30 and lost. Failure had become our way of life and self-esteem was
31 non-existent. Perhaps the most painful of all was the desperation
32 of loneliness. Isolation and the denial of our addiction, kept us
33 moving along this downhill path. Any hope of getting better dis-
34 appeared. Helplessness, emptiness and fear became our way of
35 life. We were complete failures. Personality change was what
36 we really needed. Change from self-destructive patterns of life

1 became necessary. When we lied, cheated or stole, we degraded
2 ourselves in our own eyes. We had had enough of self-destruction.
3 We experienced how powerless we really are. When nothing re-
4 lieved our paranoia and fear, we hit bottom and became ready to
5 ask for help.

6 We were searching for an answer when we reached out and
7 found Narcotics Anonymous. We came to our first N.A. meeting in
8 defeat and didn't know what to expect. After sitting in a meeting,
9 or several meetings, we began to feel that people cared and were
10 willing to help. Although our minds told us we would never make
11 it, the people in the Fellowship gave us hope by insisting we
12 could recover. We found that no matter what our past thoughts or
13 actions were, others had felt and done the same. Surrounded by
14 fellow addicts, we realized that we were not alone. Recovery is
15 what happens in our meetings, each of our lives is at stake. We
16 found that by putting recovery first, the Program works.

17 We faced three disturbing realizations:

- 18 1. We are powerless over addiction and
19 our lives are unmanageable.
- 20 2. Although we are not responsible for
21 our disease, we are responsible for
22 our recovery.
- 23 3. We can no longer blame people, places
24 and things for our addiction. We must
25 face our problems and our feelings.

26 The ultimate weapon for recovery is the recovering addict.
27 We concentrate on recovery and how we feel, not what we have done
28 in the past. Old friends, places and ideas are often a threat to
29 our recovery. We need to change our playmates, playgrounds and
30 playthings.

31 When we realized we are not able to manage on our own, some
32 of us immediately began experiencing depression, anxiety, hostil-
33 ity and resentment. Petty frustrations, minor setbacks and
34 loneliness often made us feel that we were not getting any better.
35 We found that we suffered from a disease, not a moral dilemma.
36 We were critically ill, not hopelessly sad. Our only

1 be arrested through abstinence.

2 Today we experience a full range of feelings. Before coming
3 into the Fellowship, we either felt elated or depressed with very
4 little in between. Our negative sense of self has been replaced
5 by a positive concern for others. Answers are provided and prob-
6 lems are solved. It is a great gift to feel human again.

7 What a change from the way we used to be! That's how we
8 know that the N.A. program works. It's the first thing that ever
9 convinced us that we needed to change ourselves, instead of trying
10 to change the people and situations around us. We discover new
11 opportunities. We find a sense of self-worth. We learn self-
12 respect. This is a program for doing just those things. By
13 working the Steps, we come to accept a Higher Power's will; this
14 acceptance leads us to recovery. We lose our fear of the unknown.
15 We are set free.

CHAPTER ONE

WHO IS AN ADDICT?

Most of us do not have to think twice about this question. WE KNOW! Our whole life and thinking is centered in drugs in one form or another, the getting and using and finding ways and means to get more. We use to live and live to use. Very simply an addict is a man or woman whose life is controlled by drugs. We are people in the grip of a continuing and progressive illness whose ends are always the same: jails, institutions and death.

Those of us who have found the program of Narcotics Anonymous do not have to think twice about the question: Who is an addict? We know! The following is our experience.

As addicts, we are people whose use of any mind-altering, mood-changing substance causes a problem in any area of life. Addiction is a disease which involves more than simple drug use. Some of us believe that our disease was present long before the first time we used.

Most of us did not consider ourselves addicted before coming to the Narcotics Anonymous program. The information available to us came from misinformed people. As long as we could stop using for awhile, we thought we were all right. We looked at the stopping not the using. As our addiction progressed, we thought of stopping less and less. Only in desperation did we ask ourselves, "Could it be the drugs?"

We did not choose to become addicts. We suffer from a disease which expresses itself in ways that are anti-social and make detection, diagnosis and treatment difficult.

Our disease isolated us from people except for the getting, using and finding ways and means to get more. Hostile, resentful, self-centered and self-seeking, we cut ourselves off from the outside world. Anything not completely familiar became alien and dangerous. Our world shrank and isolation became our life. We

1 used in order to survive. It was the only way of life we knew.

2 Some of us used, misused and abused drugs and still never con-
3 sidered ourselves addicts. Through all of this, we kept telling
4 ourselves, "I can handle it." Our misconceptions about the nature
5 of addiction conjured up visions of violence, street crime, dirty
6 needles and ~~and~~.

7 When our addiction is treated as a crime or moral deficiency,
8 we become rebellious and are driven deeper into isolation. Some of
9 the highs felt great, but eventually the things we had to do in order
10 to support our using reflected desperation. We were caught in the
11 grip of our disease. We were forced to survive anyway we could. We
12 manipulated people and tried to control everything around us. We
13 lied, stole, cheated and sold ourselves. We had to have drugs, re-
14 gardless of the cost. Failure and fear began to invade our lives.

15 One aspect of our addiction was our inability to deal with life
16 on its terms. We tried drugs and combinations of drugs in an effort
17 to cope with a seemingly hostile world. We dreamed of finding a
18 magic formula that would solve our ultimate problem--ourselves. The
19 fact was that we could not successfully use any mind-altering or mood-
20 changing substance, including marijuana and alcohol. Drugs ceased to
21 make us feel good.

22 At times, we were defensive about our addiction and justified
23 our right to use, especially when we had "legal prescriptions." We
24 were proud of the sometimes illegal and often bizarre behavior that
25 typified our using. We "forgot" the times we sat alone consumed by
26 fear and self-pity. We fell into a pattern of selective thinking.
27 We only remembered the "good" drug experiences. We justified and
28 rationalized the things we had to do to keep from being sick or
29 going crazy. We ignored the times when life seemed to be a night-
30 mare. We avoided the reality of our addiction.

31 Higher mental and emotional functions, such as conscience and
32 the ability to love, were sharply affected by our use of drugs.
33 Living skills were reduced to the animal level. Our spirit was
34 broken. The capacity to feel human was lost. This seems extreme,
35 but many of us have been in this state.

36 We were constantly searching for "the answer"--that person,
37 place or thing that would make everything all right. We lacked the
38 ability to cope with daily living. As our addiction caught up with

1 us, many of us found ourselves in and out of institutions.

2 These experiences indicated there was something wrong with our
3 lives. We wanted an easy way out and some of us thought of suicide.
4 Our attempts were usually feeble, and only helped to contribute to
5 our feelings of worthlessness. We were trapped in the illusion
6 of "what if", "if only" and "just one more time."

7 We have regained good physical health many times, only to lose
8 it by using again. Our track record shows that it is impossible
9 for us to use successfully. No matter how well we may appear to be
10 in control, using drugs always brings us to our knees.

11 When we did seek help, we were really looking for the absence
12 of pain. Like other incurable diseases, addiction can be arrested.
13 We agree that there is nothing shameful about being an addict, pro-
14 vided we accept our dilemma honestly and take positive action. We
15 are willing to admit without reservation that we are allergic to
16 drugs. Common sense tells us that it would be insane to go back to
17 the source of our allergy. Our experience indicates that medicine
18 cannot "cure" our illness.

19 Although physical and mental tolerance play a role, many drugs
20 require no extended period of use to trigger allergic reactions.
21 Our reaction is what makes us addicts, not how much we used.

22 Many of us did not think we had a problem until the drugs ran
23 out. Even when others told us we had a problem, we were convinced
24 that we were right and the world was wrong. We used this belief
25 to justify our self-destructive behavior. We developed a point of
26 view that enabled us to pursue our addiction without concern for
27 our own well-being or that of others. We began to feel the drugs
28 were killing us long before we could ever admit it to anyone else.
29 We noticed that if we tried to stop using, we couldn't. We sus-
30 pected we had lost control over the drugs and had no power to stop.

31 Certain things happened as we continued to use. We became
32 accustomed to a state of mind common to addicts. We forgot what it
33 was like before we started using; we forgot the social graces.
34 We acquired strange habits and mannerisms. We forgot how to work;
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8 than when it all began.

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6 tant and ~~the~~ impossible. In the end, Dr. Jekyll died and Mr. Hyde
7 took over.

8 Each of us has a few things we can say we never did. We cannot
9 let these things become excuses to use again. Some of us feel lonely
10 because of differences between us and other members, and this makes
11 it difficult to give up old connections and old habits.

12 We all have different tolerances for pain. Some addicts needed
13 to go to greater extremes than others. Some of us found we had had
14 enough when we realized that we were getting high too often and it
15 was affecting our daily lives.

16 At first, we were using in a manner which seemed to be social
17 or at least controllable with little indication of the disaster which
18 the future held for us. At some point, our using became uncontroll-
19 able and anti-social. This began when things were going well and we
20 were in situations that allowed us to use frequently. This was usually
21 the end of the good times. We went from a state of drugged success
22 and well-being to complete spiritual, mental and emotional bankruptcy.
23 This rate of decline also varies from addict to addict. Whether it
24 is years or days, it is all downhill. We may have tried to moderate,
25 substitute, or even stop using. Those of us who don't die from the
26 disease will go on to prison, mental institutions or complete demoral-
27 ization as the disease progresses.

28 Drugs had given us the feeling that we could handle whatever
29 situation might develop. We became aware that drugs were largely
30 responsible for having gotten us into our very worst predicaments.
31 Some of us may spend the rest of our lives in jail for a drug-
32 related crime or a crime committed while using.

33 We had to reach our bottom before we became willing to stop.
34 We were much more motivated to seek help in the latter stages of our
35 addiction. It was easier for us to see the destruction, disaster
36 and delusion of our using. It was harder to deny our addiction when

1 problems were staring us in the face.

2 Some of us first saw the effects of addiction on the people we
3 were close to. We were very dependent on them to carry us emotionally
4 through life. We felt angry, disappointed and hurt when they had

5 other interests, friends and loved ones. We regretted the past,
6 dreaded the future, and we weren't too thrilled about the present.

7 After years of searching, we were more unhappy and less satisfied
8 than when it all began.

9 Our addiction had enslaved us. We were prisoners of our own
10 mind, condemned by our own guilt. We had given up ever stopping.
11 Our attempts to stay clean had always failed, causing us pain and
12 misery.

13 As addicts, we have an incurable disease called addiction which
14 is chronic, progressive and fatal. However, it is a treatable dis-
15 ease. We feel that each individual has to answer the question, "Am
16 I an addict?", for themselves. How we got the disease is of no imme-
17 diate importance to us. We are concerned with recovery.

18 We began to treat our addiction by not using. Many of us sought
19 answers but failed to find any workable solution until we found each
20 other. Once we identify ourselves as addicts, help becomes possible.
21 We can see a little of ourselves in every addict and a little bit of
22 them in us. This insight lets us help one another. Our futures
23 seemed hopeless until we found clean addicts who were willing to
24 share with us. Denial of our addiction was what had kept us sick,
25 and our honest admission enabled us to stop using. The people in
26 Narcotics Anonymous told us that they were recovering addicts who
27 had learned to live without drugs. If they could do it, so could
28 we.

29 The only alternatives to recovery are jails, institutions, dere-
30 liction and death. Unfortunately, our disease makes us deny our
31 addiction. If you are an addict, you too can find a new way of life
32 through the N.A. program that would not otherwise be possible. We
33 have become very grateful in the course of our recovery. Our lives
34 have become useful, through abstinence and by working the Twelve
35 Steps of Narcotics Anonymous.

36 We realize that we are never cured and carry the disease within

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1 us all our lives. We have a disease from which we do recover. Each
2 day we are given another chance. We are convinced that there is only
3 one way for us to live, and that is the N.A. way.

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CHAPTER ONE

WHO IS AN ADDICT

Most of us do not have to think twice about this question. WE KNOW! Our whole life and thinking is centered in drugs in one form or another, the getting and using and finding ways and means to get more. We use to live and live to use. Very simply an addict is a man or woman whose life is controlled by drugs. We are people in the grip of a continuing and progressive illness whose ends are always the same: jails, institutions and death.

Those of us who have found the program of Narcotics Anonymous do not have to think twice about the question: Who is an addict? We know! The following is our experience.

As addicts, we are people whose use of any mind-altering, mood-changing substance causes a problem in any area of life. ~~Addiction is a disease which manifested itself in us at some point.~~ Our addiction involved more than simple drug use. Some of us believe that the disease was present long before the first time we used.

Most of us did not consider ourselves addicted before coming to the Narcotics Anonymous program. ~~The problem was that~~ The information available to us came from misinformed people. As long as we could stop using for awhile, we thought we were ~~all right~~ ^{all right}. We looked at the stopping, not the using. As our addiction progressed, we thought of stopping less and less. Only in desperation did we ask ourselves, "Could it be the drugs?"

We did not choose to become addicts. We suffer from a disease which expresses itself in ways that are anti-social and make detection, diagnosis and treatment difficult.

Our disease isolated us from people except for the getting, using and finding ways and means to get more. Hostile, resentful, self-centered and self-seeking, we cut ourselves off from the outside

world. Anything not completely familiar became alien and dangerous. Our world shrank and isolation became our life. We used in order to survive. It was the only way of life we knew.

Some of us used, misused and abused drugs and still never considered ourselves addicts. Through all of this, we kept telling ourselves, "I can handle it." Our misconceptions about the nature of addiction conjured up visions of violence, street crime, dirty needles and jail.

When our addiction is treated as a crime or moral deficiency, we become rebellious and are driven deeper into isolation. Some of the highs felt great, but eventually the things we had to do in order to support our using reflected desperation. We were caught in the grip of our disease. We were forced to survive anyway we could. We manipulated people and tried to control everything around us. We lied, stole, cheated and sold ourselves. We had to have drugs, regardless of the cost. Failure and fear began to invade our lives.

One aspect of our addiction was our inability to deal with life on its terms. We tried drugs and combinations of drugs in an effort to cope with a seemingly hostile world. We dreamed of finding a magic formula that would solve our ultimate problem--ourselves. The fact was that we could not successfully use any mind-altering or mood-changing substance. ~~The addict who used non-narcotic drugs, including marijuana and alcohol, was in as much danger as the narcotics user.~~ Drugs ceased to make us feel good.

At times, we were defensive about our addiction and justified our right to use, especially when we had "legal prescriptions." We were proud of the sometimes illegal and often bizarre behavior that typified our using. We "forgot" the times we sat alone consumed by fear and self-pity. We fell into a pattern of selective thinking. We only remembered the "good" drug experiences. We justified and rationalized the things we had to do to keep from being sick or going crazy. We ignored the times when life seemed to be nightmare. We avoided the reality of our addiction.

Higher mental and emotional functions, such as conscience and the ability to love, were sharply affected by our use of drugs.

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Living skills were reduced to the animal level. Our spirit was broken. The capacity to be ^{feel} human was lost. This seems extreme, but many of us have been in this state.

We were constantly searching for "the answer"--that person, place or thing that would make everything all right. We lacked the ability to cope with daily living. As our addiction caught up with us, many of us found ourselves in and out of institutions.

These experiences indicated there was something wrong with our lives. We wanted an easy way out and some of us thought of suicide. Our attempts were usually feeble, and only helped to contribute to our feelings of worthlessness. We ^{were} ~~trapped ourselves~~ in the illusion of "what if", "if only" and "just one more time."

We have regained good physical health many times, only to lose it by using again. Our track record shows that it is impossible for us to use successfully. ^{using} No matter how well we may appear to be in control, ^{using} drugs always brings us to our knees.

When we did seek help, we were really looking for the absence of pain. Like other incurable diseases, addiction can be arrested. We agree that there is nothing shameful about being an addict, provided we accept our dilemma honestly and take positive action. We are willing to admit without reservation that we are allergic to drugs. Common sense tells us that it would be insane to go back to the source of our allergy. Our experience indicates that medicine cannot "cure" our illness.

Although physical and mental tolerance play a role, many drugs require no extended period of use to trigger allergic reactions. Our reaction is what makes us addicts, not how much we used.

Many of us did not think we had a problem until the drugs ran out. Even ^{when} ~~though~~ others told us we had a problem, we were convinced that we were right and the world was wrong. We used this belief to justify our self-destructive behavior. We developed a point of view that enabled us to pursue our addiction without concern for our own well-being or that of others. We began to feel the drugs were killing us long before we could ever admit it to anyone else. We noticed that if we tried to stop using, we couldn't. We suspected we had lost control over the drugs and had no power to stop.

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Certain things followed as we continued to use. We became accustomed to a state of mind common to addicts. We forgot what it was like before we started using; we forgot the social graces. We acquired strange habits and mannerisms. We forgot how to work; we forgot how to express ourselves and show concern for others. We forgot how to feel.

While using, we lived in another world. We experienced only periodic jolts of reality or self-awareness. It seemed we were at least two people instead of one, like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. We ran around trying to get our lives together before our next run. Sometimes we could do this very well, but later, it was less important and more impossible. In the end, Dr. Jekyll died and Mr. Hyde took over.

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We all have different tolerances for pain. Some addicts needed to go to greater extremes than others. Some of us ~~may find~~ ^{found} we ~~have had~~ had enough when we realized that we ~~are~~ ^{were} getting high too often and it ~~was~~ ^{was} affecting our daily lives.

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sponsible for having gotten us into our very worst predicaments. Some of us may spend the rest of our lives in jail for a drug-related crime or a crime committed while using.

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Some of us first saw the effects of addiction on the people we were close to. We were very dependant on them to carry us emotionally through life. We felt angry, disappointed and hurt when they had other interests, friends and loved ones. We regretted the past, dreaded the future, and we weren't too thrilled about the present. After years of searching, we were more unhappy and less satisfied than when it all began.

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We feel that each individual has to answer the question, "Am I an addict?", for themselves. How we got the disease is of no immediate importance to us. ^{we are} ~~that~~ concerned us ^{with} ~~recovery~~.

As addicts, we have an incurable disease called addiction which is chronic, progressive and fatal. However, it is a treatable disease. ² We begin to treat our addiction by not using. Many of us sought answers but ~~we~~ failed to find any workable solution until we found each other. Once we ~~are able to~~ identify ourselves as addicts, help becomes possible. We can see a little of ourselves in every addict, and a little bit of them in us. This insight lets us help one another. Our futures seemed hopeless until we found clean addicts who were willing to share with us. Denial of our addiction was what had kept us sick, and our honest admission enabled us to stop using. The people in N.A. ^{sp out} told us that they were recovering addicts who had learned to live without drugs. If they could do it, so could we.

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The only alternatives to recovery are jails, institutions, dereliction and death. Unfortunately, our disease makes us ~~susceptible to denial~~^{deny} of our addiction, ~~instead of dealing with it~~^{too}. If you are an addict, you can find a new way of life through the N.A. Program that would not otherwise be possible. We have become very grateful in the course of our recovery. [We have a disease from which we do recover daily.] Our lives have become useful, through abstinence and by working the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous.

We realize that we are never cured and carry the disease within us all our lives. ↑ Each day we are given another chance. We are convinced that there is only one way for us to live, and that is the N.A. way.

From Workshop?

WHO IS AN ADDICT?

Most of us do not have to think twice about this question. WE KNOW! Our whole life and thinking is centered in drugs in one form or another, the getting and using and finding ways and means to get more. We use to live and live to use. Very simply an addict is a man or woman whose life is controlled by drugs. We are people in the grip of a continuing and progressive illness whose ends are always the same: jails, institutions and death.

Those of us who have found the program of Narcotics Anonymous do not have to think twice about the question: Who is an addict? We know. The following is our experience.

Our addiction was not caused by any particular drug or changing substance caused a problem in any area of life. Addiction is a disease which manifested itself in us at some point. Our addiction involved more than simple drug use. Some of us believe that the disease was present long before the first time we used.

Most of us did not consider ourselves addicted before coming to the Narcotics Anonymous program. The problem was that the information available to us came from misinformed people. As long as we could stop using for awhile, we thought we were O.K. We looked at the stopping, not the using. As our addiction progressed, we thought of stopping less and less. Only in desperation did we ask ourselves, "Could it be the drugs?"

We did not choose to become addicts. We suffered from a disease which expressed itself in ways that are anti-social and self-destructive. The diagnosis and treatment is difficult.

Our disease isolated us from people except for the getting, using and finding ways and means to get more. Hostile, resentful, self-centered and self-seeking, we cut ourselves off from the outside

world. Anything not completely familiar became alien and dangerous. Our world shrank and isolation became our life. We used in order to survive. It was the only way of life we knew.

Some of us used, misused and abused drugs and still never considered ourselves addicts. Through all of this, we kept telling ourselves, "I can handle it." Our misconceptions about the nature of addiction conjured up visions of violence, street crime, dirty needles and jail.

When our addiction is treated as a crime or moral deficiency, we become rebellious and are driven deeper into isolation. Some of the highs felt great, but eventually the things we had to do in order to support our using reflected desperation. We were caught in the grip of our disease. We were forced to survive anyway we could. We manipulated people and tried to control everything around us. We lied, stole, cheated and sold ourselves. We had to have drugs, regardless of the cost. Failure and fear began to invade our lives.

One aspect of our addiction was our inability to deal with life on its terms. We tried drugs and combinations of drugs in an effort to cope with a seemingly hostile world. We dreamed of finding a magic formula that would solve our ultimate problem--ourselves. The fact was that we could not successfully use any mind-altering or mood-changing substance. The addict who used non-narcotic drugs, including marijuana and alcohol, was in as much danger as the narcotics user. Drugs ceased to make us feel good.

At time, we were defensive about our addiction and justified our right to use, especially when we had "legal prescriptions." We were proud of the sometimes illegal and often bizarre behavior that typified our using. We "forgot" the times we sat alone consumed by fear and self-pity. We fell into a pattern or selective thinking. We only remembered the "good" drug experiences. We justified and rationalized our actions in order to keep from going crazy. We ignored the times when life seemed to be a nightmare. We avoided the reality of our addiction.

Higher mental and emotional functions, such as conscience and the ability to love, were sharply affected by our use of drugs.

Living skills were reduced to the animal level. Our spirit was broken. The capacity to be human was lost. This seems extreme, but many of us have been in this state.

We were constantly searching for "the answer"--that person, place or thing that would make everything all right. We lacked the ability to cope with our living. As our addiction caught up with us, many of us found ourselves in and out of institutions.

These experiences indicated there was something wrong with our lives. We wanted an easy way out and some of us thought of suicide. Our attempts were usually feeble, and only helped to contribute to our feelings of worthlessness. We trapped ourselves in the illusion of "what if", "if only" and "just one more time."

We have regained good physical health many times, only to lose it by using again. Our track record shows that it is impossible for us to use successfully no matter how well we may appear to be in control. Drugs always bring us to our knees.

When we did seek help, we were really looking for the absence of pain. Like other incurable diseases, addiction can be arrested. We agree that there is nothing shameful about being an addict, provided we accept our dilemma honestly and take positive action. We are willing to admit without reservation that we are allergic to drugs. Common sense tells us that it would be insane to go back to the source of our allergy. Our experience indicates that medicine cannot "cure" our illness.

Although physical and mental tolerance play a role, many drugs require no extended period of use to trigger allergic reactions. Our reaction is what makes us addicts, not how much we used.

Many of us did not think we had a problem until the drugs ran out. Even though others told us we had a problem, we were convinced that we were right and the world was wrong. We used this belief to justify our self-destructive behavior. We developed a point of view that enabled us to pursue our addiction without concern for our own well-being or that of others. We began to feel the drugs were killing us long before we could ever admit it to anyone else. We noticed that if we tried to stop using, we couldn't. We suspected we had lost control over the drugs and had no power to stop.

Certain things followed as we continued to use. We became accustomed to a state of mind common to addicts. We forgot what it was like before we started using; we forgot the social graces. We acquired strange habits and mannerisms. We forgot how to work; we forgot how to express ourselves and show concern for others. We forgot how to feel.

While using, we lived in another world. We experienced only periodic jolts of reality or self-awareness. It seemed we were at least two people instead of one, like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. We ran around trying to get our lives together before our next run. Sometimes we could do this very well, but later, it was less important and more impossible. In the end, Dr. Jekyll died and Mr. Hyde took over.

Every addict has a few things they can say they never did. We cannot let these things become excuses to use again. Some of us feel lonely because of differences between us and other members, and this makes it difficult to give up our old friends and old habits.

We all have different tolerances for pain. Some addicts needed to go to greater extremes than others. Some of us may find we have had enough when we realize that we are getting high too often and it is affecting our daily lives.

At first, we were using in a manner which seemed to be social or at least controllable with little indication of the disaster which the future held for us. At some point, our using became uncontrollable and anti-social. This began when things were going well and we were in situations that allowed us to use frequently. This was usually the end of the good times. We went from a state of drugged success and well-being to complete spiritual, mental and emotional bankruptcy. This rate of decline also varied from addict to addict. Whether it was years or days, it was all downhill. We may have tried to moderate, substitute, or even stop using. Those of us who don't die from the disease will go on to prison, mental institutions or complete demoralization as the disease progresses.

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sponsible for having gotten us into our very worst predicaments. Some of us may spend the rest of our lives in jail for a drug-related crime or a crime committed while using.

We had to reach our bottom before we became willing to stop. We were such a mess that we needed help in the latter stages of our addiction. It was a relief for us to see the destruction, disaster and delusion of our using. It was harder to deny our addiction when the problems caused by drug usage were staring us in the face.

Some of us first saw the effects of addiction on the people we were close to. We were very dependant on them to carry us emotionally through life. We felt angry, disappointed and hurt when they had other interests, friends and loved ones. We regretted the past, dreaded the future, and we weren't too thrilled about the present. After years of searching, we were more unhappy and less satisfied than when it all began.

Our addiction had enslaved us. We were prisoners of our own mind, condemned by our own guilt. We had given up ever stopping. Our attempts to stay clean had always failed, causing us pain and misery.

We feel that each individual has to answer the question, "Am I an addict?", for themselves. How we got the disease is of no immediate importance to us. What concerns us is recovery.

As addicts, we have an incurable disease called addiction which is chronic, progressive and fatal. However, it is a treatable disease. We begin to treat our addiction by not using. Many of us sought answer, but we failed to find any workable solution until we found each other. Once we are able to identify ourselves as addicts, help becomes possible. We can see a little of ourselves in every addict, and a little bit of them in us. This insight lets us help one another. Our full sense of hopelessness until we found other addicts who were struggling with the same problem was what had kept us sick, and our honest admission enabled us to stop using. The people in N.A. told us that they were recovering addicts who had learned to live without drugs. If they could do it, so could we.

The only alternatives to recovery are jails, institutions, dereliction and death. Unfortunately, our disease makes us susceptible to denial of our addiction instead of dealing with it. If you are an addict, you can find a new way of life through the N.A. Program that would not otherwise be possible; We have become very grateful in the course of our recovery. We have a disease from which we do recover daily. Our lives have become useful, through abstinence and by working the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous.

We realize that we are never cured and carry the disease within us all our lives. Each day we are given another chance. We are convinced that there is only one way for us to live, and that is the N.A. way.

CHAPTER ONE

WHO IS AN ADDICT?

Most of us do not have the time to think about the question "Who is an addict?" whose life and thinking is centered in drugs. Some find one another, one getting and using and finding ways and means to get more. We use to live and live to use. Very simply an addict is a man or woman whose life is controlled by drugs. We are people in the grip of a continuing and progressive illness whose ends are always the same: jails, institutions and death.

Those of us who have found the program of Narcotics Anonymous do not have to think twice about the question: Who is an addict? We know! For those who don't know the following is our experience.

Addiction is an incurable, chronic, progressive and fatal disease characterized by the obsession to use drugs compulsively. We believe that an addict is a person whose use of a mind-altering, mood-changing substance, in any form, is a problem to him or her for life.

The evidence indicates that more than 90% of addicts are self-made. We believe that the disease was present long before the first time we used.

Most of us did not consider ourselves addicted before coming to The Narcotics Anonymous Program. The problem was that the information available to us came from misinformed people. As long as we could stop using for awhile, we thought we were O.K. We looked at the stopping, not the using. As our addiction progressed, we thought of stopping less and less. Only in desperation did we ask ourselves, "Could it be the drugs?"

We did not choose to become addicts. We suffer from a disease which expresses itself in ways that are anti-social and make detection, diagnosis and treatment difficult.

One of the main reasons why people become addicts is that they are seeking, we cut ourselves off from the outer world. Anything not completely familiar became alien and dangerous. Our world shrank and isolation became our life. We used in order to survive. It was the only way of life we knew.

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One aspect of our addiction was our inability to deal with life on its terms. We tried drugs and combinations of drugs in an effort to cope with a seemingly hostile world. We dreamed of finding a magic formula that would solve our ultimate problem--ourselves. The fact was that we could not successfully use any mind-altering or mood-changing substance. The addict who used non-narcotic drugs, including marijuana and alcohol, was in as much danger as the narcotics user. Drugs ceased to make us feel good.

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Higher mental and emotional functions, such as conscience and the ability to love, were sharply affected by our use of drugs. Living skills were reduced to the animal level. Our spirit was broken. The capacity to be human was lost.

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We were constantly searching for "the answer"--that person, place or thing that would make everything all right. We lacked the ability to cope with daily living. As our addiction climbed up with us, we found ourselves in and out of institutions.

These experiences indicated there was something wrong with our lives. We wanted an easy way out and some of us thought of suicide. Our attempts were usually feeble, and only helped to contribute to our feelings of worthlessness. We trapped ourselves in the illusion of "what if," "if only" and "just one more time."

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from which we do recover daily. Our lives have returned to being useful, through abstinence and by working the twelve steps of Narcotics Anonymous.

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Drugs had given us the feeling that we could handle whatever situation might develop. We became aware that drugs were largely responsible for our having gotten us into very worse predicaments. Some of us may spend the

rest of our lives in jail for a drug-related crime or a crime committed while using.

We had to reach our bottom before we became willing to stop. We were much more motivated to seek help in the latter stages of our addiction. It was easier for us to see the destruction, disaster and delusion of our using. It was harder to deny our addiction when the problems caused by drug usage were staring us in the face.

Some of us first saw the effects of addiction on the people we were close to. We were very dependent on them to carry us emotionally through life. We felt disappointed and hurt when they had other interests, friends and loved ones. We regretted the past, dreaded the future, and we weren't thrilled about the present. After years of searching, we were more unhappy and less satisfied than when it all began.

Our addiction had enslaved us. We were prisoners of our own mind, condemned by our own guilt. We had given up ever stopping. Our attempts to stay clean had always failed, causing us pain and misery.

We feel that each individual has to answer the question, "Am I an addict?", for themselves. How we got the disease is of no immediate importance to us. What concerns us is recovery.

As addicts, we have an incurable disease called addiction which is chronic, progressive and fatal. However, it is a treatable disease. We begin to treat our addiction by not using. Many of us sought answers, but we failed to find any workable solution until we found each other. Once we are able to identify ourselves and addicts, help becomes possible. We can see a little of ourselves in every addict, and a little bit of them in us. This insight lets us help one another. Our futures seemed hopeless until we found clean addicts who were willing to share with us. Denial of our addiction was what had kept us sick, and our honest admission enabled us to stop using. The people in N.A. told us that they were recovering addicts who had learned to live without drugs. If they could do it, so could we.

The only alternatives to recovery are jails, institutions, dereliction and death. Unfortunately, our disease makes us susceptible to denying our addiction instead of dealing with it. If you are an addict, you can find a new way of life through the N.A. Program that would not otherwise be possible. We have become very grateful in the course of our recovery. We have a disease

CHAPTER ONE

WHO IS AN ADDICT?

For the addict, the whole life and living is centered around the drug. It is another, the getting and using and rinsing ways. It means to get more. We use to live and live to use. Very simply an addict is a man or woman whose life is controlled by drugs. We are people in the grip of a continuing and progressive illness whose ends are always the same: jails, institutions and death.

Those of us who have found the program of Narcotics Anonymous do not have to think twice about the question: Who is an addict? We know! For those who don't know the following is our experience.

Addiction is an incurable, chronic, progressive and fatal disease characterized by the obsession to use drugs compulsively. We believe that an addict is a person whose use of a mind-altering, mood-changing substance, in any form, has become a compulsion.

The addict is a person whose life is controlled by the drug. The disease is manifested in a person's behavior and in the way he or she lives. For us believe that the disease was present long before the first time we used.

Most of us did not consider ourselves addicted before coming to The Narcotics Anonymous Program. The problem was that the information available to us came from misinformed people. As long as we could stop using for awhile, we thought we were O.K. We looked at the stopping, not the using. As our addiction progressed, we thought of stopping less and less. Only in desperation did we ask ourselves, "Could it be the drugs?"

We did not choose to become addicts. We suffer from a disease which expresses itself in ways that are anti-social and make detection, diagnosis and treatment difficult.

Our addiction has made us a part of a different world. We are seeking to get ourselves off the outside world. Anything not completely familiar became alien and dangerous. Our world shrank and isolation became our life. We used in order to survive. It was the only way of life we knew.

Some of us used, misused and abused drugs and still never considered our-

it." Our misconceptions about the nature of addiction conjured up visions of violence, street crime, dirty needles and jail.

When our addiction is treated as a crime or moral deficiency, we become rebellious and are driven deeper into isolation. Some of the highs felt great, but eventually the things we had to do in order to support our using reflected desperation. We were caught in the grip of our disease. We were forced to survive anyway we could. We manipulated people and tried to control everything around us. We lied, stole, cheated and sold ourselves. We had to have drugs, regardless of the cost. Failure and fear began to invade our lives.

One aspect of our addiction was our inability to deal with life on its terms. We tried drugs and combinations of drugs in an effort to cope with a seemingly hostile world. We dreamed of finding a magic formula that would solve our ultimate problem--ourselves. The fact was that we could not successfully use any mind-altering or mood-changing substance. The addict who used non-narcotic drugs, including marijuana and alcohol, was in as much danger as the narcotics user. Drugs ceased to make us feel good.

At times, we were defensive about our addiction and justified our right to use, especially when we had "legal prescriptions." We were proud of the sometimes illegal and often bizarre behavior that typified our using. We "forgot" the times we sat alone consumed by fear and self-pity. We fell into a pattern of selective thinking. We only remembered the "good" drug experiences. We justified and rationalized the things we had to do to keep from being sick or going crazy. We ignored the times when life seemed to be a nightmare. We avoided the reality of our addiction.

Higher mental and emotional functions, such as conscience and the ability to love, were sharply affected by our use of drugs. Living skills were reduced to the animal level. Our spirit was broken. The capacity to be human was lost.

without concern for our own well-being or that of others. We began to feel the drugs were killing us long before we could ever admit it to anyone else. We noticed that if we tried to stop using, we couldn't. We suspected we had lost control over the drugs and had no power to stop.

Certain things followed as we continued to use. We became accustomed to a state of mind common to addicts. We forgot what it was like before we started using; we forgot the social graces. We acquired strange habits and mannerisms; We forgot how to work; we forgot how to express ourselves and show concern for others. We forgot how to feel.

While using, we lived in another world. We experienced only periodic jolts of reality or self-awareness. It seemed we were at least two people instead of one, like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. We ran around trying to get our lives together before our next run. Sometimes we could do this very well, but later, it was less important and more impossible. In the end, Dr. Jekyll died and Mr. Hyde took over.

Every addict has a few things they can say they never did. We cannot let these things become excuses to use again. Some of us feel lonely because of differences between us and other members, and this makes it difficult to give up our old friends and old habits.

We all have different tolerances for pain. Some addicts needed to go to greater extremes than others. Some of us may find we have had enough when we realize that we are getting high too often and it's affecting our daily lives.

At first, we were using in a manner which seemed to be social or at least controllable with little indication of the disaster which the future held for us. At some point, our using became uncontrollable and anti-social. This began when things were going well and we were in situations that allowed us to use frequently. This was usually the end of the good times. We went from a state of drugged success and well-being to complete spiritual, mental and emotional bankruptcy. This rate of decline also varied from addict to addict. Whether it was years or days, it was all downhill. We may have tried to moderate, substitute, or even stop using. Those of us who don't die from the disease will go on to prison, mental institutions or complete demoralization as the disease progresses.

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from which we do recover daily. Our lives have returned to being useful, through abstinence and by working the twelve steps of Narcotics Anonymous.

We realize that we are never cured and carry the disease within us all our lives. Each day we are given another chance. We are convinced that there is only one way for us to live, and that is the N.A. way.

CHAPTER TWO WHAT IS THE N.A. PROGRAM?

N.A. is a non-profit fellowship of addicts of men and women who have recovered from drug and alcohol addiction. We are recovered addicts who meet regularly to help each other to stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only "One" requirement for membership, the honest desire to stop using. There are no musts in N.A., but 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."

There are no strings attached to NA. We are not affiliated with any other organizations, we have no leaders, no initiation fees or dues, no pledges to sign, no promises to make to anyone. We are not interested in what or how much you used or who your connections were, what you have done in the past, how much or how little you have, but only in what you want to do about your problem and how you can stay clean. The fellowship is the most important person in your life because we can only help each other stay clean. We have learned from our group that it is only those who keep coming to our meetings regularly who stay clean.

Narcotics Anonymous is a Fellowship of men and women who are learning to live without drugs. We are a non-profit society, and have no dues, fees, or assessments of any kind. Each of us has paid the price of membership. We have paid dearly for the right to recover. We are addicts surviving against all odds who have banded together. We respond to honest sharing, and listen to the stories of our members for the message of recovery. We realize that at last there is hope for us.

In N.A., we make use of the things that have worked for those who have gone before us. The Twelve Steps are positive steps to make recovery possible. We have one primary purpose: to stay clean and to help others who come to us with a desire to stop using. We are united by our common problem, addiction. By meeting, talking with, and helping other addicts, we are able

They improve their chances of staying clean. There is nothing that compares to a new person freely talking about the pain.

and the endless hustle that goes on out there. If we forget where we came from, we may someday have to return there. Narcotics Anonymous has many years of face to face experience with literally hundreds of thousands of addicts in all phases of illness and recovery. N.A. is here to share recovery freely with any addict who wants it.

Our message of recovery is based on our own experience. Before coming to the Fellowship, we exhausted ourselves trying to "use" successfully, or trying to find out what was wrong with us. After coming to Narcotics Anonymous, we found ourselves among a very special group of people, who have suffered like us, and have found recovery. In their experiences, freely shared, we found hope for ourselves. If the Program worked for them, it might work for us.

We have seen it work for any addict who honestly and sincerely wanted to stop using. We meet people, addicts like ourselves, who are clean and have been for months or even years. We watch and listen to them and realize that they have found a way to live and be happy without drugs.

In all honesty, the most we can do for the newcomer is to share our experience, strength and hope, and be ready to help when asked. If we go beyond this, we risk losing their respect. Most of us can remember doing nothing as long as we could get someone else to take care of us. We don't want the help we offer to rob the newcomer of the need to take responsibility for their own recovery. In helping others, we help others. We don't claim to have all the answers. All we can do is share our experience.

We don't have to settle for the limitations of the past. We can't change the past, but we can change the future, and constantly improve on them or replace them with new ones. We are men and women who have discovered and admitted that we are powerless over our addiction. When we use, we lose.

When we discovered that we cannot live with or without drugs, we sought help through N.A., rather than prolong pain. The Program works and it saves lives. We welcome different people. The steps and traditions give us a guide from

our self-imposed life sentences. We become free to live.

Our meetings have an atmosphere of empathy. We understand the feelings which all addicts have in common. The unconditional love we find makes it possible for us to relax and to review the assumptions we had made about ourselves and reality. We are able to start living a new way of life. Working the Program gives us - relationship with a Power greater than ourselves, corrects defects, rights old wrongs, and leads us to help others. We begin the process of change by listening to the stories of the people we meet in an N.A. meeting. Maybe their solution is part of our solution. When we come out of the fog, we can learn to live like human beings. The more meetings we attend, the more we can identify with our fellow addicts. We eventually hear someone who makes us feel fortunate by comparison. Our meetings are a process of identity, hope and sharing. The heart of N.A. beats when two addicts share their share their recovery. What we do becomes real for us when we share it. This happens on a larger scale in our regular meetings. A meeting is addicts gathered together to help each other stay clean. Newer members provide those with more experience an outlet for sharing what they have learned. We all share the common bond of a disease that can kill us. We usually have coffee or some sort of refreshment. There is N.A. literature available to anyone, which we read from at the beginning of the meeting. Our prayers are of a spiritual, not religious nature. Some meetings have speakers, topic discussions, or both. Closed meetings are for addicts seeking recovery, and open meetings welcome anyone wishing to experience our Program. The atmosphere of recovery is protected from interruption by our Twelve Traditions. We take no collection because we are fully self-supporting. Regardless of where the meeting takes place, we remain unaffiliated. Meetings provide us with a place to be with fellow addicts. All we need is two addicts, caring and sharing, to make a meeting. We let new ideas flow into us; we ask questions. Though the principles of the Twelve Steps may seem strange to us at first, they do work.

We find that trying to help another addict is essential for us, whether the addict uses what have to offer or not. For this reason, N.A. groups concentrate on person-to person service, without getting involved in any outside enterprise, no matter how worthwhile. We feel safe with each other. Good comes from being with others, because an addict alone is in bad company. The love we experience at N.A. meetings takes us out of our bad company. The love we experience at N.A. meetings takes us out of loneliness and negativity. Something memorable, precious and beneficial stems from staying clean together. We feel secure to grow among friends we can trust. We no longer need to pretend that we can make it alone. In N.A., we recover together.

The only requirement to be a member of Narcotics Anonymous is a desire to stop using. We want the place where we recover to a safe place, free from outside influences. Because no law enforcement agencies are involved, we are free to express ourselves. No one is there to judge, stereotype or moralize to us. We are not recruited, and it doesn't cost anything. N.A. doesn't provide counseling or social services. Any addict seeking recovery is welcome.

Our program is, in fact, a way of life. We learn the value of such spiritual principles as surrender, humility, and service, from reading the N.A. literature, going to meetings, and talking to our sponsor. A sponsor is a special friend who guides us in recovery. We confide in them and let them help us. From them, we also learn the art of helping others.

By close work with a sponsor, we learn to utilize the Twelve Steps of the Program as a guide to dealing with life. Sponsorship is a give and take situation with both people gaining strength from the relationship. We look for a sponsor as soon as we become acquainted with members in our area. We look for someone we feel free to confide in, a person who has worked the Steps, and has the kind of attitude toward life that we would like to have. We share with others in order

to maintain progress in our recovery. Asking someone to sponsor us, and being asked to sponsor are privileges, so we do not hesitate. We are all here to help and to be helped. Get phone numbers and use them. Ask questions about the Program, and get acquainted with the people. As we learn how to work the program, we learn how to live.

Although we don't have all the answers, the Program of Narcotics Anonymous works for us. We find that our lives steadily improve, if we don't use drugs and we work the Program to sustain our recovery. We meet other addicts seeking recovery, and discover ourselves able to respond to their needs. We give freely of what we have found. The truth is that the more we give in this way, the more we have to offer. Our needs are met when we learn to give to others. By striving for honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness, we develop humility, tolerance, and patience. We are able to love the unlovable and discover self-acceptance. We become able to cope with our living problems. We finally realize that we have a choice in the conduct of our lives.

The Program of Narcotics Anonymous, our new friends, and our sponsors help us to deal with problems in recovery. In N.A., our joys are multiplied by sharing our good days and our sorrows are lessened by sharing our bad days. Pain shared is pain relieved and joys shared are joys increased. For the first time in our lives, we no longer have to experience anything alone. We have each other.

OHIO ORIGINAL 2

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CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IS THE N.A. PROGRAM?

N. A. is a non-profit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovered addicts who meet regularly to help each other to stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only "One" requirement for membership, the honest desire to stop using. There are no musts in N.A. but 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 is that "They Work."

There are no strings attached to N.A. We are not affiliated with any other organizations, we have no leaders, no initiation fees or dues. no pledges to sign, no promises to make anyone. We are not connected with any political, religious or law enforcement groups, and are under no surveillance at any time. Anyone may join us regardless of age, race, color, creed, religion or lack of religion.

We are not interested in what or how much you used or who your connections were, what you have done in the past, how much or how little you have, but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help. The newcomer is the most important person at any meeting, because we can only keep what we have by giving it away. We have learned from our group experience that those who keep coming to our meetings regularly stay clean.

Narcotics Anonymous is a Fellowship of men and women who are learning to live without drugs. We are a non-profit society, and have no dues or fees of any kind. ~~NO DUES~~

We are addicts surviving against all odds who meet regularly together. We respond to honest sharing and listen to the stories of our members for the message of recovery. Each of us has paid the price of membership. We have paid dearly with our pain for the right to recover. We realize that, at last, there is hope for us.

In N.A. we make use of the ^{tools} ~~things~~ that have worked for other recovering addicts who have ^{learned to live without drugs in N.A.} ~~gone before us~~. The Twelve Steps are positive tools that make recovery possible. Our primary purpose is to stay clean and to carry the mes-

sage to the addict who still suffers. We are united by our common problem of addiction. By meeting, talking with, and helping other addicts, we are able to stay clean. The newcomer is the most important person at any meeting because we can only keep what we have by giving it away.

Narcotics Anonymous has had more than twenty-five years of experience with literally hundreds of thousands of addicts. This mass of intensive, first-hand experience in all phases of illness and recovery is of unparalleled therapeutic value. We are here to share freely with any addict who wants it.

Our message of recovery is based on our own experience. Before coming to the Fellowship, we exhausted ourselves trying to "use" successfully, or trying to find out what was wrong with us. After coming to N.A., we found ourselves among a very special group of people, who have suffered like us and found recovery. In their experiences, freely shared, we found hope for ourselves. If the Program worked for them, it would work for us.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. We have seen ~~it~~ ^{THE PROGRAM} work for any addict who honestly and sincerely wanted to stop. We don't have to be clean when we get here, but after the first meeting, we suggest that newcomers keep coming back and come back clean. We don't have to wait for an overdose, or jail sentence, to get help from N.A.; nor is addiction a hopeless condition from which there is no recovery.

We meet addicts like ourselves who are clean. We watch and listen to them and realize that they have found a ~~new~~ way to live and enjoy life without drugs. We don't have to settle for the limitations of the past. We can examine and re-examine all our old ideas and constantly improve on them or replace them with new ones. We are men and women who have discovered and admitted that we are powerless over our addiction. When we ~~lose~~ ^{use}, we lose.

When we discovered that we cannot live with or without drugs, we sought help through N.A. rather than prolong ~~pain~~ ^{OUR SUFFERING}. The program works a miracle in our lives. We become different people. The Steps and abstinence give us a daily reprieve from our self-imposed life sentences. We become free to live.

We want the place where we recover to be a safe place, free from outside influences. For the protection of the Fellowship, we insist that no drugs or paraphernalia be brought to any meeting.

We feel totally free to express ourselves within the Fellowship, because no law enforcement agencies are involved. Our meetings have an atmosphere of empathy. ~~No one judges, stereotypes, or moralizes to us.~~ We are not recruited and it doesn't cost anything. N.A. does not provide counseling or social services.

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At the beginning of the meeting, we read N.A. literature which is available to anyone. Some meetings have speakers, topic discussions or both. Closed meetings are for addicts or those who think they might have a drug problem; open meetings welcome anyone wishing to experience our Fellowship.

The atmosphere of ~~recovery~~ ^{recovery} is protected from interruption by our Twelve Traditions. ~~We take a collection from our members because we are full self-supporting through voluntary contributions.~~ ^{we've shared what we have learned about living without drugs.} ~~Regardless of where the meeting takes place, we remain unaffiliated. Meetings provide us with a place to be with fellow addicts. All we need is two addicts, caring and sharing, to make a meeting.~~ ^{we've shared what we have learned about living without drugs.}

We let new ideas flow into us. We ask questions. ^{we've shared what we have learned about living without drugs.} Though the principles of the Twelve Steps may seem strange to us at first, the most important thing about them is that they work. Our program is, in fact, a way of life. We learn the value of such spiritual principles as surrender, humility and service from reading the N.A. literature, going to meetings, and working the Steps. We find that our lives steadily improve, if we maintain complete abstinence from all mind-altering, mood-changing chemicals and if we work the Twelve Steps to sustain our recovery. ^{Living this} ~~Working the~~ Program gives us a relationship with a Power greater than ourselves, corrects defects, leads us to help others, and where there has been wrong, teaches us the spirit of forgiveness.

Many books have been written about the nature of addiction. This book ~~primarily~~ ^{primarily} concerns itself with the nature of recovery. If you are an addict and have found this book, please give yourself a break and read it.

OHIO ORIGINAL 2

From ProofCLOSEDWLC-5
FINAL FORM

CHAPTER TWO

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CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IS THE N.A. PROGRAM?

N.A. is a non-profit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovered 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 honest desire to stop using. There are no musts in N.A. but 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".

There are no strings attached to N.A. We are not affiliated with any other organizations, we have no leaders, no initiation fees or dues, no pledges to sign, no promises to make to anyone. We are not connected with any political, religious, or law enforcement groups, and are under no surveillance at any time. Anyone may join us regardless of age, race, color, creed, religion or lack of religion.

We are not interested in what or how much you used or who your connections were, what you have done in the past, how much or how little you have, but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help. The newcomer is the most important person at any meeting, because we can only keep what we have by giving it away. We have learned from our group experience that those who keep coming to our meetings regularly stay clean.

1 Narcotics Anonymous is a Fellowship of men and women who are
2 learning to live without drugs. We are a non-profit society, and
3 have no dues or fees of any kind. Each of us has paid the price
4 of membership. We have paid dearly with our pain for the right
5 to recover.

6 We are addicts surviving against all odds who meet regular-
7 ly together. We respond to honest sharing and listen to the
8 stories of our members for the message of recovery. We realize
9 that, at last, there is hope for us.

10 We make use of the tools that have worked for other recover-

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We are not interested in what or how much you used or who your connections were, what you have done in the past, how much or how little you have, but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help. The newcomer is the most important person at any meeting, because we can only keep what we have by giving it away. We have learned from our group experience that those who keep coming to our meetings regularly stay clean.

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The Program works a miracle in our lives. We become different people. The Steps and abstinence give us a daily reprieve from our self-imposed life sentences. We become free, to live.

The therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel. Most of us have tried to stay clean on our own, and failed. We need each other to survive. The heart of N.A. beats when two addicts share their recovery; their experience, their strength, and their hope. Our meetings are a process of learning and identification. Our experience becomes real for us when we share it with others. This happens on a larger scale at our regular meetings. N.A. is not a counselling or social service, it is addicts gathered together to stay clean and learn how to live and enjoy life.

We want the place where we recover to be a safe place and we try to keep it that way. We ask newcomers to try to come to our meetings clean, we don't allow anyone to carry drugs or paraphernalia into our meetings, we don't affiliate with other programs or any law enforcement agencies, and we do everything we can to protect the anonymity of our members. We do not recruit members, this is a program of attraction rather than promotion. N.A. doesn't cost anything, we are self-supporting through our own willingness to contribute to help cover expenses. We try to remain free from outside influences, outside issues, and controversy. So that we may find freedom, we try to keep N.A. open and free.

Our meetings begin with readings from our literature. This may sound corny, but it works. These meetings may consist of members speaking, the discussion of a topic, open sharing, or a combination of these. We have "closed" meetings for addicts and those who think they might have a drug problem, and "open" meetings which welcome non-addicts as well as members. We try not to judge, stereotype, or moralize. The "magic" of N.A. is empathy, and twelve traditions are designed to protect this atmosphere of recovery.

We let new ideas flow into us. We ask questions. We share what we have learned about living without drugs. Though the principles of the Twelve Steps may seem strange to us at first, the most important thing about them is that they work. The Program is, in fact, a way of life. We learn the value of such spiritual principles as surrender, humility and service from reading the N.A. literature, going to meetings, and working the Steps. We find that our lives steadily improve, if we maintain abstinence from mind-altering, mood-altering chemicals and work

CLOSED

CHAPTER THREE

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OHIO ORIGINAL 2

WHY ARE WE HERE?

WLCS From proofread
FINAL FORM

Before coming to the fellowship of N.A., we could not manage our own lives, we could not live and enjoy life as other people do. We had to have something different and we thought we had found it in drugs. We placed their use ahead of the welfare of our families, our wives, husbands, and our children. We had to have drugs at all costs. We did many people great harm, but most of all we harmed ourselves. Through our inability to accept personal responsibility, we were actually creating our own problems. We seemed to be incapable of facing life on its own terms.

Most of us realised that in our addictions we were slowly committing suicide, but such cunning enemies of life are narcotics and sedation that we lost the power to do anything about it. Jail did not help us at all. Medicine, religion, and psychiatry seemed to have no answers for us that we could use. All these methods having failed for us, we sought help from each other in Narcotics Anonymous.

After coming to N.A. we realised that we were sick people who suffered from a disease like Alcoholism, Diabetes, and Tuberculosis. There is no known cure for these--all, however, can be arrested at some point and recovery is then possible.

In N.A. we follow a program borrowed from Alcoholics Anonymous. In the last forty years more than one million people have recovered in A.A., most of them just as hopelessly addicted to alcohol, as we were to drugs. We are deeply grateful to the A.A. Fellowship for pointing the way for us to a new way of life.

We are addicts seeking recovery. We used drugs to cover up our feelings, ~~and we had to do whatever was necessary to get them~~. Many of us woke up sick, unable to make it to work, or went to work loaded. Many of us stole to support our habit. We hurt the ones we loved. We did all these things and told ourselves "We ^{can} handle it". We were looking for a way out. We couldn't face life on its own terms. ^{eventually} In the beginning, using was fun, ~~and then it became a habit and finally~~ ^{and then} it became a habit and ~~for us it~~ ^{for us} was necessary for survival. The progression of the disease was not apparent to us. We continued on the path of destruction, unaware of where it was leading us.

OHIO ORIGINAL 2

We were addicts and did not know it. Through drugs we tried to avoid reality, ~~and postpone~~ pain and misery. When the drugs wore off, we realised that we still had the same problems and that they were becoming worse. We sought relief by using again and again-more drugs, more often.

We ~~sought~~ ^{often} ~~for~~ help and found none. Doctors didn't understand our dilemma; ~~usually~~ they tried to help by giving us medication. Our husbands, wives and loved ones gave us what they had and drained themselves in the hope that we would stop using or get better. We tried substituting one drug for another, but this only prolonged our pain. We tried limiting our usage to "social" amounts without success. There is no such thing as a "social addict". Some of us sought an answer through churches, religions or cultism. Some sought a cure by geographic ~~change~~ ^{OUR} change, blaming ~~their~~ ^{OUR} surroundings and living situations for ~~their~~ ^{OUR} problems. This attempt only gave us a chance to take advantage of new people. Some of us sought approval through sex or change of ~~peers~~ ^{friends}. This approval seeking carried us further into our addiction. Some of us tried marriage, divorce or desertion. Regardless of what we tried, we could not escape ~~from~~ our disease.

We reached a point in our lives where we felt like a lost ~~of~~ cause. Our worth to our jobs, families and friends was little ~~or~~ ^{or} none. ~~We~~ ^{MANY OF US} were unemployed and unemployable. Any form of success was frightening and unfamiliar. We didn't know what to do. As the self-loathing grew, we needed to use more and more to mask our feelings. We were sick and ~~tired~~ ^{tired} of pain and trouble. We were frightened and ran from the fear. No matter how far we ran, we always carried the fear with us. We were hopeless, useless and lost. Failure had become our way of life and self-esteem was non-existent. Perhaps the most painful of all was ~~the~~ ^{the} desperation of loneliness. ~~The~~ ^{Isolation and the} Denial of our ~~defects~~ ^{addiction}, and ~~isolation~~ ^{us}, kept ~~us~~ ^{us} moving ~~on~~ ^{along} this downhill path. Any hope of getting better disappeared. Helplessness, emptiness and fear became our way of life. We were complete failures. Personality change was what we really needed. Change from self-destructive patterns of life became necessary. When we lied ~~cheated~~ ^{cheated} or ~~stole~~ ^{stole} we degrade ourselves in our own eyes. We ~~had~~ ^{had} had enough of self-destruction. We experienced how powerless we really are. ^{when} Nothing relieved our paranoia and fear. We hit bottom and became ready to ask for help.

When

We were searching for an answer. We reached out and found Narcotics Anonymous. We came to our first N.A. meeting in defeat and didn't know what to expect. After sitting in a meeting, or several meetings, we began to feel that people cared and were willing to help. Although our minds told us we would never make it, the people in the Fellowship gave us hope by insisting we could recover. We found that no matter what our past thoughts or actions were, others had felt and done the same. Surrounded by fellow addicts, we realised that we were not alone. We found that by putting recovery first, the program works. Recovery is what happens in our meetings; each of our lives is at stake.

We faced three disturbing realizations: One: we are powerless over addiction and our lives are unmanageable; two: although we are not responsible for our disease, we are responsible for our recovery; and three: we can no longer blame people, places and things for our addiction. We must face our problems and our feelings.

We concentrate on recovery and how we feel, not what we have done in the past. The ultimate weapon for recovery is the recovering addict.

Old friends, places and ideas are often a threat to our recovery. We need to change our playmates, and playgrounds, and playthings.

When we realised we are not able to manage on our own, some of us immediately began experiencing depression, anxiety, hostility and resentment. Petty frustrations, minor setbacks and loneliness often made us feel that we were not getting any better. We found that we suffered from a disease, not a moral dilemma. We were critically ill, not hopelessly bad. Our disease can only be arrested through total abstinence.

Today we experience a full range of feelings. Before coming into the Fellowship, we either felt elated or depressed with very little in between. Our negative sense of self has been replaced by a positive concern for others. Answers are provided and problems are solved. It is a great gift to feel human again.

What a change from the way we used to be! That's how we know that the N.A. program works. It's the first thing that ever convinced us that we needed to change ourselves, instead of trying to change the people and situations around us. We discover new opportunities. We find a sense of self-worth. We learn self-respect. This program is a Twelve Step blueprint for doing just those things. By working the Steps, we come to accept a Higher Power's will; this acceptance leads us to...

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CHAPTER THREE

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on the path of destruction, unaware of where it was leading us. We were addicts and did not know it. Through drugs we tried to avoid reality, pain and misery. When the drugs wore off, we realized that we still had the same problems and that they were more drugs, more often.

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We reached a point in our lives where we felt like a lost cause. Our worth to our jobs, families and friends was little or none. Many of us were unemployed and unemployable. Any form of success was frightening and unfamiliar. We didn't know what to do. As the self-loathing grew, we needed to use more and more to mask our feelings. We were sick and tired of pain and trouble. We were frightened and ran from the fear. No matter how far we ran, we always carried the fear with us. We were hopeless, useless and lost. Failure had become our way of life and self-esteem was non-existent. Perhaps the most painful of all was the desperation of loneliness. Isolation and the denial of our addiction, kept us moving along this downhill path. Any hope of getting better disappeared. Helplessness, emptiness and fear became our way of life. We were complete failures. Personality change was what we really needed. Change from self-destructive patterns of life.

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We experienced how powerless we really are. When nothing relieved our paranoia and fear, we hit bottom and became ready to accept help.

We were searching for an answer when we reached out and found Narcotics Anonymous. We came to our first N.A. meeting in defeat and didn't know what to expect. After sitting in a meeting, or several meetings, we began to feel that people cared and were willing to help. Although our minds told us we would never make it, the people in the Fellowship gave us hope by insisting we could recover. We found that no matter what our past thoughts or actions were, others had felt and done the same. Surrounded by fellow addicts, we realized that we were not alone. Recovery is what happens in our meetings, each of our lives is at stake. We found that by putting recovery first, the Program works.

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1. We are powerless over our addiction and our lives are unmanageable.
2. Although we are not responsible for our disease, we are responsible for our recovery.
3. We can no longer blame people, places and things for our addiction. We must face our problems and our feelings.

The ultimate weapon for recovery is the recovering addict. We concentrate on recovery and how we feel, not what we have done in the past. Old friends, places and ideas are often a threat to our recovery. We need to change our playmates, playgrounds and playthings.

When we first joined the Fellowship, many of us immediately began experiencing depression, anxiety, hostility and resentment. Petty frustrations, minor setbacks and loneliness often made us feel that we were not getting any better. We found that we suffered from a disease, not a moral dilemma. We were originally ill, not just lost.

be arrested through abstinence.

Today we experience a full range of feelings. Before coming into the Fellowship, we either felt elated or depressed with very little in between. Our negative sense of self has been replaced by a positive concern for others. We are no longer alone. It is a great gift to feel human again.

What a change from the way we used to be! That's how we know that the N.A. program works. It's the first thing that ever convinced us that we needed to change ourselves, instead of trying to change the people and situations around us. We discover new opportunities. We find a sense of self-worth. We learn self-respect. This is a program for doing just those things. By working the Steps, we come to accept a Higher Power's will; this acceptance leads us to recovery. We lose our fear of the unknown. We are set free.

WHY ART? WE NEED

Most of us realized, that in our addictions, we were slowly committing suicide, but such cunning enemies of life are narcotics and sedation that we had lost the power to do anything about it. Jail did not help us at all. Medicine, religion and psychiatry seemed to have no answers for us that we could use. All these methods having failed for us, in desperation, we sought help from each other from Narcotics Anonymous.

In N.A. we follow a program borrowed from Alcoholics Anonymous. In the last forty years more than one million people have recovered in A.A., most of them just as hopelessly addicted to alcohol as we were to drugs. We are deeply grateful to the A.A. Fellowship for pointing the way for us to a new way of life.

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did whatever it took to get that fix, pill, drink or joint. We denied all
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a whole new life and eventually started looking for a way out.

This will be used to ^{try to} bring ^{an} increased reality and awareness to the
 area. We will not have any printed copy being done.

additional problems that had built up. We felt the need to use more often as our disease progressed.

We needed help and had nowhere to go. Most of us explored different alternatives. Some doctors didn't understand our dilemma. Usually they tried to help by giving us medication. ^{sometimes} Our husbands, wives and loved ones ^{often} gave us anything they had and drained themselves in the hope that we would stop using. ^{Some of us} We tried substituting one drug for another and this only created a vicious cycle. ^{Some of us} We tried limiting our usage to "social" amounts; our success with this was short-lived or non-existent. ^{There's no such thing as a social addict} Some of us sought spiritual guidance through churches, religions or cultism. ^{but our obsession with self denied us spiritual growth} Some of us sought a cure by geographical change, blaming ^{the} our surroundings and living situations for our problems. This attempt ^{did not work because} just gave us a chance to take advantage of new people. ^{shh} Wherever we went, our troubles went with us. Some of us sought approval through sexual activity or change of peers. This approval seeking just got us back where we started. Some of us tried marriage, divorce or desertion of our families.

^{Only} tried psychiatrists and institutions and some ^{even} ^{ended} when released from society. ^{Bridge} Regardless what we tried we could not escape from ourselves.

We had reached a point in our lives where ^{any form of} our worth to our jobs, families and friends was little or none. ^{Many} Some of us ^{were} became unemployed and unemployable. Success was scary and unfamiliar. ^{Any form of} We were ^{unable to continue living the way we had been and} didn't know what to do about it. As the self-loathing grew, we had to use more and more to mask our feelings. We ^{became} were sick and tired of pain and trouble. We were frightened and ran from the fear. No matter how far we ran, we always brought the fear with us. We were hopeless, useless, and lost. ^{and worthless.} Feelings of worthlessness overcame us. Failure had become our way of life and self-esteem was non-existent. Perhaps the most painful of these failures was the desperation of loneliness. The denial of our defects, the blindness to our flaws in character, kept us moving on our downhill path. ^{caught in the} desperation of isolation and loneliness.

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paranoia and fear. We hit bottom and became ready to ask for help.

We were searching for an answer. We reached out and found Narcotics Anonymous. We came to our first N.A. meeting in defeat. We didn't know what to expect. After sitting in a meeting, or several meetings, we began to feel that people cared and were willing to be patient with us. Although our minds told us we would never make it, the people in the Fellowship gave us hope by insisting we could. We found that no matter what our thoughts or past actions were, others had done and felt the same. Surrounded by fellow addicts, we realized that we were not alone. We found the Program would work best if we put recovery first. Recovery is what happens in our meetings; everyone's life is at stake. ~~We learned that~~ ^{When we were in} old friends, places and ideas could be a threat to our recovery. We had to change our playmates, playgrounds and playthings.

~~When we came to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous,~~ ^{When we were in} we faced three disturbing realizations. One: we were powerless over our addiction and our lives were unmanageable; two: ~~we were not responsible for our disease,~~ ^{at home} ~~we~~ ^{were} responsible for our recovery; and three: we could no longer blame people, places and things for our addiction. We had to face our problems and our feelings.

In N.A., we learned that members concentrate on recovery and how they feel, not what they had done in the past. We found that the ultimate weapon for recovery was the recovering addict. Having realized that we were unable to manage on our own, some of us immediately began experiencing depression, anxiety, hostility and resentment. We began to feel emotional pain that we had always run away from. ~~Due to petty frustrations, minor setbacks and~~ ^{often made} ~~losses,~~ ^{lowliness} some of us felt that we were not getting any better. However, an honest look was often a grateful one. It was in those times that many of us found out who we were. It allowed us to make important discoveries like -- it's o.k. to hurt and feel pain.

Today we experience a full range of feelings. Before ~~the~~ ^{the} Fellowship we either felt elated or depressed, with very little in between. Our negative sense of self has been replaced by a positive concern for others. ~~Answers seem to be provided to solve our problems, we know~~ ^{to grow is} Our problems seemed to solve themselves. It is a great gift to be a human being, and the opportunities we seek are determined by our own sense of self-worth. When we ~~lose~~ ^{lose} or ~~steal~~ ^{steal} we degrade ourselves in our own eyes.

have had enough of self-destruction. We try to learn to do things that will transform us into self-respecting people.

#1 A symptom of addiction is self-destructive thinking. When we get clean, these strange habits of mind pass away and we start learning to live again.

What a change from the way we used to be! That's how we know that the N.A. Program works. It's the first thing that ever convinced us that we needed to change ourselves, instead of trying to change the people and situations around us. ^{and} It gave us a Twelve Step blueprint for doing just that. By working the Steps, we came to accept our Higher Power's will; this acceptance led us up the road of recovery. We ^{lost} ~~lost~~ our fear of the unknown through practice of the Twelve Steps. We ^{are} ~~were~~ set free to live and enjoy life, just for today, without the old ghosts of our addiction haunting us.

OHIO ORIGINAL

CHAPTER THREE

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Before coming to the fellowship of N.A., we could not manage our own lives, we could not live and enjoy life as other people do. We had to have something different and we thought we had found it in drugs. We placed their use ahead of the welfare of our families, our wives, husbands, and our children. We had to have drugs at all costs. We did many people great harm but most of all we harmed ourselves. Through our inability to accept personal responsibility we were actually creating our own problems. We seemed to be incapable of facing life on its own terms.

Most of us realized, that in our addictions, we were slowly committing suicide, but such cunning enemies of life are narcotics and sedation that we had lost the power to do anything about it. Jail did not help us at all. Medicine, religion and psychiatry seemed to have no answers for us that we could use. All these methods having failed for us, in desperation, we sought help from each other from Narcotics Anonymous.

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We are addicts seeking recovery. We used drugs to cover up our feelings of humiliation, guilt, inferiority and inadequacy.

Many of us woke up sick, unable to make it to work or went to work loaded. Many of us stole to support our habit. We hurt the ones we loved. We did whatever it took to get that fix, pill, drink or joint. We denied all these things and told ourselves "we could make it". We were looking for something new in life and eventually started looking for a way out. We couldn't face life on its own terms. In the beginning, using was fun. It became a habit and then it was necessary for survival. The progression of the disease was not apparent to us. We continued on the path of destruction, unaware of where it was leading us. We were addicts and did not know it.

Through the use of drugs, we had a false reality and we escaped the pain and suffering. When we fell down, off the track, we were sad, and were disappointed when

additional problems that had built up. We felt the need to use more often as our disease progressed.

We needed help and had nowhere to go. Most of us explored different alternatives. Most doctors didn't understand our dilemma. Usually they tried to help by giving us medications. Our husbands, wives and loved ones gave us anything they had and drained themselves in the hope that we would stop using. We tried substituting one drug for another and this only created a vicious cycle. We tried limiting our usage to "social" amounts; our success with this was short-lived or non-existent. Some of us sought spiritual guidance through churches, religions or cultism. Some of us sought a cure by geographical change, blaming our surroundings and living situations for our problems. This attempt just gave us a chance to take advantage of new people. Wherever we went, our troubles went with us. Some of us sought approval through sexual activity or change of peers. This approval seeking just got us back where we started. Some of us tried marriage, divorce or desertion of our families. Many tried psychiatrists or institutions and some were even relieved when removed from society.

We had reached a point in our lives where we felt like a lost cause. Our worth to our jobs, families and friends was little or none. Some of us became unemployed and unemployable. Success was scary and unfamiliar. We didn't know what to do about it. As the self-loathing grew, we had to use more and more to mask our feelings. We were sick and tired of pain and trouble. We were frightened and ran from the fear. No matter how far we ran, we always brought the fear with us. We were hopeless, useless and lost. Feelings of worthlessness overcame us. Failure had become our way of life and self-esteem was non-existent. Perhaps the most painful of these failures was the desperation of loneliness. The denial of our defects, the blindness to our flaws in character, kept us moving on our downhill path.

To some of us, our appearance didn't matter. We had no pride in anything we did. We didn't care how we looked. For some, personal hygiene became a thing of the past. For others, it became an obsession. We tried to cover up our inner-pain with outside appearances. Any hope of getting better disappeared. Helplessness, emptiness and fear became our way of life. We were complete failures. Personality change was what we really needed. Change from a self-destructive pattern of living became a must. We started experiencing how powerless we really were. Nothing seemed to relieve our

paranoia and fear. We hit bottom and became ready to ask for help.

We were searching for an answer. We reached out and found Narcotics Anonymous. We came to our first N.A. meeting in defeat. We didn't know what to expect. After sitting in a meeting, or several meetings, we began to feel that we were understood and were willing to be patient with us. Although our minds told us we would make it, the people in the Fellowship gave us hope by insisting we could. We found that no matter what our thoughts or past actions were, others had done and felt the same. Surrounded by fellow addicts, we realized that we were not alone. We found the Program would work best if we put recovery first. Recovery is what happens in our meetings; everyone's life is at stake. We learned that old friends, places and ideas could be a threat to our recovery. We had to change our playmates, playgrounds and playthings.

When we came to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, we faced three disturbing realizations. One: we were powerless over our addiction and our lives were unmanageable; two: we were not responsible for our disease - we are responsible for our recovery; and three: we could no longer blame people, places and things for our addiction. We had to face our problems and our feelings.

In N.A., we learned that members concentrate on recovery and how they feel, not what they had done in the past. We found that the ultimate weapon for recovery was the recovering addict. Having realized that we were unable to manage on our own, some of us immediately began experiencing depression, anxiety, hostility and resentment. We began to feel emotional pain that we had always run away from. Due to petty frustrations, minor setbacks and losses, some of us felt that we were not getting any better. However, an honest look was often a grateful one. It was in those times that many of us found out who we were. It allowed us to make important discoveries like -- it's o.k. to hurt and feel pain.

Today we experience a full range of feelings. Before coming to the Fellowship, we either felt elated or depressed, with very little in between. Our negative sense of self has been replaced by a positive concern for others. Our problems seemed to solve themselves. It is a great gift to be a human being, and the opportunities we seek are determined by our own sense of self-worth. When we lie, cheat, or steal we degrade ourselves in our own eyes. We

have had enough of self-destruction. We try to learn to do things that will transform us into self-respecting people.

A symptom of addiction is self-destructive thinking. When we get clean, these strange habits of mind pass away and we start learning to live again.

What a change from the way we used to be! That's how we know that the N.A. Program is the best thing that ever convinced us that we needed to change ourselves, instead of trying to change the people and situations around us. It gave us a Twelve Step blueprint for doing just that. By working the Steps, we came to accept our Higher Power's will; this acceptance led us up the road of recovery. We lost our fear of the unknown through practice of the Twelve Steps. We were set free to live and enjoy life, just for today, without the old ghosts of our addiction haunting us.

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Before coming to the fellowship of N.A., we could not manage our own lives, we could not live and enjoy life as other people do. We had to have something different and we thought we had found it in drugs. We placed their use ahead of the welfare of our families, our wives, husbands, and our children. We had to have drugs at all costs. We did many people great harm, but most of all we harmed ourselves. Through our inability to accept personal responsibility, we were actually creating our own problems. We seemed to be incapable of facing life on its own terms.

Most of us realised that in our addictions we were slowly committing suicide, but such cunning enemies of life are narcotics and sedation that we lost the power to do anything about it. Jail did not help us at all. Medicine, religion, and psychiatry seemed to have no answers for us that we could use. All these methods having failed for us, we sought help from each other in Narcotics Anonymous.

After coming to N.A. we realised that we were sick people who suffered from a disease like Alcoholism, Diabetes, and Tuberculosis. There is no known cure for these--all, however, can be arrested at some point and recovery is then possible.

In N.A. we follow a program borrowed from Alcoholics Anonymous. In the last forty years more than one million people have recovered in A.A., most of them just as hopelessly addicted to alcohol, as we were to drugs. We are deeply grateful to the A.A. Fellowship for pointing the way for us to a new way of life.

We are addicts seeking recovery. We used drugs to cover up our feelings, ~~and~~ ^{and} we had to do whatever was necessary to get ~~these~~ ^{them}. Many of us woke up sick, unable to make it to work, or went to work loaded. Many of us stole to support our habit. We hurt the ones we loved. We did all ~~those~~ ^{these} things and told ourselves "We ~~could~~ ^{can} handle it". We were looking for a way out. We couldn't face life on its own terms. In the beginning, using was fun, ~~and then~~ ^{and then} ~~for us it~~ ^{and then} it became a habit and finally was necessary for survival. The progression of the disease was not apparent to us. We continued on the path of destruction, unaware of where it was leading us.

OHIO ORIGINAL 2

We were addicts and did not know it. Through drugs we tried to avoid reality, ~~and postponed~~^{to} pain and misery. When the drugs wore off, we realised that we still had the same problems and that they were becoming worse. We sought relief by using again and again-more drugs, more often.

We ~~screamed~~^{sought} for help and found none. Doctors didn't understand our dilemma; ~~usually~~^{often} they tried to help by giving us medication. Our husbands, wives and loved ones gave us what they had and drained themselves in the hope that we would stop using or get better. We tried substituting one drug for another, but this only prolonged our pain. We tried limiting our usage to "social" amounts without success. There is no such thing as a "social addict". Some of us sought an answer through churches, religions or cultism. Some sought a cure by geographical~~ly~~ change, blaming ~~their~~^{our} surroundings and living situations for ~~their~~^{our} problems. This attempt only gave us a chance to take advantage of new people. Some of us sought approval through sex or change of ~~peers~~^{friends}. This approval seeking carried us further into our addiction. Some of us tried marriage, divorce or desertion. Regardless of what we tried, we could not escape ~~from~~ our disease.

We reached a point in our lives where we felt like a lost ~~or~~^{er} cause. Our worth to our jobs, families and friends was little ~~or~~^{MANY OF US} none. ~~We were~~ unemployed and unemployable. Any form of success was frightening and unfamiliar. We didn't know what to do. As the self-loathing grew, we needed to use more and more to mask our feelings. We were sick and ~~tried~~^{tired} of pain and trouble. We were frightened and ran from the fear. No matter how far we ran, we always carried the fear with us. We were hopeless, useless and lost. Failure had become our way of life and self-esteem was non-existent. Perhaps the most painful of all was ~~desperation~~^{the} of loneliness. ~~The Denial of our defects, and isolation~~^{us} kept ~~on moving~~^{along} ~~on~~^{AND THE DENIAL OF OUR} this downhill path. Any hope of getting better disappeared. Help-~~lessness~~^{ADDITION}, emptiness and fear became our way of life. We were complete failures. Personality change was what we really needed. Change from self-destructive^{VE} patterns of life became necessary. When we lie~~d~~^{ed} or cheat^{ed} or steal^{ed} we degraded ourselves in our own eyes. We ~~have~~^{had} had enough of self-destruction. We experienced how powerless we really are. ~~Nothing~~^{WHEN} relieved our paranoia and fear, We hit bottom and became ready to ask for help.

^{When} We were searching for an answer. We reached out and found Narcotics Anonymous. We came to our first N.A. meeting in defeat and didn't know what to expect. After sitting in a meeting, or several meetings, we began to feel that people cared and were willing to help. Although our minds told us we would never make it, the people in the Fellowship gave us hope by insisting we could recover. We found that no matter what our past thoughts or actions were, others had felt and done the same. Surrounded by fellow addicts, we realised that we were not alone. We found that by putting recovery first, the program works. Recovery is what happens in our meetings; each of our lives is at stake.

We faced three disturbing realisations: One: we are powerless over addiction and our lives are unmanagable; two: although we are not responsible for our disease, we are responsible for our recovery; and three: we can no longer blame people, places and things for our addiction. We must face our problems and our feelings.

^{CON} We ~~concentrate~~ concentrate on recovery and how we feel, not what we have done in the past. The ultimate ^{tool} ~~weapon~~ for recovery is the recovering addict.

^{offer} ~~Old~~ friends, places and ideas are a threat to our recovery. We need to change our playmates, ~~and~~ playgrounds and playthings.

When we realised we are not able to manage on our own, some of us immediately began experiencing depression, anxiety, hostility and resentment. Petty frustrations, minor setbacks and loneliness often made us feel that we were not getting any better. We found that we suffered from a disease, not a moral dilemma. ~~We~~ ^{We} were critically ill, not hopelessly bad. Our disease can only be arrested through ~~total~~ abstinence.

Today we experience a full range of feelings. Before coming into the Fellowship, we either felt elated or depressed with very little in between. Our ~~negative~~ sense of self has been replaced by a positive concern for others. Answers are provided and ~~problems~~ ^{problems} are solved. It is a great gift to feel human again.

What a change from the way ^{we} ~~it~~ used to be! That's how we know that the N.A. program works. It's the first thing that ever convinced us that we needed to change ourselves, instead of trying to change the people and situations around us. We discover new opportunities. We find a sense of self-worth. We learn self-respect. This program is ^{the} ~~a~~ Twelve Step ^{guideline} ~~blueprint~~ for doing just those things. By working the Steps, we come to accept a Higher Power's will; this acceptance leads us to recovery. ~~We lose our fear of the unknown. We are set free.~~

CHAPTER THREE

From Workshop

HOW ARE WE SICK?

Before coming to the fellowship of N.A., we could not manage our own lives, we could not live and enjoy life as other people do. We had to have something different and we thought we had found it in drugs. We placed their use ahead of the welfare of our families, our wives, husbands, and our children. We had to have drugs at all costs. We did many people great harm, but most of all we harmed ourselves. Through our inability to accept personal responsibility, we were actually creating our own problems. We seemed to be incapable of facing life on its own terms.

After we realized that in our addictions, we were slowly committing suicide, but such cunning enemies of life are narcotics and sedation that we had lost the power to do anything about it. Jail did not help us at all. Medicine, religion, and psychiatry seemed to have no answers for us that we could use. All these methods having failed for us, in desperation, we sought help from each other from Narcotics Anonymous.

After coming to N.A. we realized we were sick people who suffered from a disease like Alcoholism, Diabetes or Tuberculosis. There is no known cure for these--all, however, can be arrested at some point, and recovery is then possible.

In N.A. we follow a program borrowed from Alcoholics Anonymous. In the last forty years more than one million people have recovered in A.A., most of them just as hopelessly addicted to alcohol as we were to drugs. We are deeply grateful to the A.A. Fellowship for pointing the way for us to a new way of life.

After we started taking drugs, we used drugs to take our feelings. We had to do whatever necessary to get drugs. Many of us woke up sick, unable to make it to work, or went to work loaded. Many of us stole to support our habit. We hurt

the ones we loved. We denied all those things and told ourselves "We could handle it". We were looking for something new in life and eventually started looking for a way out. We couldn't face life on its own terms. In the beginning, using was fun. For us it soon became a habit and finally was necessary for survival. The progression of the disease was not apparent to us. We continued on the path of destruction, unaware of where it was leading us. We were addicts and did not know it. Through drugs we tried to avoid reality, and postponed pain and misery. When we came down our problems came back and were compounded. We realized that we still had the same problems, and that they were becoming worse. We sought relief by using again and again - more drugs more often.

We screamed for help and found none. Doctors didn't understand our dilemma. Usually they tried to help by giving us medication. Our husbands, wives and loved ones gave us what they had and drained themselves in the hope that we would stop using or get better. We tried substituting one drug for another, but this only prolonged our pain. We tried limiting our usage to "social" amounts without success. There is no such thing as a social addict. Some of us sought an answer through churches, religions or cultism. Some sought a cure by geographical change, blaming their surroundings and living situations for their problems. This attempt only gave us a chance to take advantage of new people. Some of us sought approval through sex or change of peers. This approval seeking carried us further into our addiction. Some of us tried marriage, divorce or desertion. Regardless of what we tried, we could not escape from our disease.

We reached a point in our lives where we felt like a lost cause. Our worth to our jobs, families and friends was little or none. We were unemployed and unemployable. Any form of success was frightening and unfamiliar. We didn't know what to do. As the self-loathing grew, we needed to use more and more to mask our feelings. We were sick and tired of pain and trouble. We were frightened and ran from the fear. No matter how far we ran, we always carried the fear with us. We were hopeless, useless and lost. Failure had become our way of life and self-esteem was non-existent. Perhaps the most painful of these failures was the deprivation of loneliness. The denial of our defects, and isolation, kept us moving on this downhill path. Any hope

down hill path. Any hope of getting better disappeared. Helplessness, emptiness and fear became our way of life. We were complete failures. Personality change was what we really needed. Change from self-destructing pattern of living became necessary. We experienced how powerless we really are. Nothing relieved our paranoia and fear. We hit bottom and became ready to ask for help.

We were searching for an answer. We reached out and found Narcotics Anonymous. We came to our first N.A. meeting in defeat and didn't know what to expect. After sitting in a meeting, or several meetings, we began to feel that people cared and were willing to help. Although our minds told us we would never make it, the people in the Fellowship gave us hope by insisting we would recover. We found that no matter what our past thoughts or actions were, others had done and felt the same. Surrounded by fellow addicts, we realized that we were not alone. We found that by putting recovery first, the program works. Recovery is what happens in our meetings; each of our lives is at stake. Old friends, places and ideas are a threat to our recovery. We need to change our playmates, playgrounds and playthings.

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We concentrate on recovery and how we feel, not what we have done in the past. The ultimate weapon for recovery is the recovering addict. When we realized we are not able to manage on our own, some of us immediately began experiencing depression, anxiety, hostility and resentment. We began to feel the emotional pain that we had always run away from. Petty frustrations, minor setbacks and loneliness often made us feel that we are not getting any better. We found that we suffered from a disease, not a moral dilemma. We were critically ill, not hopelessly bad. Our disease can only be arrested through total abstinence.

Today we experience a full range of feelings. Before coming into the Fellowship, we either felt elated, or depressed, with very little in between. Our negative sense of self has been replaced by a positive concern for others. Answers are provided and problems are solved. It is a great gift to feel human again.

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What a change from the way we used to be! That's how we know that the N.A. program works. It's the first thing that ever convinced us that we needed to change ourselves, instead of trying to change the people and situations around us. We discover new opportunities. We have found a sense of self-worth. We have learned self-respect. This program is a Twelve Step blueprint for doing just that. By working the Steps, we came to accept a Higher Power's will; this acceptance led us to recovery. We lose our fear of the unknown. We are set free.