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FOR THOSE IN TREATMENT

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This pamphlet is designed to help you in your recovery while you are in a treatment facility. It is based on the experience of many addicts who have been in treatment and are recovering today in Narcotics Anonymous. In treatment, you may begin your new way of life, living drug free, but you cannot stay there forever. Treatment provides the opportunity to get clean--Narcotics Anonymous will help you stay clean. We have written this pamphlet to let you know that if you want to stop using drugs, we have found a way to live clean a day at a time.

WHAT IS NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS?

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Narcotics Anonymous is a recovery program for anyone who has a desire to stop using drugs. In Narcotics Anonymous we have found that the value of one addict helping another is without parallel. We meet regularly to help each other stay clean and to share our message of recovery. Our message is that any addict can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way of life. Our message is hope and the promise of freedom.

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We are not affiliated with any other organizations, including other Twelve Step Fellowships, programs, or treatment centers. We employ no professional counselors or therapists. Our membership is free and we share what has worked for us in day-to-day living. Very simply, Narcotics Anonymous is the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions that you see printed on the front and back of this pamphlet. These, and one addict helping another.

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IS N.A. RIGHT FOR YOU?

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Those of us in N.A. who found ourselves in a treatment facility were there either because we were beaten down by our addiction and voluntarily checked in

1 looking for help, or because we were forced to be there. In either case, we weren't
2 too sure about N.A. at first.

3 Let us dispel some misconceptions about N.A. and keep our minds as open as
4 possible. N.A. is for all addicts, regardless of their "drug of choice," age, race,
5 sexual identity, religion, or lack of religion. With each passing year, our
6 membership gets more diverse. People of widely varying backgrounds have found
7 recovery in N.A.

8 One thing that most of us experienced when we first got clean was denial.
9 Thoughts of not being as bad or being worse than other addicts are common
10 examples of denial. Some of us even thought that we had used the wrong kinds of
11 drugs to belong to N.A. Denial is a major aspect of the disease of addiction that
12 tells us we're different and prevents us from seeing the truth about ourselves. We
13 suggest that you look honestly at your life and why you are in treatment. Instead
14 of focusing on the good times, remember when you said to yourself, "What am I
15 doing here? This is not how it was supposed to turn out." When we honestly
16 looked at our past, all of us could find many reasons to stop using drugs.

17 Eventually we were faced with some basic questions: "Is my using causing
18 difficulties in any area of my life? How long has it been since drugs worked like
19 I wanted them to? If I don't have a drug problem, why can't I stop?" Perhaps the
20 most basic question we were faced with was, "Do I want to stop using?" Many of
21 us were not able to answer these questions right away. We found that how we
22 answered these personal questions set the course for our future. We suggest that
23 you use your time in treatment well--you may not get another chance.

24 Addiction is a progressive disease and our powerlessness over it means we
25 can't control it. Our often bitter experience has demonstrated over and over again
26 that when we continue to use drugs in any form or quantity, our disease progresses.

1 Progression means that the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of our
2 disease get worse. Our continued use of drugs eventually results in jails,
3 institutions or death.

4 N.A.'s APPROACH TO RECOVERY

5 The First Step of Narcotics Anonymous is "We admitted that we were
6 powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable." N.A.'s
7 basic approach is summed up by the phrase "powerless over our addiction," rather
8 than, "powerless over drugs." This is the cornerstone of the N.A. Program. We
9 must abstain from all drugs in order to recover--but, the disease of addiction goes
10 much deeper than drug use.

11 When we take a look at our addictive thoughts and feelings, our
12 obsessiveness, our compulsion, our impulsive behavior, our self-image and the
13 internal emotional experiences--that's where we find our common ground. When
14 we focus too much on the particular drugs that got us here, we are often stressing
15 our differences. Our problem is not the drugs we used; it is the disease of
16 addiction. It is for this specific reason that we identify as addicts. This simple
17 principle gives us our basis for unity among so many different kinds of people.

18 Acceptance of the First Step eventually brings relief. We found that we
19 have a progressive disease, but it doesn't have to manifest itself in every area of
20 our lives. Through the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous, we have a proven
21 plan of recovery that arrests this disease one day at a time.

22 We begin to be aware that our recovery is our responsibility and this means
23 we must take action. We need to learn how to take care of ourselves--physically,
24 emotionally and spiritually. In N.A. we become willing to consider new ideas. We
25 suggest that you go to meetings, listen and participate, talk to other N.A. members,
26 ask questions, get their phone numbers and begin calling them. Read and study

1 whatever N.A. literature is available to you. This type of positive action has
2 helped many of us overcome the crazy thoughts and feelings we experience in
3 early recovery. These are to be expected and you don't need to be afraid of them
4 or use over them. Focus your energy on today--don't use and the feelings will pass.

5 PREPARING FOR RELEASE FROM TREATMENT

6 As we approached discharge, many of us began to experience a wide range
7 of emotions. Though we were excited at the prospect of leaving, this was often
8 overshadowed by feelings of fear, uncertainty, and inadequacy. We didn't know
9 how, or even if, our families, jobs, and friends would receive us. We were afraid
10 we would use again or never regain our self-respect.

11 We encourage you to approach N.A. members with your questions and
12 feelings, because most of us have been through these same feelings and situations
13 in early recovery. In Narcotics Anonymous, we found the courage, strength and
14 support to deal with all these issues and to not use drugs.

15 Others of us felt self-assured and confident in our ability to stay clean on
16 our own. Many of us were fooled by a false sense of security that came from
17 being in a controlled environment for a period of time. That was a real mistake.
18 We have found that the attitudes of "I can go it alone," "I can hang around those
19 old people and places" and "I can use one more time" are the kinds of self-
20 deception that most often lead to relapse.

21 THE FIRST DAY OUT

22 The first day out of treatment can be a real turning point. How we handle
23 this day may set the tone for our recovery program. It is very important to go to a
24 meeting on that day. Many of our members, who relapsed after treatment, have
25 said that they never intended to put off going to meetings--they just didn't get
26 around to it before they found themselves in a using situation.

1 The first day out, it is most important to have a plan of action. Here are
2 some suggestions that have worked for us.

3 A. Make up your mind that no matter what happens this day, you will
4 not use.

5 B. Contact a couple of N.A. members and let them know it is your first
6 day out.

7 C. Ask an N.A. member to meet you upon discharge.

8 D. Plan which meeting you are going to attend and come early. Talk to
9 some N.A. members before and after the meeting.

10 E. Choose destinations that are safe, places where you won't be setting
11 yourself up to use.

12 Many of us, when re-entering our living environment, are confronted with
13 things that remind us of our active addiction. We recommend, with the help of
14 other members, to conduct a housecleaning. This may include getting rid of old
15 phone numbers, paraphernalia and so on. The presence of other members will
16 make this process much safer.

17 MAKING THE TRANSITIONS

18 The first things on the agenda for your new way of life are to choose some
19 regular meetings and begin communicating with members of the N.A. Fellowship.
20 Most of us wanted to place other things such as jobs and family matters above N.A.
21 on our priority list, but N.A. members had some valuable experience for us. They
22 reminded us that if our addiction took hold again, there might not be a job or
23 family to worry about. Even though these are very important parts of our lives
24 that must not be neglected, developing good habits to maintain our recovery must
25 come first. They reminded us that our time in the treatment center was just a
26 beginning.

1 It is a good idea to go to a meeting every day for a while. Some of us got a
2 solid start by trying the 90/90 plan--90 meetings in 90 days. Few things are better
3 insurance against relapse. In this way you can pick a home group and some other
4 meetings that you will attend regularly.

5 If you have a sponsor*, take the initiative to call him or her daily, and plan
6 regular times to get together. Remember that the responsibility for your recovery
7 is yours, not your sponsor's, so it is up to you to reach out and make plans. If you
8 do not have a sponsor, it is important to get one as soon as possible. You can
9 choose a sponsor by listening carefully to everyone at meetings and asking yourself
10 who, of the same sex, has what you want in terms of recovery. But don't put this
11 off. That one-on-one contact is irreplaceable. This transition period need not be a
12 very difficult one, if you are vigilant about these suggestions.

13 COMMON EXPERIENCES

14 Our experiences in early recovery vary widely. Some members share that
15 they enjoyed their early recovery. Some members recall their early recovery as a
16 painful and confusing time. Still others remember unpredictable changes from one
17 extreme to the other. However, no matter what we experience, we know that using
18 drugs will not make it better. As we add more clean days we will find that our
19 moods begin to even out.

20 There are no dumb questions or wrong ways to feel. We can talk about
21 thoughts of using drugs, anger, hostility, inadequacy, fears--even joys. We had to
22 let go of our old ideas about what is and what is not acceptable. If we talk
23 honestly about ourselves, we find that other addicts can identify with us. No one
24 can help us if we don't tell them what's going on. The Program of Narcotics
25 Anonymous is designed to help addicts change.

*See the Sponsorship pamphlet for more details

1 Addicts are never too new or too sick to start taking action with the
2 Program of Narcotics Anonymous. Our experience shows that we must work the
3 steps in order to recover. Action on the steps results in the spiritual experiences or
4 attitude changes which allow addicts to begin to be comfortable without using
5 drugs.

6 Probably the biggest change or miracle for most of us in early recovery was
7 the day we woke up and realized we hadn't thought about drugs for a while. We
8 lose the compulsion to use and somehow the mental obsession is arrested a day at a
9 time.

10 Our security today comes from the consistent application of what has
11 worked for other recovering addicts. It comes from the practice of good recovery
12 habits formed early on. After some time of practicing sound principles in a
13 regular living environment, we build up a solid security based upon spiritual,
14 mental, emotional and physical health. We keep it by continuing to practice sound
15 principles and good habits. You're in the position to make that investment in your
16 future right now. Keep your recovery first, and with time, you will find the
17 gratitude, freedom and peace of mind that is available to us all.

18 There are other pieces of N.A. literature that we suggest you read including:
19 *Staying Clean on the Outside*, and the Newly Revised N.A. White Booklet. If at all
20 possible, get a copy of the Basic Text of recovery, *Narcotics Anonymous*, which is
21 filled with valuable experience, strength and hope from recovering addicts around
22 the world. This literature will give you more information on what Narcotics
23 Anonymous is and how to stay clean. For those who are returning to a place where
24 there are no N.A. meetings, write to:

1 The Loner Group
2 P.O. Box 9999
3 Van Nuys, CA 91409
4 U.S.A.

5 Hundreds of thousands of addicts are staying clean in Narcotics Anonymous
6 worldwide. We want you to know that you are welcome in Narcotics Anonymous.
7 We hope you will give yourself a break and find the freedom we have found. We
8 do recover.

9 SOME PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

10 Mike:

11 My name is Mike and I am a recovering addict. Early on I suffered from
12 extreme shyness coupled with fear and resentments. I let these feelings direct my
13 behavior throughout my life. They deeply affected my relationships with my
14 family and with every human being that I got close to.

15 I was an emotional cripple. I got in touch with the drug alcohol when I was
16 twelve and I immediately thought I had found the cure for my awful feelings.
17 Since it only cured those empty feelings briefly, I kept taking more and more of
18 that drug. My solution to that problem was to substitute one drug for another.
19 Somehow, I made it through college and medical school, but even that didn't stop
20 me from using. Outside success didn't fill my inner emptiness. I destroyed two
21 marriages, as I preferred drugs to my mates. I was self-centered, dishonest,
22 domineering and dependent. By now, when I was all alone, I couldn't stand
23 myself, so I used even more drugs to keep running. Instead of dealing with my
24 emotions, I got loaded. Drugs became my solution to everything. When they no
25 longer worked, I became willing to find a way to stop using them. I couldn't stand
26 the pain of running anymore.

1 Finally, I entered a drug treatment program and stayed for twenty-eight
2 days, but I still went out and used. Then I went to a long-term facility where I
3 was totally miserable, with persistent obsessions, resentments and self-pity. That's
4 when I was introduced to the Narcotics Anonymous Program of recovery. I
5 thought, "How can these people tolerate me?" and I soon realized that these people
6 were 100% supportive. They had been there. I had found a place where I
7 belonged. I got a sponsor who kept telling me, "Just be willing to accept help."
8 Friends told me that the obsession goes away, bad times pass and you grow. I
9 wanted to change everything at once, but I couldn't.

10 I had to start at Step One by admitting my powerlessness, and becoming
11 willing to depend upon a Power greater than myself. As the drugs left my system,
12 I saw how unmanageable my life had become. I found it was no longer valid to
13 blame others for my difficulties. I began to understand I was a victim of myself.

14 Although I am still an infant in the N.A. Program, there have been
15 remarkable changes in my thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behavior. I do not try
16 to direct the universe anymore. I let a Power greater than me do it. I try to live
17 in the now which is the only real time there is.

18 I started helping others. I found, even just out of treatment, that I could
19 share my recovery with someone still there. I learned to give it away to keep it
20 and serve others. I started giving instead of taking as I worked the steps. I was
21 slowly relieved of fear and resentment. I started disclosing to other human beings
22 who I really was.

23 This program saved my life.

24 Barbara:

25 I "volunteered" for treatment because my husband told me that if I didn't
26 agree to go, he would have me committed. I had been using drugs on a daily basis

1 for over twenty years. I knew that I could no longer get the relief I wanted from
2 drugs. I was not able to cope with even the simplest of problems, nor could I take
3 daily responsibilities. Everything seemed to be overwhelming to me. I was sick
4 and tired of being sick and tired.

5 The only thing I knew was that something had to change; I could not go on
6 as I had been. I didn't realize that there was a direct connection between all the
7 things that were wrong with my life--my problems with jobs, relationships, family
8 and friends; my inability to concentrate or to sleep normally; my constant fears;
9 and my use of drugs. When the treatment director asked me if I had a drug
10 problem, I said "The only drug problem I have is I can't get enough of them." And
11 I believed that at the time. I had known I was an addict for years, but I believed
12 that I chose to be one, and that it was a smart choice. I did not know that
13 addiction is a disease or that I was powerless over my addiction.

14 I remember going to my first N.A. meeting in the hospital. I was too
15 paranoid to talk at the meeting, but it was more important that I listen anyway. I
16 heard recovering addicts share about their using and their recovery. A few had
17 used like I had. Because I believed what they said about their using, I began to
18 believe what they said about recovery.

19 I did not like the idea of powerlessness. The N.A. members told me that
20 denial was part of the disease, and suggested that I take an honest look at my
21 using. I had to get several days clean to be able to do that. When I looked back at
22 my using, I could see that I had stopped getting really high years before. I had
23 begun using to do normal things like sleep, stay awake, calm down, cheer up, etc. I
24 also realized that I had used drugs I didn't like, combinations I'd sworn never to
25 try, and drugs I knew wouldn't work in my efforts to find relief. I'd never tried

1 to quit because I couldn't imagine not using. I had lost the power to choose, and I
2 had been using because I had to for years.

3 When I was able to realize that the First Step was true for me, it was a
4 relief. The Second and Third Steps looked impossible, because I did not believe in
5 any kind of Higher Power, but the N.A. members told me to just be open-minded
6 and willing to try. I began to pray, and life started changing. It worked. I
7 became a little more peaceful; my head slowed down. When I got out I asked one
8 of the women who came into the meeting to sponsor me and she was a great help
9 with the steps. The compulsion to use was removed from me and I gained the
10 desire to stop using. I couldn't remember ever before feeling as good as I had
11 begun to feel.

12 When I was released from the treatment center, I went straight to a meeting.
13 I follow the program of recovery outlined in the White Booklet now for the same
14 reasons I began to take those actions in treatment--it works and I like the results.
15 This is the way I always wanted to feel. The relief I could no longer get from
16 drugs is there for me in the Program of Narcotics Anonymous.

17 Jeanie:

18 I was eight months pregnant, still shooting dope and running from the law.
19 Although I thought and cared about the fact that I could go to prison for fifteen
20 years and my child could be taken away from me the day he was born, I could not
21 quit using or change the way I was living. I had been to jail numerous times. I
22 had seen a psychiatrist and gone through different drug programs more times than
23 I could count. All these things went through my head. All the nights and days I
24 cried, "Please don't let this baby suffer because of me." I thought it was me, I
25 didn't know I had a disease.

1 Eventually, I backed myself into a corner and I had to hide. My attorney
2 was fed up with me. "You need help," he said. I had resigned myself to the fact
3 that I was a junkie and I was always going to be a junkie. I would have never
4 said that to normal people, they wouldn't understand. My attorney gave me the
5 name of a place to go--he thought to get help--I thought to hide.

6 There was confusion over whether or not they should take someone who was
7 eight months pregnant. They had no choice. This was my Higher Power's plan and
8 they were all part of it whether they knew it or not. They accepted me and
9 explained a few things to me. They told me I had a disease called addiction and I
10 was powerless over it. Everything started to make sense, no wonder I couldn't stop.

11 They had people from N.A. who brought in a meeting on Wednesday nights.
12 They looked like me, talked like me, but they did things I didn't do--they cared
13 about me and they were living life without the use of drugs. They gave me their
14 phone numbers and talked to me about steps. They were using these steps and
15 sponsors to live without drugs. I needed them and I needed to learn what they
16 knew.

17 Finally, I was able to go to outside N.A. meetings. Those same people, from
18 the meeting at the hospital, picked us up and took us to a candlelight step study.
19 It was dark except for the candles and being as scared as I was, it made it easier
20 for me to share. After the meeting, people came up to me to talk. I made friends
21 at that meeting that I still have today. I'm learning a new way of living life
22 without using. I've learned that I do have a disease called addiction and I am
23 powerless over my addiction, but just for today I don't have to use. I've learned
24 that no matter how bad things get, people in N.A. will be there for me to help get
25 through them. I learned that if I don't pick up, I don't get loaded. Most important

1 I learned that through working the Twelve Steps of N.A. you can learn these things
2 too and we can be clean together.

3 Patricia:

4 Hello, my name is Patricia. Today, I am a very grateful recovering addict,
5 but I can remember a time when I did not want any part of freedom from my
6 addiction. I came to Narcotics Anonymous by anything but choice. I was court
7 ordered. Before this major event in my life, I had been for some years a successful
8 businesswoman and somewhat of a minor celebrity in a small southern city. I saw
9 myself as very capable of running my own life.

10 While living under that delusion, very much to my horror, I was committed
11 to treatment for habitual drug use. I was furious! I had never been so insulted in
12 my life. I was beside myself when I discovered the person who had committed me
13 was my secretary! I could not believe she actually told some judge the innermost
14 secrets of my personal life. As time passed, I began to see my long-time friend and
15 employee as a very brave and loving human being who took one last chance to help
16 pull me out of a hell only addicts know about.

17 Mostly, I suppose I was scared. Drug free (whatever that was supposed to
18 mean) seemed like a terrifying prospect. The day I was committed seemed like one
19 of the longest days of my life. The processing and paper work took hours. By the
20 time it was over, I was real sick and in heavy withdrawals. I do not suppose it
21 matters very much how one gets to treatment, by court order or by volunteering,
22 and it probably matters even less whether one is in withdrawals or not. It still is a
23 very long day.

24 Welcome to treatment!

25 The treatment center had lots of meetings and groups. Meetings and
26 lectures on everything ranging from the nature of the disease, family relationships,

1 work relationships, and even sex. The Narcotics Anonymous meetings were the
2 hardest ones to sit through. The truth about myself seemed to come through with
3 all the subtlety of chalk scraping across a blackboard. I was angry and felt
4 anything but a part of their Fellowship. Sooner or later, I grew sick of listening to
5 myself and started listening to other people. Surprisingly enough, I did not feel
6 quite so frightened and lonely. It is funny how that works.

7 The treatment center kept large posters of the Twelve Steps and Twelve
8 Traditions hanging on the wall of the main meeting area. Somewhere around my
9 second week there I actually noticed them.

10 I read the first one. It said, "We admitted we were powerless over our
11 addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable." Those words seemed to
12 overwhelm me and I felt sick to my stomach. It was The Truth. I believe I took
13 the first step right then and there. The emotional pain was too great for it not to
14 have been real.

15 Along about this time I began to notice my thoughts were very clouded and
16 I seemed surrounded by a lot of mental confusion. I would reach for answers that
17 I knew would just not be there. Was it possible that I had brain damage from all
18 the years of drug use? Yes, ma'am! I wanted to go back to using. At least that
19 way I would not have to face all this nasty reality. I seemed to have forgotten
20 that it was drugs that caused the brain damage in the first place. It has been some
21 time now and I know I still cannot think as fast as I once could. I remember that
22 was a bad week. A lot of other patients seemed to get awful news as well. I may
23 have felt a lot of negative feelings but I did not feel alone. Most importantly, I
24 had accepted Step One and now the door to using drugs as a way out of pain
25 seemed closed.

1 Step Two: "We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could
2 restore us to sanity." I could not help but notice that some of the other patients
3 who had taken that step were in a lot better shape than I was in. By now, I was
4 very interested in making this recovery business as easy on myself as possible. The
5 whole idea of a Higher Power really confused me. All I knew was that without
6 one, I could not have what those other people seemed to have. And even though I
7 did not seem to understand what they had, I wanted it. I do not know what I
8 thought I was doing, but I do remember spending a lot of time alone wandering
9 around the treatment center grounds expecting the shrubbery to burst into flames
10 like the burning bush in the Bible.

11 After an awful lot of trial and much error, I came to know peace, the real
12 long lasting kind. My life has not been the same since that happened. Even
13 though I really cannot put into words just what did happen, I do know today I
14 have a belief in this Twelve Step journey and I believe in the God of my
15 understanding.

16 While I was in treatment, they made us keep a journal. I still have mine.
17 Sometimes, I take it out and read it. The last entry is this:

18 "...I want to learn to be free. I have to be taught how to do
19 that because I do not know how."

20 "I have learned that the answer to long serious problems do
21 not come easily but with enough effort they come in their own good
22 time. Other people give them to you and they are given freely."

23 "I am not always right. In a lot of cases I am wrong. Things
24 do not always come to the bitter, harsh end that I expect."

25 Patty:

26 When I left treatment, I had two things going for me. One, I was clean for
27 the first time since I was eight years old and, two, I had a Power greater than

1 myself to hang onto. My main problem was reminding myself that all these
2 changes inside of me had really happened. I felt as fragile as glass, wanting
3 desperately to hang on to what scraps of peace I had. I followed some N.A. advice.
4 I went to ninety meetings in ninety days, stayed far away from my old using
5 friends, made new friends, and got a sponsor. None of that was easy, but if you
6 just hold your breath and do it, it works out.

7 Sponsorship is a very interesting thing. I promised this total stranger that I
8 would call her every day and tell her what I was really thinking and try to be
9 honest about it in exchange for help with the Twelve Steps. I knew that the
10 Twelve Steps were the only way out of the "black hole" I called my using life. Out
11 of this verbal contract with my new sponsor, I was given far more than I could
12 have expected. She was there for the joyous times of my discovering a whole new
13 me, and she was there for the terrible times when the emotional pain was so great
14 it took my breath away. She seemed to always be just behind me saying, "...just
15 live in today, things do get better." At meetings, she would sit next to me, fill my
16 hand with candy and tell me to sit quietly and not disturb anyone. I later learned
17 she had been a kindergarten teacher for some years!

18 I highly recommend sponsors. Mine turned out to be an important link to
19 reality, a vital aid in working the steps, and an incredible teacher on how to live
20 life on life's terms. Maybe one of the best things about sponsors is that they are
21 free, just for the asking.

22 Today, I am a sponsor and although I do not walk around with sacks of
23 candy in my purse, the women I sponsor remind me of my own not so distant past.
24 Their struggle for a new life gives me hope in my own recovery. It is incredible
25 how much we all need each other.

1 Before I came to N.A., my life story was fairly gruesome. I had been
2 physically battered from the time I could walk until I left home at the age of
3 seventeen. I had been on drugs almost from the time I could spell my name. I had
4 been more than a casual visitor to a state run mental institution and I had endured
5 what seemed like a lifetime of isolation and loneliness. I do not live like that
6 anymore! I still have a lot of questions about myself, about the world and how I
7 fit into it. One thing I do not question is that this program works. I think I will
8 keep going to meetings, calling my sponsor, and working those steps to the best of
9 my ability. "Just for today" has been the best deal I was ever offered.