

New Awakenings

CON•SAPS

con (kon), **adv.** [contr. <L. *contra*, against], against; in opposition: as, they argued the matter pro and **con**. **n.** an argument, reason, vote, person, etc. in opposition.
con (kon), **v.t.** [CONNED (kond), CONNING], [earlier *cond* <ME. *conduen*, to conduct; OFr. *conduire*; L. *conducere*; see CONDUCT], to direct the course of (a vessel).
con (kon), **adj.** [Slang], confidence: as, a **con** man. **v.t.** [CONNED (kond), CONNING], [Slang] to swindle (a victim) by first gaining his confidence.

sap (sap), **n.** 1. the juice which circulates through a plant, especially a woody plant, bearing water, food, etc. to the tissues. 2. Any fluid considered vital to the life or health of an organism. 3. vigor; energy; vitality. 4. sapwood. 5. [< dial. *sapskull* & *saphead*], [Slang], a stupid person; fool. **v.t.** [SAPPED (sapt), SAPPING], to drain of sap.

sap (sap), **n.** [OFr. *sappe* < the v.], an extended, narrow trench for approaching or undermining an enemy position or besieged place. **v.t.** [SAPPED (sapt), SAPPING], 1. to undermine by digging away foundations; dig beneath. 2. to undermine in any way; weaken; exhaust; devitalize. **v.i.** 1. to dig saps. 2. to approach an enemy's position by saps. --**SYN.** see **weaken**.

Concerning the "Twelve Concepts for Service" no real study has yet been made either by we Traditionalists or (we would say) by the current structure. Some of us would say this alone is a good argument against them.

This is one addict's perspective. You will no doubt see more from others in the coming months and there are doubtless others with greater knowledge than I. During most of NA's history i was not here; I was busy (down at the dope house). I am an inheritor of the present situation. (See "vigilance").

Going all the way back there have always been two

schools of thought, if you will - one that believed in greater administrative control or a more business-oriented approach to the development of our Fellowship, and the other which opposed this, basing themselves (we believe) more strictly (or literally) on our Traditions. Viewed in this way the last 10 years can be seen as a protracted trouncing of one school of thought over the other, culminating, it seems today, in the adoption of the Concepts.

Once upon a time "NA as such" was the Groups and the Traditions were their non-negotiable and only guidelines. The service structure was built to serve *only* and was defined outside of NA. Groups (NA as such) and service boards or committees were understood to be distinctly different entities. All we knew about authority was contained in the 2nd Tradition: defined on the Group. All we knew about service boards or committees was contained in the 9th Tradition: we (the Group[s]) may create them and they must be directly responsible to those they serve (again, *the Groups*).

It is interesting to reflect upon the phrase "directly responsible". This section of our non-negotiable guidelines might just have easily read, "in some manner responsible to" or "through a representative system, indirectly responsible to" or "directly" could have been left out altogether to leave more room for "trust". It was not, of course.

Viewed in this manner the Traditions "add up" and hang together as a cohesive set. Viewed otherwise they give rise to more ambiguity than answers. Questions raised over the years have included: If our Traditions are only about Groups, does this mean service boards or committees may go ahead and freely violate Traditions? If the service structure has a Fifth Tradition (the current supreme *raison d'etat*) why does it not also have a Seventh Tradition? Can our services function without their own set of guidelines? How can our services function in an effective and timely manner if every decision must go back to the Groups?

As you no doubt know, the lines in our Text which defined the service structure outside of NA, forbidding them to rule, censor, decide, or dictate, and guaranteeing to the Groups the right to use or not use such services were deleted under scandalous circumstances. It has been said that "they deleted the lines that prevented them from deleting the lines".

Efforts to come to terms with some of the above questions, and perhaps ultimately, "If the service structure

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from p. 1

is not NA then what is it?" gave rise a few years ago to a proposed Twelve Precepts for Service (see page 3). This was written by a Trustee and circulated on a small scale for feedback. A later version seems much more sympathetic to the "authority" of the structure. We can guess where most of his feedback came from.

With the printing of the Baby Blue in 1990 by autonomous NA Groups and the willingness of one member to become a spokesperson and focal point, these issues were rescued from oblivion and the syndrome of "a lie repeated often enough will become accepted". There came a frantic effort to hush up, cover up, clean up, approve retroactively and anticipate the next moves of this insignificant "handful" of trouble-making members (often called non-members). When I look back at the World Service Conference Reports for 1990-93 it looks like 3/4 of it is thus motivated.

It was in this context and atmosphere that the Concepts were hastily approved at the World Service Conference. The first Concept seems to imply that our right to create a service structure began and ended with the one, now only Approved™ one. Given that service boards or committees continue to be created by service boards or committees constantly, (isn't the solution found by bureaucracy to bureaucratic problems always to create more bureaucracy?) it would appear that possession of this right has "changed hands". Another Concept says that grievances should be heard. It offers no further recourse or guarantee. Thus "Let's just take him out in the parking lot and kick his ass" (an infamous WSO quote from 1991) might have to be, "Let's give him 1 minute to talk then take him out in the parking lot and kick his ass" - a far cry from ideals such as freedom, autonomy and a Loving God.

Another Concept seems to define Group Conscience as decision-making without votes. Its always seemed to me that a better word for this is *consensus*. Many of us feel that this is the preferred way of deciding things as a Group. The problem is that the Concepts do not define Group-Conscience on the Group(!), thus retroactively approving what has always been the practice in many places - the practice of decision-making by service boards or committees: Hence, "The RSO BOD took a Group Conscience and decided that...". We have seen this kind of confusing use of our language more and more lately (This is in fact, along with the name "Concepts", A.A. language). And a Fellowship filling up with addicts who weren't here a year ago would seem now to find an against-all-odds chance for clarity...

Another Concept gives servants charged with carrying out decisions a right to "full participation" in those decisions. In practice, this is the legitimization of "administrative" or "add-in" votes. The original structure where only GSR's voted in ASC's, only ASR's voted in RSC's, and only RSR's voted at the WSC kept Group Conscience and thus decision-making defined on the Group. "Carrying conscience" is probably another bit of our terminology that will soon cease to have meaning. At each level approximately one-third of votes are cast by committee vice-chairs, offices, treasurers, subcommittee chairs, etc., who are carrying no conscience from any Group or Groups and naturally tend to have an administrative perspective or a vested interest, if you will. We say that in this manner the Ultimate Authority is diluted or corrupted along the way. The fact that this was the practice at the WSC as well as many RSC's and ASC's prior to the approval of the Concepts means that this historic transferral of decision-making power from the Groups to the service structure was legitimized without the approval of the Groups (do you remember your Home Group's decision on this one?). Or we could say that they delegated themselves the authority to delegate themselves the authority. ♦

Publishing Box

How it works: YOU write the articles. If there's an article you don't like YOU write the rebuttal. YOU send feedback, criticism, news, poetry, etc. so as to help make this a better newsletter. If you want to keep getting the *New Awakenings* in your mailbox, you must send some bucks (see the bottom of page 11). If your newsletter doesn't show up, let us know: we lost a subscriber once and mail service is getting steadily worse, but come hell or high water we print 'em every 60 days.

We share our experience and learn from each other. No individual inside or outside the fellowship represents Narcotics Anonymous. Nothing appearing in this newsletter is necessarily more than the feelings of one member, just for today.

Financial Statement

Received:

Georgia	10.00
England	25.00
Kansas	10.00
Washington DC	2.00
Colorado	20.00
Illinois	5.00
Georgia	10.00
Maryland	20.00
Missouri	4.10

Total 106.10

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Total 115.95

TWELVE PRECEPTS OF SERVICE FOR NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS 3/31/88

1. **Service is a Spiritual Principle;** it is through giving freely of ourselves that we receive. In N.A. we believe that service is an integral part of Recovery, and as a result we have created a "Participatory Service Structure" where the equal opportunity to serve is a privilege of membership.

2. **Service should be inclusive not exclusive,** all N.A. members have something to offer and we actively strive to involve as many members as possible in our service efforts. Ultimately, it is a Loving God working through our members that makes it possible for us to achieve our goals.

3. **Our service is for the addict who still suffers,** and we believe that the N.A. Group is the most important part of our Service Structure since it is the service unit in direct contact with the newcomer. All the other elements of our Service Structure have been created to serve, support, and assist our groups in the fulfillment of their primary purpose.

4. **Our Service Structure is a tool** whose purpose is to do those things that for our Groups which would compromise their spiritual integrity or distract them from their primary purpose.

5. **Our services are initiated and completed by our Groups and Members.** Our service structure is a closed loop. Our Groups and/or members begin the process with an idea of what needs to be, or could be done to help fulfill their primary purpose, our Service Structure is responsible for implementation of the idea which is finally achieved by Groups and/or members working directly with the addict who still suffers.

6. **The Principle of Practical Spirituality is at the heart of our service.** We believe that if it is not practical then it is not spiritual; a Loving God is at the center of our service and this God has the power to make all things possible and practical.

7. **The resources we need to fulfill our service projects will always be available when the time is right.** We believe that if a service project is spiritually correct then the finances, manpower, and emotional support necessary to complete the task will be available.

8. **Our service should be simple and straightforward.** Ongoing recovery is a process of simplification and likewise in our services we should strive for simplicity, if our service efforts

are in tune with God's will then they will not be complicated. When service is spiritually based there is no need for secrecy, dishonesty or subterfuge; the spiritual correctness of the service is all that is necessary.

9. **All service should be open and aboveboard,** communication is inherent in the principle of direct responsibility. Open information and full accountability are implicit in our approach to service. We have nothing to fear and nothing to hide.

10. **Selfless service is our ideal.** The Disease of Addiction is our greatest strength because it brings us together, it is also our greatest weakness because it tends to tear us apart. Our disease is one of obsessiveness and compulsivity; it is physical, mental, and spiritual in nature. We recognize that there is a direct relationship between quality of service and personal recovery. We stress the need for each member involved in service to keep their personal recovery (physical, mental, and spiritual) as their first priority. When individuals fall short or fail in their service we treat them with compassion and love rather than rejection, exclusion, or punitive action. We strive for progress and do not demand perfection from each other.

11. **The services we provide within our Service Structure should always be guided by principle.** "True Spiritual Principles are never in conflict" and the Spiritual Principles embodied in our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions should be respected and maintained throughout our services. Our Twelve Steps literally apply to the member seeking recovery, our Twelve Traditions literally apply to our Groups, and these Precepts of Service literally apply to our Service Structure. Awareness of Spiritual Principles is necessary for all if we are to survive, to grow, and provide service based on God's will for us.

12. **Ultimately, our service projects are in God's hands.** Trust is a key principle for us, and essential in our service efforts. The trust that N.A. Members give those who serve is equal to the trust that those who serve have in the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, in Spiritual Principles, and in God. As individuals, we trust our will and our lives to the care of a loving God. Our Groups trust in a loving God as their ultimate authority. Likewise, in our Service Structure we trust a loving God as the source and strength of our service.

THE N.A. TREE (1975)

[This is an excerpt from the approved service document for N.A.]

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Considerable thought and discussion took place concerning which words should be used to describe our structure. It seems ironic that, while we were in agreement about the structure itself, we went "round and round" about the words. The irony, of course, is that it's the structure which is important, not the words. Some felt that we should use the same terms that other fellowships have used, other felt that we should use government terminology. Both of these suggestions, as well as others which came up in the course of our discussions, have merit, but neither fully serves the purpose. First of all, this structure of ours isn't exactly like any other and it can't just be plugged into an existing framework. Secondly, the use of someone else's terms would not be in N.A.'s best interest. N.A. is a fellowship unto itself; and it is of the utmost importance that we maintain our own identity.

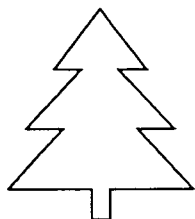
For the purpose of this work, we decided to use the simplest possible terms which were meaningful to us all. Geographically we chose to use the words Area, Region, and World. These designations can be thought of as roughly equivalent to the telephone company divisions in the sense that they are meant to represent population rather than location. This is important because we are, and deal with, people not places. Furthermore, we tried to avoid using terms such as "organization," which might imply a lack of adherence to our Traditions. Instead, we used words like Service Board and Service Committee which could not be construed as a violation of the Traditions.

Another important thing to keep in mind is that some of the service arms which we describe in this structure are not a part of the N.A. program. They exist separately and are designed to provide services to the program. The Narcotics Anonymous program consists only of 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and addicts helping each other. We have described three types of service in this overview; these are Personal Service, General Service, and World Service. In general, the Personal Service one or more members can offer directly to the addict who still suffers is a part of the program. It is in the nature of our 12th Step work. General Service and World Service, however, are not primarily involved in this type of direct service. Rather, they are designed to support our program of recovery by providing the services necessary for our members and groups to survive and grow.

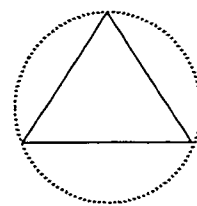
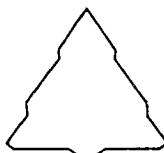
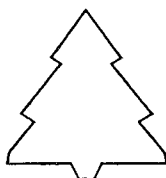
If you as a member or as a representative of your group need more information or clarification on any part of this pamphlet your World Service Office will be more than happy to help. Get in touch with them by writing: WORLD SERVICE OFFICE, P.O. BOX 622, Sun Valley, CA 91352.

The Member

The front-line, so to speak, of N.A. Service is the individual N.A. member. A member is a self-proclaimed addict who is living a drug-free life by practicing the principles of Narcotics Anonymous. Anyone can be a member, the only requirement is the desire to stop using. One qualifies by taking the First Step and remains a member as long as he or she is clean and desires membership. The services that each of us provide are the most important in N.A. It is the member who carries the message of recovery and works with others. It may sound silly but without an active membership there would be no need for a service structure, there would be no N.A.



N.A. TREE
1975



GUIDE TO SERVICE
1995?

SELF ESTIMATE

It's surely great to have a better estimate of myself than in my addiction. It has taken a lot of work to get here. I'd heard so many times from professionals, that I suffered from either having low self esteem, an over grown ego, being an under achiever or too controlling. . . . I didn't have much ability to figure out for myself what the truth might be. I couldn't possibly have done a fair evaluation, even if I had bothered trying. It has come about by the repetition of a process and the application of principles. What a wonderful feeling to hold myself in high regard, to value who I am. What a miracle I truly am.

The process is embodied in the steps and traditions that I have learned to use on a consistent basis in my life. Once the idea sank in that I must change my life to one of living principles, things started to happen. The first efforts were mechanical and lacked thoroughness. When I approached the effort with the principle of self-honesty called for in the First Step, things started to change. Working and writing the steps with the guide of a knowledgeable sponsor, whose life showed their value, changed how I look at myself today. With the rebuilding of a life, one principle at a time, this guidance allows me to be a prize in someone's life today. As far ahead as I can see today it will always be about liking who I am and what I do with these principles.

If you haven't found these rewards in your growth then perhaps you are not looking in the right place. It is always so easy to find the negative things that I can continue to do in life. They still hurt when I can see that I am doing them again. The greatest rewards seem to come from doing the next right thing for the next right reason. So many times in this journey the good things that I have done in the past have come around a year or so later and given me reward when I least expect it or when I need it the most. To me it is forever humbling for someone to say that they like what I said or they identify or that they think of me often. These bring tears of joy to eyes that seemed to only know how to weep in sadness in my addiction. A lot depends on looking in the right places.

Find those that have enthusiasm and love for this way of life, like I have. Ask them what it takes. Putting value on another's existence begins to make room in our own hearts for self esteem to grow. Place the people you find working a program in high regard for they well may be the ones who will save your life and give you the opportunity to do the same in their lives. As we learn to care about others in new ways, we find ourselves caring about ourselves more. It's not easy but it's simple and it gets better. So much so that I need to stick around to find out how good it can be. Cause if you are like me . . . you always liked the good stuff. Today I'm good stuff, bet you are too. ♦

Footsteps Revised

I had a dream that I walked through the streets of a darkened city. As I walked, thinking how alone I was, I passed many old acquaintances. I wanted to stop, talk, and join in their fun, but the footsteps kept coming down that dark alley, ever closer, louder. I tried to run but I was too sick and tired. I tried to hide, but my pounding heart gave me away. I fell to my knees and cried out for help. The footsteps stopped as I was lifted by many hands, surrounded by many hugs and freed at last from fear. I awoke today, opened my eyes and saw that I am NOT ALONE. The dream goes on.

-Anonymous

Daily Definition ☺

from Webster's New World Dictionary,
College Edition

hug•ger•mug•ger (hug'ēr-mug'ēr) *n.* [earlier also *hoker-moker*, apparently rhyming compound based on ME. *mokeren*, to hoard, conceal, whence the basic sense "secrecy"], 1. a confusion; muddle; jumble.

2. [Archaic], secrecy

Anyone you know?

To New Awakenings:

Thank you for caring about us. I've been clean since 2/2/89. I've learned that through other addicts I could stay clean & learn how to live. I love the Program. I've been in service the whole time. Today I believe the Steps are the road to God. It makes my heart sad to hear of God being taken out of our Steps. As a G.S.R. of my Home Group, I will ask my Home Group to secede from any service structure that goes away from that spiritual direction. What I see, hear, is that a lower force through the disease of addiction would win over good. God knows all, I'm a soldier in his army. I'm sending a donation to help our cause!

In his loving light
A new recruit
from New Jersey ♦

STEP ONE

LOS ANGELES DRAFT 9/25/88

The following piece of literature is a portion of the First Step written by a member in California in response to the work being done on the then work-in-progress It Works How and Why. Written in 1988, it was not included in the input that had been received and workshopped in the fellowship during the previous seven years of the project. It came into the World Literature Committee about the time that the last World Literature Conference was held in June of 1988. That workshop, held in Chicago, did a compilation of the two previous book forms and the input received and workshopped over the previous year in 10 workshops across the fellowship.

The direction for the work was followed well by most of the twelve working groups that weekend in Chicago and produced what many felt was the best effort to date on this project. There were several steps that remained to be reworked and that was the plan of the WSCLC after the Chicago conference. After this review the material was to go back for a final Literature conference before being released to the fellowship for approval. This was never to happen.

The WSCLC decided that the material submitted by the individual on the First Step was of a quality and consistency that the fellowship, in conference, had not been able to manage. The person was asked to continue writing and the next two steps were done by the early spring of 1989. When the WSCLC changed members and leadership at the conference that year the process of the single writer was looked at. The committee chair insisted that the process wouldn't work as planned due to difficulties with the writer on rewrites and content. Friends of that writer say that the person was willing to work with the committee in any way. We may never know all the facts.

All of this had been a volunteer effort until this year (1989) when the process was changed by the WSC. The work began from scratch at this point to write the book IT WORKS HOW AND WHY after almost eight years and somewhere in the neighborhood of \$700,000+ being spent.

This surrender takes courage. Despite what our sick pride tells us, it takes courage to admit we're powerless and then to behave that way. It takes courage just to walk through the doors of Narcotics Anonymous and begin facing up to our living problems. And while we may have a hard time identifying the spiritual principle of courage at work in ourselves, we have no problem identifying it in the N.A. fellowship. We hear clean addicts sharing their experience of powerlessness over their own addiction to drugs, horror stories far worse than our own. Suddenly, in the group, courage seems possible. We've heard many newcomers say it: "If they can get clean, I can get clean."

When it comes to admitting we're powerless over addiction, once is not enough. We have a fatal disease of self-destruction that does not disappear just because we say so. Even after we've been clean for a while, denial often creeps in again. Our rebelliousness dies hard, as does our need to feel we are in control. We may have reservations and think we are different — that we are not powerless over our the disease or that we really don't have a disease at all.

We are not immune to sick thinking. Our denial and self-deception can cover up new awareness. We have found that we must continue to work and live the First Step on a daily basis. So we continue to practice surrender. Clean time gives us no power over our addiction. We remain powerless.

Losing touch with the fact of our powerlessness over our disease allows it to become active in our lives again. We may come to think that we can go it alone, that we don't need the program. We may go to fewer meetings and lose contact with clean addicts and the message of recovery. Our isolation can reinforce feeling "different" from others in the Fellowship. Once again, we can get trapped in the consciousness of self-deception.

In this climate, we are once again vulnerable to the obsession to use. Some of us have in fact listened to it when the disease told us one more time that we could "handle it" and be in control. Some of us have moved from the obsession into the compulsion, acted off the disease, and relapsed. None of us who have relapsed has ever reported that suddenly, mysteriously, we had control. On the contrary, those of us who have come back have reported that the effect of using on our lives was just as bad or worse than it was before.

Our disease is progressive, and our lives remain unmanageable by us. Relapse is never an accident. But at any point in the progression when our disease tells us we can use, we can always turn to the First Step again. We can admit that we are powerless over what our disease tells us, and that if we act off it, our lives very quickly will become unmanageable. Once again, this admission and surrender release us from our sick thinking. We do not in fact have to use. Just because we think about it doesn't mean we have

to do it.

We have found that we need to surrender any reservations and doubt that we might have. We have the disease of addiction, we are powerless over that disease, and we can recover by using the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous. By continuing to practice and internalize our surrender to the First Step, we eventually go past admitting our powerlessness and the unmanageability of our lives, all the way to a deep acceptance.

The First Step goes far beyond drugs, just as recovery from the disease of addiction goes far beyond simple abstinence. We don't have to be using drugs to practice our disease. We don't have to be using drugs to see our self-destructiveness play itself out in our jobs or our relationships. We don't have to be loaded to be overwhelmed by the unmanageability of our lives.

Surrendering to the fact of our powerlessness makes us willing to look at how our disease manifests itself in other areas of our lives. If we act out on our disease in any way, our lives grow ever more unmanageable. Our First Step can be applied in every case. In the beginning, it is easy to see how to apply it by remembering how it works in the area of drugs. We admit our powerlessness over the disease as it expresses itself in our drug use, and so we don't act out on the disease by using drugs. We admit we can't control it, so we don't control it. It is the same in other areas.

As we move through our recovery, we have continuing breakthroughs in our denial and self-deception. One by one, we come to see other aspects of our lives where we are keeping too tight a grip on people and circumstances, trying to manage and control and manipulate. With the help of our sponsors, we see that we are behaving in a totally self-centered way in a particular situation. We see that we are trying to keep our own lives manageable by exerting control. We are quite sure we know how others should think and behave, even if we have to manipulate them into it. One more time, we have a faulty version of reality, and we think we can change other people and events to match it. When it doesn't work and things don't go our way, we are filled with feelings like anger, self-pity, self-recrimination, and pain.

Growing aware of how our disease plays out in our lives is difficult and painful for us. The addict resists this awareness. Our disease puts our sick ego and pride in the way of admitting that in fact our control is an illusion and our way isn't working. If we are to live Step One in the situation at hand, we have to admit where we are powerless - a humbling admission, but it's the prerequisite to surrender. And we must surrender and give up fighting the losing battle. We have to stop trying to exercise power - stop manipulating and controlling. If we do not, our lives continue unmanageable - and painful. If we do, we experience some freedom and peace of mind.

Freedom and peace of mind: not a very normal and natural state for addicts like us. What's normal and natural for is to use drugs, be obsessed, act compulsively, live in denial, and behave in destructive ways. The difference is that with the Twelve Steps, we are learning another way to live. We have found that the antidote to our disease is in the spiritual principles embodied in this program. It begins with the First Step, when we embark on a spiritually-based formula for living that allows us to be free from active addiction and the self-made prison we called life.

Over and over again, as recovery clears away denial, we practice the spiritual principles of acceptance and honesty, humility and hope, faith and surrender. We seek out a sponsor who will help us and guide us. With practice over time, we internalize these principles, and they come to occupy the space inside of us where there used to be only the disease of fear, hopelessness, and self-destruction.

We have found relief and freedom in the spiritual principle of acceptance. We begin to accept ourselves for who we are right now. We work at accepting others exactly the way they are. Accepting life on its own terms goes against our addictive nature, which wants us to rebel. But we come to understand that we can work on changing our attitude and the way we react to the world. It requires discipline and vigilance to keep practicing the willingness to accept life just the way it is -- inside us and outside us.

We exercise the spiritual principle of honesty, continuing to look at our lives and admit we have a disease over which we have no control. Accepting the reality of our powerlessness is the essence of the spiritual principle of humility. Humility is acceptance of who we actually are: members of a fellowship of recovering addicts and members of the human race. There is some freedom and comfort in even the beginnings of humility, as it opens the door to hope: we cannot change on our own, but there is help, and we can ask for it. To counter the natural fear addicts have when we give up the illusion of control, we begin to practice faith -- the faith that somehow, somewhere down the road, everything is going to be all right.

We surrender, and by surrendering, we win. Working and living the First Step each day, we win the arrest of our disease just for today. We begin to experience a freedom we never possible -- the freedom to change.

Keep What You Have

xerox New Awakenings for a friend

Dear New Awakenings

Its been such a pleasure to receive and read our newsletter. I thought you would like to hear about some of our experience in the U.K. especially concerning the use and distribution of the Third Ed. Rev. (With Original 4th & 9th Traditions) Basic Text - also known as Baby Blue.

In my Home Group we have been using this literature for about one year now. Some members in the Fellowship do not approve of our decision making process, i.e. our Group Conscience decisions and there seems to be a campaign to stop us, to correct us, to straighten us out, maybe.

The methods used in this authoritarian behavior towards us are, of course, ugly, very offensive and punitive. True Spiritual Principles are never in conflict.

In my Home Group we believe that Unity is single-mindedness of purpose, and that while we can have our disagreements and conflicts, we CAN disagree without being disagreeable. Also that we follow this way of life by the power of example and nobody can tell us what to do or what to believe. There are no bosses in N.A. - if there were it would kill us.

No bosses means no authority except the Authority explained to us in the second Tradition. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern. Narcotics Anonymous is a God-given Program and we are told that we can maintain our Group in dignity ONLY with Group Conscience and Gods love. Is this confusing for some of our members? The way some behave here it must be. The desire to stop using as the ONLY requirement for membership in Narcotics Anonymous insures that no caste system will develop allowing one addict to become superior to another. NO bosses, no superiors but one ultimate authority, the Spiritual Principle of Equality.

Some members do not believe that ours is a God-given Programme. Some believe that we were the creation of another fellowship. Some believe that they run N.A., that they can sit around in committee meetings and make decisions about what is allowed and what is not allowed in N.A. Sadly, some N.A. Groups condone such behavior. Some Groups actually support these committees, a great many, however, are in ignorance as to the potential harm these often well-meaning members can do to us. Of course there is a lot of good work done in committee meetings; to say they can do nothing right would be as foolish as to say they can do nothing wrong. For a few years or so I was one of those who thought I was in charge. Well, with my vast experience of service at Area, Region/UKSA, H&I, PI and of course before advancement (as I saw it) I had served most if not all service posts in the Group. Today I believe whole-heartedly that ours is a God-given Programme therefor the good

will stay and the bad will go.

In my Home Group we take our Autonomy as a privilege of a strong group that has learned to stand on its own. Autonomy means that our groups are self-governing and not subject to outside control. To be controlled by other groups or committees would destroy our creative freedom, remove our right to establish our own atmosphere of recovery and not allow us to serve our members as we best saw fit. Of course Autonomy can be used to violate the Traditions, an example of this is given in the Basic Text 4th Tradition; if we do not dictate to other groups, or force anything upon them; and, if we consider the consequences of our action ahead of time, then all will be well.

In the U.K. we only have one newsletter to date, Clean Times. Trouble is, as a sub-committee of the U.K. Region Service Committee they are likely to give anything possibly detrimental to those who know better, a wide berth. For example the letter I wrote 'One Members Experience' New Awakenings; Vol.2 Number 1, never saw the light of day in Clean Times. Yet UK RSC can get as many pages as they want especially when they put in some extra monies. What's sad about this to me is that members are being served with the same train of thought all the time, i.e. there are those that know better and there are those that are causing disunity, with little if any ground in between. For myself and my Home Group and many of my friends there is a deep love for N.A. the Programme that saved our lives and the only thing that ever worked for us. For many of us standing up for what we believe in is a very new and often frightening thing.

In the past I used to think that disagreement in N.A. = disunity, that Unity = uniformity and conforming to the will of others. In my personal Programme of recovery I have room for conformity when I believe it to be appropriate, for example I surrender to Group Conscience when things don't go my way.

In Colchester we believe that a Narcotics Anonymous group is any meeting which meets regularly at a specified place and time for the purpose of recovery provided that it follows the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. We therefor believe that All Else is not N.A. Its like to us, what's the big deal, all we are trying to do is follow N.A. Traditions (all 12 of them) and N.A. philosophy in general as described in great detail in all editions of our Basic Text. We do not believe that the 12 Traditions are negotiable under any circumstances, they are the guidelines that keep our Fellowship alive and free. They are our Unity.

The problem seems to be a different understanding of the Traditions. Thing is, in my Home Group we are continually criticized, by a few members of good standing in the service structure.

continued in box, next page

Re: Re: "War...What Is It Good For?"

I have been aware of *New Awakenings* for some time now, and have enjoyed reading input (uncensored) from other addicts. I find it absolutely miraculous that a group of people who, individually, were beaten down and left for dead, are coming around and standing together. Until now I have been content with just observing. Once again my conscience has appeared at a time that is both uncomfortable and unsolicited.

Throughout the course of my recovery I have been taught many precious and valuable lessons. Some of these were gained at the cost of personal anguish, of misery and insanity. Grace allowed me to learn other lessons much less painfully. Often, lessons were gained by both methods. One of the courses that I ran involved being taught the decision making process. My sponsors have shown me, through steps and by example, how to make decisions in my life. I also found, through their wisdom and my own thick-headedness, that indecision is a part of that process. This is part of the message that is guiding me to reach out to an addict who may not know this particular truth yet: Making no choice is a choice. Taking no action is an action.

The second part of the spiritual nudge compelling me to write is the issue in which indecision is most telling: Our service structure. The addicts who write in wondering why other addicts

are so concerned about the current goings-on in the service structure must be ignorant of the fact that our current 'service structure' has been involved in unspiritual maneuverings that have balanced our literature and intellectual properties on the brink of a precipice from which we may not recover them. It (service) is not N.A., but it very obviously can effect N.A. to the very core.

The way our service structure was constructed has made it ripe for abuse. We have no leaders, but we have trusted servants. Somewhere along the line we forgot what we were entrusting them to do. We kept placing our trust blindly, and waiting for change. The disease needs no prodding when that type of opportunity presents itself. Any time we put trust in any vehicle we empower it. As a Fellowship we freely gave boards and committees the power to alter our message, our hope. That they have done so is no surprise. That we have failed as a Fellowship to do anything at all about it most certainly is. Our current level of inaction promises more death and more dilution of the message. I have 'collaborated' in this series of disasters every bit as much as EVERY ADDICT IN THE FELLOWSHIP TODAY. And for me, just for today, it stops.

As for members being "service junkies", God bless them. They have kept open the meetings that saved our collective ass. If we want to be offensive and compare people out, let's just keep calling them 'service junkies', or 'purists', or 'N.A. Nazis', or any other name that I, personally, have been called (generally by small minded bunches of wandering meeting-terrorists bent on protecting World Service from my Home Group and myself). I have found, more often than not, that the 'little make-believe politics of N.A. services' are problems of real significance to humanity as a whole. If this really is how members see our current plight, we are in much more distress than I feared. This is not a game. For those who aren't paying attention, I'll say it again. If we allow addicts to be sued by service boards, if we allow our literature to be held hostage, if we, as a Fellowship, can't find an action to move us as one, then THE DISEASE WILL WIN. According to our (original, as in before it was changed w/o Fellowship approval) 4th Tradition, "These Traditions are part of a set of spiritual principles of Narcotics Anonymous, and without them, N.A. does not exist". If addicts still feel that it's O.K. for us to sit on our asses and watch a God-given gift destroyed by insanity, I can't help that. The Spirit moved me to write, and I've followed that direction.

With Love and Respect,
An addict in Maryland. ♦

from previous page...

Members are suggested not to come to our meetings, that what we are doing makes us not N.A. anymore, that we are hurting the Fellowship with our beliefs. There is much more also.

If we are acting outside the 12 Traditions here then surely we will struggle and fold. On the other hand if we are healthy here then we will Grow. One thing is guaranteed: nothing stays the same, we grow or we go. What we're interested in is freeing up more information. We should have nothing to hide in a Fellowship like ours; we should never resort to chastising and trying to control everything. The one promise of N.A. is Freedom from active addiction, not (only) drug addiction but addiction the disease as we have learned about it in N.A. The limitations of that Freedom are only those that we put on it ourselves. I wonder why we fight each other and almost destroy the thing that we all love so much, could it possibly be the disease, the only true enemy any of us have?

See You in the Rooms
Love and Fellowship ♦

CAN WE HELP?

As our home group experienced more committees being less directly responsible we've grown together. The practical foundation of this fellowship lies in the closeness we develop at this point of unity. After a time there was nothing that a structure could aid us in that we could not accomplish as a home group. Time and effort has gone into the learning experience of what has come before. The group participates in the compilation of the history of NA and the book *The NA WAY OF LIFE*. We support other meetings and have drawn closer to one another these last few years.

We have had contact with members of like-minded groups. We have come to a point where the strength that we have gained should be offered to others as it was freely offered to us. It has taken many hours of work to collect and organize a very good set of archival material. We have learned so much and wish for others to benefit from what is available from our past.

Our group takes this recovery process very seriously. Although we do social things together, that is not what our meetings are about. Many who have shown up have found that the honesty we share is intense. Some like that and some find it intimidating. Those who are used to one hour meetings have the option to leave as they need to. Our meetings end when there is no one left that wants to share. We currently have a home group with a wide range of ages. For us that is a positive indicator that what we are doing has a valid foundation and a timeless message that identifies with anyone.

Over the years we have seen an entrance of social pathology into the structures above group level. Rule making and entrenched leaders are not very attractive to us. We have learned to share our experiences with one another and to avoid power and prestige. It has been sad to watch addicts who never wanted laws to govern them evolve a structure that attracts and retains people that are just certain that they will find the right set of guidelines to make this thing work right. In our home group it works just fine without those self-centered solutions. We are fortunate to have several members with a wide range of experience in the ways of NA. They pass along their knowledge and strength so that others may benefit from what this program can give.

We have heard from different parts of the country that there is a lot of apathy around. As a home group that is doing well and growing, we would like to hear from others about their concerns, needs and working solutions. What is going on where you are at? What is working . . . or not? Can we help? Are there materials that you would like to see? Interested in doing something and need support? Several attempts at doing this in the past did not remain as responsive as might be hoped. We have thought about this and want to help the best way we can. That is always about giving it away. So we'll try to the best of our ability to give back what you have given us so freely.

So feel free to contact us care of this newsletter. Thanks for listening.

- Architects of Adversity Group above the 45 parallel ♦

Dear Fellow Addicts,

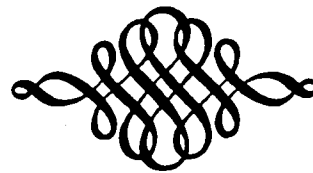
I've recently had this experience with my 10 year medallion. I received a medallion which on the front was colored green & black with the X in the middle and on the back, the circle with the N.A. colored red [Mid-Atlantic Region. -Ed.]

A newcomer happened to see it and said, "Oh wow, Malcolm X. I'm going to get me one of those. Where did you get it?"

I personally feel the Roman numerals on our medallions should be in simple numbers 1,2,3, etc. It's a simple program for complicated people.

I've also experienced addicts who can't read Roman numerals. Also, if you have the 9 year (IX) and the 11 year (XI), depending on how you turn the coin, they look the same.

Let's keep it simple. We're not Romans we're addicts. ♦



Hi. We would like to bring to your attention something we've discovered about the articles received by *New Awakenings*. Some are timeless pieces that can be printed any time while others are time-sensitive. The time-sensitive articles lose some of their impact if not printed immediately; they become history instead of news. Though they are still important, it would be better if they were printed closer to the time they happened.

We encourage you to send articles like what happened at your Group, Area, Region, workshop, etc. But please realize that news is easier to relate to than history because it's still fresh on our minds.

Please don't think that if it is something that happened some time ago that it's not wanted. It is. Just as important are the timeless articles about Steps, Traditions, how you live them in your life or anything else related to NA Recovery. We just want the best newsletter possible and we do this with your articles.

Your input of all kinds is needed.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR A "PURIST".

MARCH 27, 1985

- 1) IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS "ADDICTS"
- 2) SUSTAIN THEIR RECOVERY BY ATTENDING N.A. MEETINGS
- 3) WOULD PREFER TO TRAVEL 50 MILES TO GET TO AN N.A. MEETING THAN TO GO TO ANY OTHER FELLOWSHIP MEETING.
- 4) CONSIDER THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN N.A. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THEIR LIFE SINCE THEIR VERY LIFE DEPENDS ON N.A.
- 5) LIVE BY THE PRINCIPLES OF THE 12 STEPS & THE 12 TRADITIONS OF N.A.
- 6) SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF N.A. (BEING CLEAN, NOT SOBER; ACCUMULATE CLEANTIME, NOT SOBRIETY)
- 7) REFER TO OUR BOOK AS THE "BASIC TEXT", NOT THE BIG BOOK
- 8) DO NOT REFER TO THE PEOPLE THEY SPONSOR AS "PIGEONS"
- 9) QUOTE OUR "BASIC TEXT", NOT ANY OTHER FELLOWSHIP BOOKS
- 10) ARE ACTIVE MEMBERS ON THE GROUP, AREA, REGION, AND WORLD LEVELS
- 11) TAKE THEIR SERVICE COMMITMENTS SERIOUSLY AND TRY TO THE BEST OF THEIR ABILITY TO CARRY THEM OUT
- 12) ATTEND AND SUPPORT ALL N.A. FUNCTIONS FIRST BEFORE ANY OTHER FELLOWSHIP FUNCTIONS
- 13) CARRIES THE MESSAGE OF N.A. RECOVERY WHICH IS UNDILUTED BY ANY OTHER MESSAGE
- 14) UNDERSTANDS THAT N.A. IS A UNIQUE AND SEPARATE FELLOWSHIP WHICH OFFERS RECOVERY FROM ADDICTION
- 15) HELPS NEWCOMERS
 - A) EXPLAINS THE MEANING OF THE FIRST STEP OF N.A.
 - B) EXPLAINS THE CONCEPT OF ANONYMITY
 - C) SHARES & CARES THE N.A. WAY
 - D) ENCOURAGES INVOLVEMENT IN N.A. MEETINGS AND OTHER N.A. FUNCTIONS
 - E) TAKES NEW MEMBERS TO MEETINGS WHERE THE N.A. MESSAGE IS FOUND
- 16) CARES ENOUGH ABOUT THE FUTURE OF N.A. TO GET UP AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT
- 17) CONSIDERS IT A PRIVILEGE TO SERVE THE FELLOWSHIP
- 18) UPHOLDS THE TRADITIONS OF N.A. IN THEIR GROUPS, AREAS, AND REGIONS
- 19) SPEAK UP WHEN TRADITIONS ARE BEING VIOLATED EVEN WHEN IT BRINGS CRITICISM OR RESENTMENT FROM NON-PURIST MEMBERS
- 20) REALIZE THAT THEIR PERSONAL RECOVERY IS BASED ON N.A. UNITY ... AND THAT N.A. MUST REMAIN PURE TO INSURE IT'S SURVIVAL
- 21) REALIZE THAT THE GROUP CONSCIENCE NEVER GOES AGAINST THE TRADITIONS AND THAT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "GROUP CONSCIENCE" AND "GROUP OPINION"
- 22) ARE USUALLY MISUNDERSTOOD AND/OR DISLIKED BY NON-PURIST MEMBERS, BUT BELIEVE IN THEIR HEARTS THAT IT IS BETTER TO FOLLOW WHAT THEY BELIEVE IS BEST FOR THE FELLOWSHIP OF N.A. THAN IT IS TO PLEASE SOME MEMBERS
- 23) SHARE A STRONG COMMON BOND WITH OTHER PURIST MEMBERS AND OFTEN GO TO GREAT LENGTHS TO SEEK OUT OTHER MEMBERS WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES "PURISTS"
- 24) AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT... PURISTS GIVE WARM, LOVING HUGS ...THE N.A. WAY

* THIS INPUT IS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE NEXT "PURIST" COMMITTEE MEETING WHICH WILL PROBABLY HELD AT THE 6th E.C.C.M.A. IN TOWSON, MD.

IN LOVING SERVICE:
ANONYMOUS MEMBER OF THE EAST COAST VIGILANTE COMM.

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Just send us your name and address. Use this form if you wish. Send us a letter if you can. We publish the first week of every other month. Getting you one issue #2 in the U.S. cost 68.3¢ Projecting from this cost we figure a year's subscription (6 issues) should be \$4.10. Sending more enables *New Awakenings* to go out to addicts who haven't seen it yet.

♪ If you move don't forget,
let us know where you went! ♪

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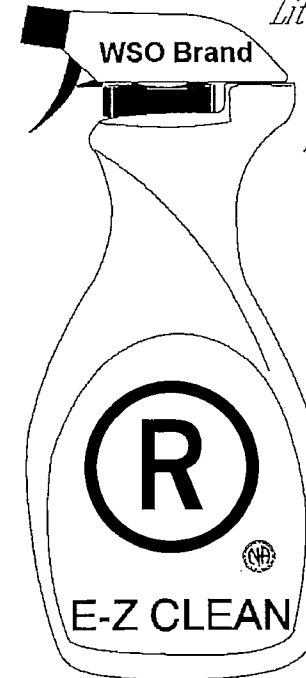
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