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Notes from the editor

I really didn't think I was going to be able to make any of the ASIS conference the weekend of June 18th-20th due to work but thankfully my thinking is not MY higher powers will!!!

I am glad there were allot more people there then I thought would be there. We talked about how we will soon outgrow the facility it has been held at for the last few years. There are at least 2 new gray book meetings that have started up. One in Philly on Saturday nights and also one in Wilkes Barre, PA on Monday nights. All in all there were about 25 of us there!

If I got anything out of that weekend it's that I'm not alone in my heart broken state over what has become of our fellowship! We went around the room on Friday night and introduced ourselves and the stories were all different yet all the same. I myself thought we could fix the service system from within but every World Service Conference that goes by creates more and more to fix and with the new vision statement seems to make it totally impossible at this point!!!!

Grassroots is what is needed and ASIS is where it's at for me!!! Does this mean I have abandoned NA? Not at all, it means my Group will strive to help create an alternative service system for groups to fall back on once NAWS destroys itself (and at this rate it will).

Groups need to stand up and say enough is enough!!! Check out nahelp.org there you can get the gray book and all the pamphlets you need for free to start your own gray book meeting! No longer do we have to let NAWS over charge us for literature that belongs to US, the fellowship of NA!!!

If you love NA and can't stand what has become of it check us out at nahelp.org it can't hurt!!!

Jeff



The topic for the next issue is the 12th Tradition "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

Narcotics Anonymous Purist Newsletter



July 2010

THE PURIST NEWSLETTER WHERE EVERY VOICE COUNTS



Spiritual Principles of Tradition 9

HUMILITY/ PRUDENCE/ FIDELITY

-The Ninth Tradition speaks of fidelity. Narcotics Anonymous groups join together, combining their resources to create service boards and committees that will help them better fulfill their primary purpose. Those boards and committees are not called to govern Narcotics Anonymous; they are called, rather, to faithfully execute the trust given them by the groups they serve. With a minimum of organization, our service boards and committees perform tasks on behalf of the groups, helping our groups remain free to do what they do best, simply and directly. Our fidelity to the Ninth Tradition assures that the simple, spontaneous atmosphere of recovery shared one addict to another in the NA group is never organized, legislated, or regulated out of existence.

The Restaurant parallel

To oversimplify I would draw the parallel of the waiter. The waiter, busboys, and chef are all responsible to serve the customer. The customer (group) decides what he will eat and drink. The waiter (area service committee) will directly serve the customer. They will fill the water glasses and ask the customer how to best serve them. The chef (region/world) backs up the waiter but rarely speaks directly to the customer. The whole idea is to make the dining experience good for the customer. If the service is lousy the customer may go down the road (ASIS) and refuse to pay. The point is that the customer (groups) are the boss. The restaurant cannot force the customer to eat the special, they are only there to serve what is ordered. Most customers would be horrified if they saw what happens in the kitchen (NAWS). The chefs (region/world) get together to decide what is best for the customer. They make menu changes that are better for the profits of the restaurant but not the customer. The customers decide they really don't like the cheap ass processed shit they are being fed but they are hungry so they order anyway and pay the bill. The chef takes a nice vacation with all their friends

N.A., AS SUCH, OUGHT NEVER BE ORGANIZED, BUT WE MAY CREATE SERVICE BOARDS OR COMMITTEES DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO THOSE THEY SERVE.

Recovery is a spiritual experience, with its foundation in surrender. Organization implies management and control; the antithesis of surrender. This Tradition makes it possible for us to take care of our "organizational needs" without losing our focus on recovery. It allows us to establish a "service structure", made up of working boards and committees, to help us communicate and function successfully. The purpose of our "service structure" is to do those things for our groups which would disrupt their "atmosphere of recovery" or distract them from their "primary purpose." We create and direct our services, our boards and committees exist only to serve us, and are strictly accountable and responsible to us. When we provide the physical, financial, and emotional resources necessary to fuel our "service structure", it takes care of our "business" so we can concentrate on recovery.

One purpose of the 9th Tradition

One purpose of our Ninth Tradition is to separate and distinguish NA as such from our service boards and committees. 'NA as such' is groups of addicts holding meetings for the purpose of recovery from the disease of addiction. Their primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Service boards and committees are created by these groups and are not NA as such. They have many other purposes and may become besieged with rivalry or competitiveness. This is an important distinction as many members confuse our service structure with NA. Our structure does not speak for NA but should allow NA to speak through it. Our boards and committees should not lead NA as such, but should be led as outlined in our second tradition.

Separating our service structure and NA is vital to our spiritual growth. When we blur the distinction, service disputes and controversies enter into our recovery meetings and affect our personal recovery. No member should be isolated or feel isolated from the fellowship because of service issues. This Tradition talks about direct responsibility. It is up to NA groups to insist on this. Although our structure is separate from NA as such, we expect it to work within the principles established by our Steps and Traditions.

Somehow, over the years, our service boards and committees changed direction. They changed from being "not a part of Narcotics Anonymous" to being "solely to serve the fellowship." This cheats the newcomer members from the concept of the Ninth Tradition. This may not be a direct change but indirectly an implication of service boards or committees being NA can confuse people and bring conflict upon ourselves. Service boards or committees serve the Fellowship not direct the Fellowship.

We are not their creatures

The Fellowship creates its service boards and committees. This is important to understand because in the course of things it may seem to us that our service efforts 'create' the Fellowship. It works one way and not the other. This keeps our committees and boards oriented to serve members and groups. It helps them to not get so caught up in what they are doing that they forget their allegiance to the Fellowship. If they do not, they may begin to govern. Power, like anger, is a potent drug. We create these and they are our creations but it takes care and training to serve NA without falling into well known traps! They didn't create us, our desire for recovery did. We recovering addicts are not their creatures.

service boards don't govern the fellowship

No service boards or committee should be allowed to govern the Fellowship. In selfless service, members may choose to become involved with committees our service boards. But since they are not NA, opinion and manipulation has no place, just group conscience as explained in our Second Tradition. Members may trust specific members to carry their collective conscience but this does not make this member a leader, governor or an organizer. It simply makes that person a trusted servant. No one has the power or authority to make decisions for NA. NA as a whole makes decisions for NA as a whole



Groups keep it simple

In our White Booklet, we read that "NA is a nonprofit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean." This is NA, as such-a simple fellowship using a nonprofessional, addict-to addict approach to the disease of addiction. We are a fellowship, not a lobbying organization or a medical service or a chain of treatment facilities. We are non-professional. We have no rules, no fees, no governing bodies, and only one membership requirement: a desire to stop using. Our primary purpose is, quite simply, to carry the message. These are some of the traditional standards by which our groups may guide themselves, and our ultimate guiding authority is a Higher Power as it finds expression in the conscience of our members. Our groups work as well as they do because they keep it simple, least anything get in the way of carrying our message as simply and directly as possible, one addict to another.

Tradition 9

The groups we serve believe that direct responsibility means a service board or committee first ask those they serve for direction regarding that service board or committee's policy before performing services.

This was the proposed definition of the 9th Tradition at the ASIS conference that was held June 18th-20th and passed unanimously!!!

In 2010 we are going to try something new. We are going to convert pages 4 and 5 to "The Step of the month club". We feel that although traditions are great to talk about and discuss we need to also talk about steps for our personal recovery!

The Step of the Month club

This Month we look at the 6th Step and I have asked someone who I have chatted with on a few different NA online venues and I believe has a great message! Thanks Boe

"We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

"Defects of character?" What defects of character? I remember a time when at six months clean I shared during a discussion that I honestly felt I no longer had any "defects of character". Could I have been more arrogant or narcissistic? Still, that is where I was! It had seemed to me that my biggest character defect had been that of a using addict. Seems I hadn't fully grasped the disease concept of addiction.

Time goes on and the process of recovery takes place. We do our best at living the Steps and practicing the program and this Way of Life to the best of our ability. Living life on life's terms, we acknowledge our powerlessness and the apparent unmanageability over our lives. We acknowledge, sometimes painfully, the existence of a Power greater than ourselves that could restore us to sanity and we "decide", to the best of our ability, that turning our will and our lives over to the care of a loving God is a good thing.

We come to discover that such a decision was fraught with challenges. Things that worked before no longer seemed to produce the results sought and we have by this time come to understand that repeating the same things over and over again expecting different results was defined as insanity.

Our sponsors suggested we, guided by the loving God of our understanding, take a serious and honest look at ourselves. Inventory time! Who am I, and what have I become? How did I get choose to become who I had become?

I came to see that my personae was "willfully" created by me to meet certain perceived needs and that these "needs" were, in my case, borne out of fear. I had learned or otherwise been molded to lie, cheat, steal, become violent, arrogant and proud in order to protect my fragile ego. I came to see that my drug using was an all but inevitable symptom of personae. The exact nature of my wrongs!

How comforting it was to feel the acceptance of another human being when I shared all of these to him. God was indeed there as I bared all of who I had become. I knew I was no longer alone and that there was no need to hide behind a wall of shame. I no longer needed to be the victim and was freed to take responsibility. I was free to be honest, caring, loving, humble and far more spiritual than I had ever imagined possible. This too would need to be a daily commitment

Equipped with a list of these "wrongs" I would eventually have to amend and the exact nature the character defects that created them I was "entirely ready to have God remove all of the defects of character"! Turning my will and my life over to the care of the God of my understanding became a much more will and trusting endeavor.

I no longer wanted to be the man I had been and sought to do God's Will and seek His Good Orderly Direction in what I did.

Such a commitment brings with it certain insights or revelations about "me" and the exact nature of who I am and the human experience I have been given. Of so little faith am I – time for Step Eight

As a footnote, I am reminded of something Jimmy Kinnon once shared. "We were born out of resentment". To that I would add "fear". We were born, as is all spiritual growth, out of fear and resentment and set free to live and enjoy life to it's fullest in accordance with spiritual principles and the process of recovery.