

# New Awakenings

## Faith and the Service Junkie An N.A. Love Story

This coupling started a long way apart at the beginning. Their differences seemed insurmountable. S.J. was so involved with doing and getting things done he had little time for anything else. While Faith was surrounded by belief, trust and acceptance. An odd couple that could be united.....

S.J. had found a home in Narcotics Anonymous, a place to stick around. When he gave of himself, he found great things returned to him. Things like breathing and being able to tie his shoes. There was also a sense of control and power there that everyone warned him about. This was a seductive power that was hard to avoid. After all, S.J. had arrived here with all the answers.

Faith had always been here. She was one of the first. She had been involved from the start with the twins of recovery, Carin and Sharin. Patience and Hope were also very close friends. They had learned to stick with the winners.

S.J. had looked at everything that was written about service. He had bumped heads with Mad Max {the angry one} and Wierd Harold {who always had complicated solutions to simple problems} already. He had wondered about the calm and serene Sedate Nate {the easy going one}. After all how did Nate rate his peace and inner joy? Some had said that it was from surrender, Nate didn't have to fight anymore.

Faith had known these same people for awhile. Max and Harold just would not allow the relationship to be a natural one. Control and power had been their love of life for a long time. Nate had been intimate with Faith for a long time. Even though they would not admit, without her in their life they suffered greatly from a lack of Faith.

Faith had met S.J. one day when things could not be all worked out with the usual mind games. There didn't seem to be any solution. Max and Harold had tried their ways of censoring the truth, dictating what had to be done, and exerting their rule over all in their power and prestige. Nate quietly introduced Faith into the process. He talked about the fact that she has often been the one to rely on in situations like these. Max and Harold bristled at this new twist. After all in their thinking their wisdom had come from years of paid travel and they knew all of the ego centered and popular servants.

Faith had learned to trust group conscience, a process that demanded honesty and truth. That integrity in action allowed both sides of an issue to be heard and understood. Through the learning experience of applying spiritual principles, compromise that a workable solutions can be reached.

S.J. feel in love with this wonderful idea of understanding, and love embodied in Faith. A relationship including Faith would know no boundaries. That together he could face every lack and character defect. Faith wished to enter his life that day, but first must come humility. Humble is something that S.J. knew very little about in his life, especially in service. Self centeredness and ego had been a way of life for him. Change must take place once awareness happens, else misery be unbearable once again.

Nate had always shown a teachable side S.J. An open mindedness that allowed for others to be right. This was very attractive to him at this time. It dawned on him that Nate might be one of those winners that he had been told to look for. A resource for learning what Faith had to offer. As he began to open his mind to Nate's love for N.A., he began the process of coming to believe.



S.J.'s early experiences with Faith were somewhat blind. His previous experience had not taught him that this relationship begins with belief. That there were things around him, principles and ideas that worked for others when they used them. That once he believed, the process of growth through action could happen. He found that once he used what others were and found that they worked for him, then trust could be built in these principles. Thus came the opportunity for acceptance of Faith into his life. That the winners and recovery could be a natural part of this way of life, and that Faith could be a part of his life forever.

As his relationship with Faith grew so did S.J. He began to start becoming open to others instead of needing to change them. Truth seemed not to hurt so much anymore. That the whole picture was better than one painted by those that said "Trust Me". That length of service had little to do with quality of service.

Their relationship allowed for a unity with others that he had never thought possible before. To learn to be childlike again no longer being childish. To disagree without being disagreeable. A new chance to love creatively not destructively. A way to let others be where they were at and for that to be okay.

S.J. found that with Faith in his life that the addition of the many other spiritual principles became easier. It was hard work and he found that when he made the effort things happened that he could not believe or explain away. This new power in his life was one that he had tried to create on his own, not knowing that it had been there all along. Honesty, open-mindedness and willingness were becoming a way of life. The long sought after freedom was his once the surrender took place. Hand in hand he went forward into a life he had never known or had ever dreamed possible.

He had learned that.....

ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE WITH FAITH

## *BUBBLES*

*...sought through prayer and meditation...*

So many bubbles..., random ideas floating to the surface and bursting. The substance of the idea is obscured as it rises through the murk of my subconscious. When it nears the top the shadow of a thought is partially visible, distorted by the bubble; out of focus through the murk. When it comes to the surface I can see it clearly but still the bubble distorts. They often stay there, clear but distorted, at the top of my subconscious, for a long time. When the bubble bursts the light of my understanding projects the idea clearly on the screen of my conscience. Sometimes the light is so bright they are burned there forever. Mostly the light is just bright enough to display them clearly for a moment, till my memory zips them up and compresses them neatly in a corner. Often, the light is so dim or the bursting so frequent that the screen appears to me only as a subliminal flash. All of the ideas trigger a feeling which can vary from joy to relief to panick to despair. My spiritual condition seems to determine how bright the light of my understanding is, how frequently the bubbles burst, and how distorted makes the idea inside as it rises to the surface...



*The first article appearing in the first N.A. Way magazine*

## IDENTITY CRISIS

For many years I pondered the philosophical question; "Who am I?" I searched for meaning in life through fantasy after fantasy. I sought purpose for my existence in cause after cause. Finally, desperate for an identity to reconcile my diverse personality, I began to expand my consciousness through drugs, from hippie to hype. I searched the world over for stories about drugs and the culture surrounding them. I scoured the realm of pills from doctors, the best and the worst of liquid potions. I went from upholstered sewers full of disco-glitter to cribs cluttered with filth on the nod. Nowhere could I find me. Not in the dealer, not in the jet-setter, not in the biker, nor in the burn-out. I came to this Fellowship totally lost. Not knowing who or what I was. I knew that I'd tried to be many things and had failed. I knew who and what I wasn't. My life only got worse when I used drugs - I wanted to stop.

My would-be helpers tried to convince me that I was an "alcoholic", but I knew alcohol was only an occasional substitute. They tried to appease me by suggesting that I was a cross-addict, but I didn't have any splinters in my shoulders from carrying crosses - I wasn't addicted to crosses. Well, maybe then I might be a dual addict (they were truly trying to help me surrender), but my possessions didn't include matched swords or pistols - I wasn't addicted to dueling at all. In exasperation they put it to me that I must be a poly-addict. However, to the best of my memory, I'd never smoked or shot or swallowed a bit of plastic. I survived the psychology and the would-be helpers caught up in their own chemical denial. I came to an N.A. meeting and finally heard something that made sense. I was a person whose whole life and thinking had become centered in drugs in one form or another. Very simply...an addict! Now I knew what all that mumbo-jumbo about keeping it simple meant.

Eventually I was able to surrender to the idea of being powerless over my addiction, my life had become unmanageable. Today I realize that chemical identities are just a very insidious form of denial. My recovery is based on powerlessness over addiction, **not** powerlessness over drugs. I'm sick, getting well the N.A. way, recovering from addiction. I don't think that I can recover from drugs. My body, and maybe my mind can get over their effects. Drugs are not incurable; addiction is. I can recover from my disease if I accept my powerlessness over it and work the steps on that basis. My denial is strong, the strongest part of my addictive thinking. I'm sure that my denial could lead me to say that I'm a drug addict, an addict-alcoholic, a cross addict, a chemically dependent pill head, or any one of a number of complex chemical/personality labels.

The Fellowship of N.A. taught me to identify myself according to my condition. I am an addict. None of the chemical symptoms of my disease; none of the drugs I used are any more important than the others. As an addict, I am addicted to all mood changing chemicals whether I used them moderately, excessively, and even if I never used them at all. I'm an addict, recovering from addiction through the N.A. Program. The chemicals I used are not even the most important symptoms of the disease that I'm powerless over...today.

Total surrender can lead to unlimited recovery. To participate in my disease through denial of it would be to reserve a place for relapse: to limit my recovery. I need to participate in my recovery at meetings where addicts help each other recover from addiction. I'm grateful for the gift of knowing who and what I am. I'm no longer caught up in the aura of drugs. I've surrendered to the N.A. Program and don't need to participate in any denial based on a chemical hierarchy. I choose unconfused recovery expressed through my simple identity.

I am, very simply, an addict.



## A NEW SURRENDER

I've tried to look at it all from a principled distance. We have this fellowship full of newcomers who don't know the ~~awe~~-full history of N.A. service. At just about every meeting they attend they hear..."our common welfare should come first.....one Ultimate Authority, a loving God...in our **Group conscience**...our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.....Each Group is autonomous.....N.A...ought never...finance...any...outside enterprise .....N.A...ought to be fully self-supporting.....N.A. as such...may create service boards and committees, **directly responsible to those they serve.**"

When I was in their seat, when I was new, I treated these principles as cherished **truths**, describing the nature of Narcotics Anonymous: pure and simple. Just as you and I did, they will probably soon be attracted to service in order to 'give it away so they can keep it'. Today, that's usually where our disillusionment begins. Or where we begin to be corrupted, depending upon our character and the character of those members they find involved in service. Each of us discovers the spiritual corruption in N.A. structural service in a different way and each of us deals with it according to our own recovery. We find that lock-stepped compliance to 'what is done here' and unthinking uniformity masquerade as Unity, overriding any considerations of the truth and **Spiritual Principles** as they regard our common welfare. We find that service committees tell N.A. Groups and members how to think and how to behave. The conscience of those groups is either manipulated or ignored. Each service committee takes it's lead from the next 'higher' service committee. We find our leaders running the show with strong hands and wills, skillfully assuring us that they do what they do in our best interests. We find a structure more nearly resembling representative government than any form of 'service' we may have considered. We see any group that differs from the norm criticised, ostracized or outcast, and are told not to go near those people because they are sick and not 'real' N.A.. As we become more sophisticated and perhaps ask our representative to read some financial reports from our primary service center we realize that outside concerns buy our literature at reduced rates so that they may charge the same amount we charge our members while defraying their own costs. Or in other words, we indirectly finance outside enterprise. We also see from these reports that large 'profits' are made on the literature that we buy as newcomers or buy as groups to give to newcomers and that this profit is used to finance service projects that are supposed to benefit our group. We find that groups don't really need to be self-supporting that their services are paid for through our newcomer tax. We find that most every function sponsored by a structural service committee is designed to raise funds or encourage conformity. We learn that our services are funded by literature/convention profits and fund-raisers with groups' donations being relatively meaningless as funding. Consequently we are not amazed to discover that the services rendered by our boards and committees were seldom if ever requested by most or even any of the groups. We wonder how our structural services, our boards and committees are 'directly responsible' when the pure and simple **Spiritual Principles** shared at most every meeting of N.A. seem foreign to the conduct of these boards and committees we have created. We question the honesty of the **Narcotics Anonymous** fellowship when we look at the service structure it has built for itself.

How has this happened? N.A. truly is a spiritual fellowship where an addict with the desire to stop using drugs can miraculously stop using, lose the desire to use and find a new way to live. We say our recovery in N.A. is based upon the application of spiritual principles in our lives. How then, can such blatant compromises of such basic spiritual principles be tolerated? Perhaps it's because most of the fellowship is not aware of the reality of our services. Perhaps it's because most of our fellowship doesn't know our real history. It sounds to me as if our fellowship needs to inventory it's services, current and past so that we may begin living up to our principles here and now.

Not a new fellowship\* Not a renewed resignation\* Not new guidelines\* Not a new complaint  
A NEW AWARENESS \* A NEW ANALYSIS \* A NEW AWAKENING \* A NEW ACTION



## NO COMPROMISE

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One of the most painful and degrading actions my active addiction demanded me was that I consistently had to compromise my ideals to survive. I had grown up believing in honesty and personal integrity. I'd learned to be "... as good as my word." In my youth, before active addiction stole my self-worth, I was a person of my word. You could believe what I said. You could count on me. I believed in certain principles, and consistently stood up for them. I wasn't always right but I stood up for what I believed. My belief system was based in my perception of reality. Honesty was honesty, and like pregnancy, you either were or you weren't. Personal integrity meant doing the right thing for the right reason, telling the truth, living without deceit, being fair, just, standing up for principles courageously, and accepting the consequences of my actions.

Addiction altered my behavior. Reality became uncomfortable, eventually intolerable. I needed more and more drugs to survive. When I was under the influence of drugs, honesty and integrity were less important and often inconvenient. Between 'runs', honesty and integrity were burdens that would have prevented getting more drugs and the relief I needed. My values were still there, however, and the only escape from this inner conflict of addiction vs. conscience was to use more drugs. Eventually addiction conquered conscience. Dishonesty, deceit, and injustice became as much a part of my life as drugs. I would do whatever was needed, say whatever was required, be whoever the drug-culture I lived in expected, to get the money and drugs my addiction demanded. Whatever the consequences of my actions were, there always seemed to be enough drugs to compensate.

Dishonesty, deceit and cowardice became habitual. My self-esteem was lost to the demands of active addiction. I lied and stole for practice, even when I didn't need to. I laughed at honest people who stood up for their beliefs and called them square and used them. Living up to principles made them vulnerable, I thought them weak. Addiction twisted reality cruelly so that I began to feel that my dishonesty and deceit could result in some benefit for them. After all, I thought, I am sophisticated and they are naive. I was baffled when their pain and confusion increased. I gradually began to see myself as hopelessly immoral. The drugs slowly stopped working so well and conscience nagged me about my dishonesty and cowardice. My denial forced me to continue telling me that I'd become such a bad person that there was no hope. I'd become what I despised and there was no reconciliation between my actions and my ideals. Only death or permanent institutionalization could save the world from my taint. I began killing myself with drugs. It didn't work. The fog of addiction thickened and I groped hopelessly for help.

Blindly I reached out and you took my hand. Narcotics Anonymous rescued me from my dishonest, deceitful, cowardly drug-altered world or self-destruction. You taught me that I was powerless over the disease of addiction. I stopped using. You taught me that simple abstinence was not enough. I got honest. You taught me to walk my prayer. I stopped compromising. Courage came slowly and painfully. You taught me that addiction had many more symptoms than just drug use. I didn't understand that at first. My dishonesty, deceitfulness and cowardice were more difficult to abstain from than drugs. You showed me actively that the spiritual principles of recovery were pure. You taught me by example that compromising on these principles was just as self-destructive as using drugs. The faith to act can only come from acting on faith. My way didn't work any better in recovery than it had in active addiction. My life had become unmanageable, and as I accepted this, my mind opened. Watching you live clean and recover led me to believe in abstinence, accept my condition, and gave me the faith to try recovery.



Narcotics Anonymous taught me that anything less than a total commitment to all twenty-four spiritual principles of recovery and sharing is denial of my decision to turn my will and life over to the Spirit of recovery. I perceive. Therefore, I cannot compromise. Acceptance is acceptance. Reality shows me that I'm powerless over addiction and my life is unmanageable by me. I can choose to accept that or deny it. Recovery demands acceptance. Faith is faith. Hope comes from faith in my life and I believe I can recover. I need to act on this faith or become hopeless again. Commitment is uncompromising to me. It is surrender in action. Honesty is honesty. Recovery reinforces personal integrity for me. I am free to be as honest, courageous and just as I am willing to be uncompromising on spiritual principles. This kind of limitless recovery forces me to accept my humanity. I fall short of my goals consistently. But by "...shaping my thoughts with the spiritual principles ... (I'm) ... moving toward, ... (I'm) ... free to become who ... (I) .. want to be."

When I compromise spiritual principles in my life, I limit my recovery. When I compromise spiritual principles in my service, I deny addicts the recovery they seek. Just as acceptance is acceptance, faith is faith and honesty is honesty, so group conscience is group conscience, direct responsibility is direct responsibility and anonymity is anonymity. Compromise of these spiritual principles in service brings me similar life-limitation to compromise in my recovery. Except that the life I may limit, the recovery that I may deny, is often someone else's.

Our predecessors taught us that "Half measure's avail us nothing." Compromising Spiritual Principles in recovery and service can only hurt. My recovery demands uncompromising honesty and personal integrity. Real recovery and true service means....

#### NO COMPROMISE.

- from the Way of Life Book, an N.A. literature work in progress, for info or willingness, write to W.O.L. 375 Franklin Ave. Aliquippa, PA 15001 U.S.A

#### TAIL WAGS DOG

In a single remarkable session a west coast Area Service Committee (ASC) refused a request to give 15 basic texts to a book study meeting but responded enthusiastically to a direct donation request from WSO, Inc.

It seems that WSO has mailed out a passionate plea for direct donations to ASC treasurers. One member's objection that WSO "would just spend it on plane tickets" was rebutted by a passionate plea for "faith". Sometimes the usurpation of the Ultimate Authority becomes incredibly blatant. That eyes and ears should be so closed is sad. That a poor Group in a poor town should be without books for a book study meeting while \$150 can be sent to Van Nuys feels like something died.

In places we focus on the word structure and have forgotten service, are asked to trust the servants of self, and in the end the disease is still in control. It allows our Traditions to become meaningless. It allows us to hear what we want in them rather than what they say.

In a structural sense it becomes Orwellian. Servants are served. The structure claims a 5th tradition and the groups should send dollars. "Full Participation" is a euphemism for administrative votes and the death of group conscience. The most important persons are the least important. The structure supplants the Principles.



## Unity and Fear

"We keep what we have only with vigilance, and just as freedom for the individual comes from the Twelve Steps, so freedom for the group springs from our Traditions."

We have all heard these words so often it is easy to overlook their true beauty and spiritual power. It is commonplace at conventions in N.A. to poke fun at them by saying the word "boing" after the reader says "springs" and to say the word "rip" after the reader says "tear". These things we do at an event such as a convention are relatively harmless; after all, we learn not to become too "serious" about ourselves or other addicts in recovery. However, it bears bountiful fruit to look at the word "vigilance" and see what it really means. Likewise, another word in our basic text which describes our Traditions is "inviolable". These words cover conceptual matters that are the fundamental nutrients in any healthy service structure. More simply, it is these conceptual matters that, when understood, allow groups to interact with each other in a constructive and positive manner. In Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary vigilance is defined as "The quality or state of being vigilant" so from the noun "vigilance" we go to the adjective "vigilant" and see this definition: "Alertly watchful especially to avoid danger." In the same dictionary "inviolable" is defined: "secure from violation or profanation; secure from assault or trespass." I'm not going to define every word used - if you need, please go to your nearest dictionary.

Why are these two words so important? It is very simply this - "inviolable" describes the very nature of our traditions, and that nature is profound in its simplicity. The words are describing how our traditions should be treated. "Vigilance describes the type of action we as members of home groups need to take in order that our traditions remain secure from assault or trespass, secure from profanation (okay - here's the deal, profanation is "the act or an instance of profaning." "Profane" means, and this is indeed startling, "to treat with abuse, irreverence, or contempt; to debase by a wrong, unworthy, or vulgar use.") When we put all these words together a clear picture emerges about the nature of our traditions and our individual and group responsibilities to protect them. This is the starting point of what I will call the profanation of our first tradition and the ramifications in our other traditions of this profanation.

The problem many of us have with those that use the word "unity" as a rallying point when referring to tradition one is this - through innocent neglect and not necessarily deliberate contempt, most addicts in recovery, most addicts in service, are and have profaned tradition one. "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity." On the surface these words appear to be clear and understandable - I know of no addict who is currently getting recovery through the twelve steps of Narcotics Anonymous only, who would disagree that our common welfare is just that - recovery from addiction through addiction through N.A.'s twelve steps. What truly polarizes addicts is the concept of unity. This concept must be visited before we can see why vigorous personal action is needed to "reclaim" the traditions to maintain Narcotics Anonymous as we understand it.

Sometimes it is easier to define a word by saying what it is not. This is not very exact, but it is useful. I think most addicts from wherever they come will agree, unity is not conformity. Many addicts however, in saying this, don't realize how important it is to see where our unity truly lies. When we were out there using chemicals, our will and our lives became so monotonous and we were controlled by something so monstrous that we lost all of our freedom to be the loving and caring individuals God intended us to be. No matter what or how much we used, we all were "like thinkers" (for lack of a better word). What we all have in common is the loss of personal freedom (the pamphlet "Another Look" speaks of this disorder). What the steps offer us is the complete freedom to find out who we are what God wants us to be. Most of us had so little freedom that a goal of achieving such a state of being is most attractive.

Let's look at the N.A. symbol. There we see that the sides of our "pyramid" lead to a single point - you guessed it! Freedom! The explanation of our symbol in the basic text tells us that the broader the "base" of our "pyramid", the higher the point, freedom, becomes. We are limiting ourselves when we perceive the base, the growing base, as the number of addicts who are coming into recovery. What most of us miss is the base, as we call it, also has a spiritual component. The best way to describe this component is to say the more varied our spiritual viewpoints, the more, for lack of a better word, "types" of recovering addicts we have, the broader our spiritual base becomes. To tie all this together with tradition one all we have to do is see how our "unity" is actually in our "diversity"! This is, for some, a startling revelation.



What has happened in Narcotics Anonymous over the last decade or so is we have grown so rapidly we are afraid, we fear, a fellowship that welcomes all voices without attaching labels to them. There was a time when a large diversity of opinions could be heard in N.A. meetings and in N.A. services, a time when diversity was the main element in views expressed and votes taken at the World Service conference. Sure there was a lot of conflict, but at least voices were varied. Over the years we have become so afraid of our selves and so untrusting of God that we've allowed our "Fellowship Conscience" to become watered-down. Votes at the World Service Conference have become a barometer of this fact. These votes now seem to be expressing that there is a "party-line" - the twelve concepts call this "party-line" this "like-thinking", the "majority voice". The false assumption is that a vote at a World Service Conference is the "Fellowship-Conscience". This false assumption snowballs and what we fail to see is the very possible scenario that such votes may only be "Fellowship Opinion". If there is a difference between "group conscience" and "group opinion", there has to be this dichotomy at all levels of service. We can't really believe that because something happens at a World Service Conference then it must necessarily be the fellowships conscience. We would be lying to ourselves.

There are some basic reasons why our fellowship services and our members' philosophies, our members' personal spirituality, have become watered down. Again, it's a non-deliberate profanation - a profanation of our ninth tradition. Tradition nine describes how our groups can exercise spiritual freedom by furthering our service to ourselves and society by the creation of service boards and committees. The profanation is lack of exercising our responsibilities as N.A. home groups to provide these boards and committees with a continuing supply of new trusted servants who could bring much needed "fresh" ideas to the table. This problem starts right at home. All of us have seen meetings which have regular attendance of 20, 30, 40, or more addicts struggle to develop trusted servants so a meeting can have a true home-group with individuals seeking a conscience from our ultimate authority. To follow through, all of us have seen area service committees, regional service committees, and world service committees where trusted servants merely play "musical chairs". This problem of support is an epidemic, a widespread disease that enlarges exponentially every day. It is no real mystery why N.A. services have lost a diversity of flavors and we currently sit in a situation where everyone is "vanilla" or everyone is "chocolate". We expect our services to reflect a diverse fellowship but we don't take our end of the responsibility as groups. Why?

This last question is one too complex to handle - groups are individual addicts - as such they work steps or go crazy. To sum this up with a step analogy - one mostly directed to N.A. members who figure whatever happens to N.A. services is God's will. In step 3 we make a decision to turn our will and our lives over - but that decision must be followed by action if we want any kind of progressive recovery. Likewise, if we make a decision to let "God" do the work we surely fail. Let's practice traditions and recognize our serious responsibilities as groups to faithfully take action where N.A. as a whole is involved. Sitting back doesn't work. Sitting back we have created a one-party rule - and the WSC "label-conference approved" smacks distinctly of government. To all members I wish you luck and send my prayers -take action - take back your fellowship or one day you'll wake up and not recognize N.A.'s "new fangled" services. Get up and take action - only in this action will God spur us along to adhering to spiritual principles in N.A. services.

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Just send us your name and address. We publish the first week of the even numbered months. Current costs place six issues at \$ 5.00 Full financial disclosure appears in each issue. If you would, please write us with your thoughts and comments. Send an article if you want.

The address is New Awakenings P.O. Box 21232 Oakland, Ca 94620



## You Can't Write...

Dear Fellow Members,

Amid the complexity, there is simplicity. The simple truth is that members of N.A. wrote all the existing literature and we can do it again. How did it get to be heresy in N.A. to speak the truth? The only people who say we can't do it are in a position to get paid to do it or to get personal credit. Does this seem like there might be a conflict of interest?

We don't need a fearless leader, perhaps a faithful leader would do. Search your heart for what God's Will is to you and voice the results until you find a common ground of issues and possible goals. Writing literature is a little like staying clean: many will say it can't be done, or it can't be done that way. When you do it, however, there's not much to say. Trust those who trust you. Keep faith with those who keep faith with you.

When I think back on the incredible amount of reading of input I read on the Board of Trustees, I realize that I benefitted from having access you never got to see! That is a shame. I trust you to be able to sort through the garbage for the goody. There was some real goody in that material. There is some real goody in the Grey Form that preceded the Basic Text. Have you seen that yet? Well, why not?

Check out your ideas. There are service technician's who can help you with writing. We need a Fellowship lit pact or agreement stating simply the rules of the game so that we can go forward with new creations. This would allow members to do the work anonymously without signing release forms and contribute general recovery material exactly the same way they contribute their heart, love and ideas drawn from their own personal experience in a recovery meeting of N.A. No one thinks to charge for that do they? How then would they seek recompense for sharing on paper to help fellow addicts seeking recovery? It is the giving that counts for us.

The release form was originated for personal stories in the Basic Text only. It was later put to use in the N.A. Way magazine and for other forms of written input. There must be a glut of release forms in some great file at WSO. I wonder how they keep it all in order? It is nonsense and implies distrust. The release forms stifled the lit movement from the beginning and if nothing else happens, the lit movement is now dead as a doornail.

BECAUSE YOU CAN'T WRITE

OR CAN YOU????

### bits from the mailbag

Thanks & keep up the good work.- Maryland

Here's a little donation... We strive to display our gratitude... Thanks alot.- An N.A. Group

I hope and pray for the best. Thank you for your unheralded efforts.- California  
Good stuff. I have suggested to those I sponsor to subscribe.- Georgia

Please keep up the important work of N.A. becoming N.A.- Florida  
It's nice to see something real basic happening in our Fellowship again. It's also nice to see some different viewpoints.- Massachusetts

Thanks for the previous New Awakenings. I love them.- Alaska

Finally, after 9 years there is literature I can read and enjoy again. former WSC  
Literature Chair

I would prefer to remain anonymous. Southern California

If you believe in what you are doing pray to God for the courage and the strength to stand and face the challenge. There is hope. Together we can Ohio

Thanks for [the] copy of your very interesting and helpful newsletter... [it] arrived on the eve of our own ASC. I don't usually go, but I have a sponsee who was struggling with his current commitment to be the local helpline chair and I went to support him. After all the personalities started, the "exploding egos" routines that I recall from my own past ventures in service I was reminded why I currently choose to do my service work at the group level. I appreciate the diversity and integrity of the viewpoints presented.- Florida

Thanx for this publication. Keep up the good work. Love Ya Lots! - Another N.A. Group



## A RHYME FOR THIS TIME

When I first got here  
Dying was all that was near

Made my first meeting, sat in the rear  
Had no idea what I would hear

The ladies were pretty I noticed with a leer  
Addiction took you the same places that was queer

One's story so similar I found him a peer  
He said "Work steps die, it will take away the fear"

My seat got hot it started to sear  
To my eyes you brought many a tear

You warned me of the things from which to steer  
There was a path from which not to veer

Then you hugged me that wasn't so mere  
All these years latter you all remain dear

My mind is much smoother my spirit more clear  
Living a new life it's a whole new career

Life was so crazy it was quite insane  
I needed a new place in which to retrain

You did some readings, I didn't complain  
Words were striking notes inside my brain

Told of the gutters in which you had lain  
It would never be easy, you made that plain

Not like elsewhere not the same refrain  
So much more feeling, not such a drain

As my eyes watered it felt like the rain  
From my soul it started to wash the stain

Living the steps its in something I train  
Spiritual gifts even under the strain

I live with help in the land of the sane  
My spirit may limp, but I have a cane

There is a new away that I must sustain  
Give it way to keep it, and don't sweat the pain

L U V Y A A L L

## QUESTIONS?

*Q: What is this thing?!*

A: This is the New Awakenings newsletter. It's a special handout addition.

*Q: Is this N.A.?*

A: Nothing but. We believe that our diversity is our unity.

*Q: Is this thing approved?*

A: You may approve it in whole, in part, or not at all. No newsletter has the ability to be Conference approved. It's not for use in meetings.

*Q: What's it all about?*

A: Its all about change, just like the rest of recovery. Regimented compliance with "what is done here" is neither unity nor progress. All we know about authority is embodied in the Second Tradition. This is a free press for a free society.

*Q: Who's doing this?*

A: This is an effort of many N.A. members around the world. The mail as well as the miracles of modern digital technology are helping to make this possible. If you have something you want to share in writing please send it in!

*Q: Does the New Awakenings come out regularly and can I get a subscription?*

A: Yes, yes! The next New Awakenings, #5, will come out the first week of October and about every 60 days thereafter. The first one came out in February 1993. The money we are asking for is pegged as close to real costs as we can get and a complete statement of income and expense is printed each issue. Please let us hear from you! Look for our address on the previous page.