



**WORLD SERVICE OFFICE, Inc.  
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS**

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To: The N.A. Fellowship  
  
From: Bob Stone,  
World Service Office

Enclosed is a report on the new step and tradition book *It Works: How and Why*. This report has been prepared by the chairs and vice-chairs of the World Service Conference Administrative Committee, WSC Literature Committee, WSO Board of Directors and World Service Board of Trustees and mailed to all World Service Conference participants, area and regional service committees and literature committees. It is the wish of the trusted servants who put together the report that you will make this information known to the N.A. groups and members in your area or region. In addition, you need to be aware of the following information.

An article appeared in the November/December issue of the *Newsline* entitled *IT WORKS: How and Why*. The article, which basically was a reprint of the enclosed report, discussed some options available to the Fellowship for approving or revising this new book prior to approval. In discussions which have taken place since that article appeared, it has become apparent that some confusion has resulted from that article. Therefore, I hope to clear up any confusion you may have.

One reason the article may have been confusing is that I made the mistake of printing it prematurely. The article was intended to be a follow-up to this report. Both the report and *Newsline* were being worked on simultaneously and, as we frequently do, the report was going to be included in the *Newsline*. At the draft stage of the development of the *Newsline* the report was inserted. Unfortunately, when the rest of the *Newsline* was completed, I had it printed and it was immediately mailed. At the time the *Newsline* was mailed, the exact language of the report had not been finalized. The trusted servants involved in writing the report were still discussing its content at the time and hadn't yet reached consensus. I was wrong to have published the report in the *Newsline* before its content was finalized or distributed. Furthermore, the article appeared without any reference made to who wrote it. So, I understand why this article may have caused some confusion, and for these reasons, I apologize.

There is one other point to understand with regard to the *IT WORKS: How and Why* article and this report. The report devotes a substantial amount of space discussing Option One. It is important to understand that there was no intention to "slant" the report or persuade readers to select any particular option over any other. The reason that a large amount of space is spent discussing Option One is that if this alternative is selected, it requires action now. The discussion therefore is necessary in order to prepare N.A. groups and members to take action now if they choose to participate in the plan outlined in Option One.

I hope this information is helpful in clearing up any confusion which you may have had concerning the *Newsline* article. I apologize for the error.



# **WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS**

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## ***A REPORT ON IT WORKS: HOW AND WHY***

**To: The N.A. Fellowship**

**From: The Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the World  
Service Board of Trustees, WSO Board of Directors,  
World Service Conference Administrative Committee and  
World Literature Committee**

The development of *IT WORKS: HOW AND WHY* has been a matter of great interest and importance to the N.A. Fellowship for several years. Members around the world are anxious to have our book on the Twelve Steps and Traditions complete because it is so greatly needed. A tremendous effort has been exerted by everyone involved in this project to get the book completed at the earliest possible moment. The World Literature Committee is currently at work developing the second half of the book, the portion on the Twelve Traditions. This report is about the current status of Part One (the Twelve Steps) and some new developments that have taken place.

The approval form (the white cover) was first released in mid-April, 1986. The immediate response from most members who have read this new book was to enumerate its best qualities and endorse its content. However, there were a few who verbally expressed concerns. Because it was in the approval form, members all over the world began, in good conscience, to buy the book, read it, and prepared to express their group conscience at the 1987 World Service Conference.

As additional study of the book has taken place, a few members have begun to list items they question. In response to a few conversations between N.A. members and WSC Literature Committee trusted servants, a request was included in the September Fellowship Report encouraging this objective review and suggesting that feedback and suggestions be expressed in writing to the Committee as soon as possible.

At the recent WSC Committee meetings in Charlotte, North Carolina some members expressed their opinions regarding the book. Two special meetings were held at which the book was discussed and specific concerns were presented.

In the opinion of some who expressed their views in Charlotte, there is a need to change parts of the book in order to avoid conflict with the philosophy of N.A. or confusion because of inconsistency. There were other members who expressed the opinion that the book should be approved exactly the way it is. The number of specific items in question cannot easily be described so as to fit within this report. However, the issue of making changes in the book is the subject of this report.

According to the Conference-approved Literature Guidelines, the book *IT WORKS: HOW AND WHY* is in the approval form and due, according to the schedule of things, to be either approved or disapproved by the Fellowship at the next Conference meeting. This would imply that it is too late to make any changes. However, the concerns of members cannot be ignored, especially if the



changes that are recommended are appropriate and necessary. At the very least, adequate consideration of the issues raised should be given in order to determine their merit.

Some members who were present in Charlotte, as the input was being shared, have indicated that some of the concerns raised may indeed be valid. At any rate, whenever N.A. members have legitimate concerns regarding new or existing literature, those concerns should be evaluated and discussed so that appropriate action may be taken.

As a Fellowship, we have found ourselves in this situation before. At times in the past we have waited until the Conference date arrived and issues were vehemently fought out on the floor of the Conference. Unfortunately this procedure did not always resolve matters and some have continued to be a source of friction and controversy. The Basic Text is the best example. The World Service Conference has continued to make changes in it over the years and every change becomes a highly emotional dilemma. Additionally, each time the Fellowship is asked to consider changing an already approved item of literature it creates more conflict and controversy.

So, despite the need to complete our book on the Twelve Steps and Traditions, there is also a need to approve the best quality literature possible with a minimum amount of controversy. Unfortunately there is no built-in mechanism whereby proposed changes in approval-form literature can be made. Therefore, the bottom line of this discussion is that regardless of the merit of the issues recently raised, only when the Conference meets in April can any changes be made.

If changes are proposed during the Conference meeting, it creates the old problem of forcing the participants to vote on things that have not been presented to the Fellowship ninety days in advance of the Conference. There are some regions which do not allow their RSR's enough flexibility to vote on amendments or other items for which they have not received specific instructions. These RSR's would therefore be prohibited from participating in any decisions to make changes in the book.

This also brings up another point: equity. The World Literature Committee generally does not receive input on items which are in the approval form. However, since some members felt that their concerns were important, they did submit input which, of course, was welcomed and accepted. But without receiving input from the rest of N.A. around the world, we have no way of knowing whether the concerns which were raised are shared by the worldwide Fellowship, or simply a handful of members. Therefore, before the input which was received can be integrated into the publication, it will be necessary to receive input from other regional literature committees around the world. It is only fair that we provide an opportunity for members who haven't sent input to do so. This is the only way we can be certain that we are responding to concerns which are shared by a large proportion of the N.A. membership so that this literature item may be truly reflective of the Narcotics Anonymous philosophy.

Because the book has been in circulation since April of 1986, and most of the feedback has been positive, we hypothesize that it is possible that many N.A. members like the book as it is. It is also possible that some members like the book in general, but could point out a few things they'd like changed. Most likely, there are also members who haven't sent in their comments simply because of the fact that the book is in the approval form and is scheduled to come to a vote at the 1987 World Service Conference. It is quite possible that a large number of RSR's will come to the 1987 WSC prepared to vote on the book as it is.



Some members suggest that the approval form (White Cover) is dramatically different from the review and input copy (Blue Cover) and therefore the Fellowship should review and input on the White Cover copy as well. Other members contend that approval literature is always reflective of input received from earlier review and input drafts and is frequently much different in final form. In some cases, review-form drafts and final approval-form literature are similar, but on occasion approval-form literature bears little resemblance to earlier review drafts. It is reasonable to conclude that there are no hard and fast rules.

We cannot predict the future and the Conference must make the final decision. No service board or committee has the authority to stop the approval process. We are not here to decide these things for the Fellowship, only to be responsible in making the information known, and try to offer some solutions.

The N.A. Fellowship basically has three alternatives to choose from: 1)approve the book with no changes; 2)return the book to the Literature Committee for additional work; or 3)make changes at the Conference.

Each alternative has merits and drawbacks. If the book is returned to the Literature Committee, it would delay the use of the publication by our members for an additional year and possibly two years. This alternative would, however, probably provide opportunity to assure that the final approved book was the best quality possible without problems.

If the Conference participants elect to make the changes during the April meeting, it may produce the best possible book but it may also create continuing controversy. The controversy of adopting changes that the members have not seen in a major publication might be more divisive than the approval would be worth. It may also result in proposals for additional changes being submitted at subsequent Conference meetings.

If the Conference adopted the book with no changes, it might also set the stage for having changes proposed each year in the same manner as changes are offered for the Basic Text.

This seems like a no win situation, but that does not mean other alternatives cannot be considered. It seems that some of the important factors are 1) The opportunity for N.A. members worldwide to submit input; 2) An opportunity for a World Literature ad-hoc committee (see Note 1) to evaluate the input and suggest any changes; and 3) Avoid a two-year delay if possible. A further purpose of this report is to offer three other alternatives that may be successful. They are presented here for your information and consideration.

**Option 1:** Accept Fellowship-wide input until March 1, 1987, have the proposed changes reviewed by an ad-hoc committee comprising members from the Board of Trustees, WSO Board of Directors, WSC Administrative Committee and World Literature Committee, and have appropriate changes proposed by the ad-hoc committee for adoption, as amendments to the book, when it is considered for approval at the Conference in 1987.

**Option 2:** Accept Fellowship-wide input until June 30, 1987. Have the ad-hoc committee review the input and publish a revised approval form by October 1, 1987, and have this version considered for approval at the Conference in 1988.

**Option 3:** Accept Fellowship-wide input until October 1, 1987. Have the literature ad-hoc committee review and make changes and publish a new approval form copy at the Conference in 1988 and possibly approve the book at the Conference meeting in 1989.



The trusted servants who helped put this special report together have all been directly involved with working on *IT WORKS: HOW AND WHY* for many months. It is our unanimous desire to do what the Fellowship wants in this matter and at the same time produce the highest quality publication within the shortest reasonable time.

We think it would not be in the best interests of the Fellowship to simply ignore the input that has been shared or take no action between now and the Conference meeting. We feel it would be irresponsible to force the Fellowship at that time to choose only between accepting the book without changes or making changes on the floor of the Conference meeting.

The quality and content of this book, as with every other publication, is significant and vital to every member of the Fellowship. It is important to the Fellowship and to ourselves that we know that every effort has been made to produce literature that clearly and fully expresses the philosophy of Narcotics Anonymous. We believe that to accept lesser quality or incorrect information in our literature is severely and sufficiently damaging that it would warrant rejection of any publication which would have these faults.

N.A. is still growing and still evolving. We are still in the process of developing the basic structural document of our Fellowship, the various committees are still working on their guidelines and the procedures for getting things done at all levels of service are malleable. Experience may show us a way of installing an escape mechanism in the literature approval process that will help us in future situations like this.

The immediate need, however, is to either take some action that is reasonable and prudent now or wait until the Conference. It is the belief of these trusted servants that Option One should be initiated immediately in order to make use of the time currently available. Although further discussion at the Conference will determine subsequent action, if option one is selected we need to be prepared with the proposed amendments.

We wish to stress that although it is somewhat unusual for us to ask for or receive input on approval-form literature it is always welcomed. The Literature Committee remains open and receptive to the wishes of the N.A. Fellowship and the only way we can do this is by receiving input directly from area and regional literature committees, groups and members. It is impossible for us to guess or otherwise ascertain the conscience of our Fellowship unless it is conveyed to us.

The World Literature Committee continually strives to be responsive to the N.A. Fellowship as it evolves and grows. The only way we can be successful in this is if the membership provides us with input. So often we hear people talk about the importance of communication in service, especially world services. It is just as important for the membership to reciprocate and provide information back to world service committees.

The majority of our membership has not sent input on this book in its current form. That is, of course, what was expected. But nevertheless, having such a small amount of input makes it difficult to tell whether the concerns raised are shared by the entire worldwide Fellowship. Therefore, we encourage every area and regional literature committee, as well as any members or groups who have input to send in their comments on *IT WORKS: HOW AND WHY*. Even if you absolutely love the book the way it is, or if there are sections or chapters that you feel shouldn't be changed, please let us know that too. Please send your specific comments directly to the World Literature Committee in care of the WSO.



The input will be collected until March 1, 1987, at which time it will be thoroughly evaluated and discussed by the literature ad-hoc committee. It is our hope that by following this process, the committee will be able to ascertain the worldwide group conscience on these issues and, if necessary, propose some specific amendments to the book which will be presented at the World Service Conference in April.

The final decisions must be made by the N.A. Fellowship as a whole as expressed through the group conscience. All of these alternatives will be presented and discussed at the World Service Conference. Hopefully, through reports such as this one, the N.A. membership will be informed and prepared to make the best decision possible regarding this important new book.

*Note One* The tremendous volume of work that the WSC Literature Committee is currently working on made it necessary to expand the working force available to the Committee. Because of the significance of the book on the Twelve Steps and Traditions, an ad-hoc committee was formed as an alternative to diverting the Committee from other works or assigning a smaller task force to this project. An ad-hoc committee for this type of project is provided for in the Literature Committee Guidelines adopted by the Conference.

The ad-hoc committee assembled includes members of the World Literature Committee, the Board of Trustees, the WSC Administrative Committee and the World Service Office. Each of these service committees are fully in support of the ad-hoc committee and made available capable trusted servants who have participated equally in the work. In keeping with the Literature Committee Guidelines, the completed work of the ad-hoc committee will be submitted to the full World Literature Committee for final action and submission to the Conference. Utilizing this process permits the Literature Committee to maintain its current work priorities and literature quality and also provides a broad base of experience and perspective for this important work.

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