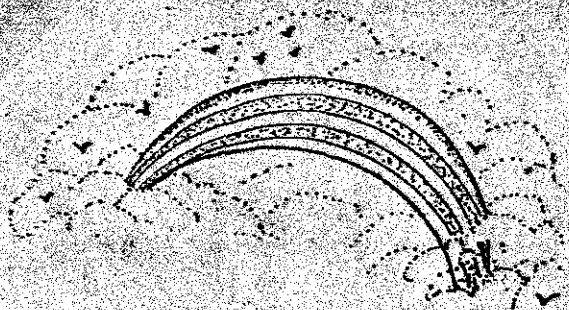


*March*

1983

# **The Rainbow Connection**





# The Rainbow Connection

Metro Atlanta Groups of Narcotics Anonymous  
"... caring and sharing the NA way ..."

Volume 5 - Number 1 March 1983

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890 Atlanta Road, Marietta GA 30060 or call  
404/427-2185.

## STORY OF THE MONTH

### "Search for Freedom"

Freedom--- What is freedom? I believe freedom has a million different meanings. To some people it means to be young and single. To others it means to be free of family ties with no strings, and to some it means to be free of institutions.

But let me try to tell you what it means to me. I'll start by telling you how it was before. Before what? Before I found freedom behind locked doors.

My search started when I was about thirteen. I started like a lot of other kids do, experimenting with drugs because everyone else was doing it. The first obstacle was to get up the nerve to disobey my parents. My excuse was that they were too strict because they didn't want me to get involved with drugs. After that my excuse was to ease the guilt. Guilt for what? The guilt I felt because of the hurt I'd caused my parents by disobeying them. Every reason I found to do drugs created an excuse to do more. The list was getting longer and longer. I felt I was searching for something, but for what I didn't know.

You see, I had all of the things that most people call freedom. I was young, single, and had no strings on me. I had a family who cared. So what more could anyone want? I didn't know, but I thought I could find it through drugs.

At seventeen, I was well on my way to addiction, but nobody could tell me that. I wouldn't listen. I decided I needed a husband, so I could be free of my parents, and live my life like I wanted to. I told myself that my parents were the reason I was getting high, so once I was married I wouldn't need drugs any more.

Pretty soon I found out that I was wrong; that now I needed drugs to escape the ties of an unhappy marriage. Once again, I sought freedom in drugs. A year later, when I found out I was pregnant, I quit using so I wouldn't harm the baby. Even before my daughter was born I loved her. I felt like this was my big chance to prove to my husband and family that I wouldn't need drugs, and that I couldn't be all bad if God had seen fit to entrust me to bring new life into the world. Again, I kept telling myself that I wouldn't use anymore; that the baby would solve all the problems in my marriage. But of course it didn't. So, I turned to drugs again. All the baby did was

help me find more excuses to use. Excuses like I needed something to pep me up, or I just have to have something to help me sleep after a long day of caring for the baby. Then, there was more guilt than ever, because I knew deep down that I was the world's worst wife and mother. I felt like I was a failure at everything. It was plain to see even as I was growing up. I wasn't the sweet daughter that every mother dreams about. So, to the list of excuses or reasons to use, I added self-pity. To me, drugs had become the answer to everything.

At age twenty, I divorced my husband, still seeking freedom. I had by then begun to feel the weight of the monkey on my back. He was getting bigger and hungrier every day, and needless to say more expensive. Now, I added loneliness and tiredness to the list. I was lonely without my husband, and it was tiring trying to be both father and mother to a child. I was going down a long dark road searching for a light; a light I couldn't find. It seemed like there was no end. Now I not only wanted freedom my responsibilities, but I wanted freedom life. I hated what I had become. Still, I told myself I had no problem--- it was just the world I lived in. Nobody "understood."

Like a lot of other addicts, I tried the easy way out. I tried to commit suicide, but it didn't work. I was crying out for help, but nobody heard. The country doctor and my family blamed it all on my ex-husband, and gave me tranquilizers to calm me down. Without realizing it, they gave me another excuse to use. I was back on the road again, the never-ending road to self-destruction.

When all of my savings were gone, and my checking account was closed, there was no other way to support my habit, so I started writing checks on the closed account. This brings us up to where I am now. I traded everything that means freedom to most people for drugs and a three year stretch in the pen.

Believe it or not, behind these locked doors is where I've found the freedom I spent half of my life searching for. At last I'm free-- free from that monkey. Oh yes, he's still there, but he's not so heavy any more. He's more like a shadow forever reminding me of the way I suffered. There are a lot of painful 3. memories that I try not to think about, like the times when my little daughter would hold my shaking hands and wipe the sweat from my forehead when I was needing some



dope. I can still see the hurt in her little eyes, because all that she knew was that her mommy was sick and she was out of her medicine. These kind of memories will always haunt me and tear at my heart because I realize now how I not only hurt myself, but also the people I love the most. Now, I have found freedom from guilt and self-pity. I know I wasn't the world's greatest wife and mother, and I've certainly never given my parents any reason to be proud of me. But now I am clean and I am beginning to like myself. And I know that when I get to go home to my daughter I'll be a better mother, because I'm clean and ready to accept my responsibilities. If I ever get married again, my mind will be clear, and it will be for the right reasons; not because I'm looking for something. I'll also be a better daughter, because now I'm not a junkie-- I'm a recovering addict. My search is finally over. I've found the freedom I've searched so hard for-- the freedom from drugs. I hope that my story will someone else out there to realize that no matter how far down you get, there is still hope. I can't say it's easy, for it's not. It's hard. But with the love and help of God and my brothers and sisters in N.A. I manage to stay clean one day at a time. As one addict to another, I hope you find the inner peace I've found through the God of my understanding. I will always be extremely grateful to the judge who sentenced me, because without being sent to prison, I'd never have found the freedom of N.A.

--Della H.

## THANKSGIVING CONSCIOUSNESS II

For some unknown reason, conventions always seem to coincide with difficult times in my life, and so they often seem to be turning points in my recovery. I view recovery as a path, and conventions seem to be the high points of the path, where I get a chance to stop and look around, see where I have been and where I have to go. The recent conference in Memphis was no exception. It followed close on the heels of A MAJOR DECISION in my personal life (don't get excited-- I have been clean over a year, so it's OK for me to make those now.) More importantly, it came at a time when I had become thoroughly disgusted with the inevitable bullshit which accompanies service work in N.A. I had almost given up on trying to do anything in the way of organized service work, and I was beginning to doubt the faith which I have come to place in the N.A. fellowship. I had heard many ugly rumors flying around concerning this conference in particular, and at the last minute I almost backed out.

Fortunately, my higher power had a better idea, and although my faith was lacking, I found myself wheeling out of Marietta at 2:30 a.m. on Thanksgiving morning, at the wheel of a car full of very tired dope fiends, who nonetheless had a desire to serve. All of my ugly premonitions (must'a been my disease talking, and me too dumb to see it) disappeared as soon as we walked into the opening group conscience on Thursday morning. The love and caring of the people in that room was so strong it could almost be touched. It flooded over me in a beautiful wave of feeling, which stayed with me all weekend. That warm, beautiful, indescribable feeling, born of the simple desire of one addict to help another, which is the heart and soul of N.A., swept over the conference from the outset, resulting in outstanding co-operation and accomplishment by the participants. I was reminded strongly of our second tradition, that "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority; a loving God as he may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern." This was the best expression of the spirit of the conference. Many people

5.

were apparently upset before the conference by the question of the authority to hold this conference-- "Who said y'all could do that?" Well, the need for the conference was there, and so was the willingness to fulfill that need. God made the ways and means available (in my humble opinion), largely through the willingness of the Memphis fellowship, and the miracle happened.

If there is anyone out there in our fellowship who feels that their recovery is lacking something, and is not too sure about the power of a loving God, some service work for your fellowship may provide the answer to your problem. Although it may at times be frustrating, because our disease does get in the way from time to time, it is where the real miracle of N.A. happens: the most and the best. It gives my life some meaning, and puts a smile on my face to serve the fellowship which has saved my life, and to try to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. When my gratitude speaks, I am the first one to benefit.

Bryant

*If It Works  
Don't Fix It!*

## IT'S GOD'S HOUSE

When I come across a problem or an undesirable situation, as well as a good one, I pray about it once, sometimes twice. I know God hears me the first time. If I continually pray over and over on one thing, I will miss out and not see when and that my prayer has been answered. God always answers my prayers, "Yes, no, or wait," and I know which answer He gives me. When I pray, I have faith that my prayer has already been answered.

I am a part of God's temple, and I know that He does not want my part of the house cluttered nor abused. I have exchanged my tin and copper pieces for silver and gold. I not only re-arranged my furniture, I traded the old for new. When things are too heavy for me to carry, I ask for help.

I have made all of the repairs to the damages I have done to the best of my ability. About those damages I was not able to repair I prayed to God, and found that He is forgiving, and learned that I must forgive myself also.

When I go outside after a rainy day and step in a mudhole, and get muddy and wet, what am I going to do about it? Moan, groan, and complain, or watch out for mudholes? It's not the mudhole's fault. When I learned that I don't have the ability to worry about the right things, and that my thinking is not always sane or correct, I said, "OK God, I got the message. Now, I turn my will and my life over to your care. I'm yours! Today, you are my guide and strength for whatever is and is going to be. Today I walk with you hand in hand. I know that if we're not hand in hand it's because I'm the one who let go, not you." Today, I'm at peace with God. He holds me and keeps me from blowing away.

Today, I have a choice. I can look up or look down. I can wallow in the mud, or I can get out on the green grass and reach down to pull someone else from the mud, when they grab my reaching hand, ready to take hold.

Today, I am right with God, and by the grace of God, I am where I'm at today. Without His grace and love, I could not be.

Today I want you to know, though I don't say it very often, but I love you in a very special



way. Give God and yourself a chance to build  
on a solid foundation. My house is God's house.

Lani L.

### ~~TEXTXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

#### TO LOVE AND TO HATE ME

To love someone means to want them to live.  
I want to live, I want you to live.  
I love myself and you.

To hate someone means to want them to die.  
Hate destroys the person.  
To feel both love and hate means a change is needed.  
Lani L.

#### H&I FUNDRAISER DANCE

Last night the H&I Subcommittee of the  
Marietta A.S.C. sponsored a dance at the  
Rising Sun Clubhouse. The funds raised will  
go to buy literature for the hospitals in  
our area.

The turnout was great! About 75 people  
were there, and we raised \$96.00.

It's always a treat for all of us to get  
together, dance, and enjoy the fellowship,  
but last night was extra special for us.  
A few of the hospitals and institutions in  
our area gave the patients temporary leave  
for the meeting and dance. Everyone was  
excited-- the patients weren't sure what to  
expect. They had never been to a dance clean  
and sober.

We all had a great time. They were able to  
see that there is fun in recovery. It's not  
all just going to meetings and working steps.  
They also discovered that clean addicts are  
wild and crazy people that love to have fun!!  
Thank you God, for making this possible.

#### BRIGHT SHINING FACES

When addicts, sick of the old ways, seek and  
find relief from their addiction through N.A.,

8. their faces begin to shine. I love to see that

"N.A. look." Knowledge of addiction as a disease and experience of relief and recovery from our disease shows up in the faces of our newcomers. Definite and visible changes take place. As their recovery progresses, their faces begin to shine. Everywhere they go they find loving, supportive, recovering addicts. They see others like themselves coming alive, talking program, and learning to live and enjoy life without the use of drugs. In meetings and activities where our Twelve Traditions are upheld, they find nothing to interrupt or distract them from working on their recovery. Bright shining faces.

I am committed to those bright shining faces. Let no one wipe off their smile. Because of the nature of our disease, we often find it difficult to understand certain feelings. All our lives we have felt disillusionment and despair. We have seen the ugly side of life and become accustomed to it. The whole idea of smiling seems to go against our idea of reality. We often seek other explanations for happy events. Something inside us will not be satisfied until we break the charm. We want concrete explanation and spend vast amounts of time and energy trying to figure out things we see happening. Somehow a warm or beautiful course of events or happenings makes us suspicious. Our old ways force us to seek hidden meanings, and we hide behind a miserable shield of sarcasm. Of course, this type of thinking only serves as a way of avoiding complete surrender. As long as we can find something wrong with reality as we see it, we can set ourselves up to judge others and hold back our hearts in what we do.

I believe in Narcotics Anonymous. N.A. has given me and many others a completely new life in which dreams I had forgotten become possible. The nicest thing about my new life is that I can share it with others. The Program is the first thing in my life that I have been able to give myself to completely. I treasure my recovery and pray to be an instrument in the recovery of others who seek our way.

The N.A. way of life offers more than knowledge of our disease. We learn to trust a loving God of our understanding to guide us and help us in our recovery. Like any spiritual path we concern

ourselves through the Twelve Steps with belief and faith. Belief is as far as our minds can take us towards an understanding of our God. In Step 3 we take a leap of faith, and turn our will and our lives over to the care of the God of our understanding. When we do this we can expect a few changes. Others may not understand, but our faces begin to shine. Although we may encounter those who do not understand, or still live with the spiritual agony of being their own Higher Power, the warmth within will guide us. Addicts like to feel good, and recovering addicts are no exception. In my own experience, the spirituality of N.A. bears little resemblance to the false ecstasy I have felt in my using days. In recovery I have heard the voice of God in my being. I experience the Supreme Being as a feeling of quiet assurance which keeps me firm in the face of adversity and gives me solid hope. I can see the God of my understanding working in my life as well as the lives of countless others in our Fellowship. I have been to the top of the mountain and know no fear. Even so, I am content to walk my way quietly. It is lovely to me to watch others finding one of the many pathways to the joy and peace they seek. The shock and amazement they show when they finally find recovery is real, and gives me a feeling of mirth and compassion. I wish only to always live my life amid these bright and shining faces.

Bo

## NEWSLETTERS

I got clean some time ago. I still believe in the principle of "a day at a time". For recovery to offer me the opportunities to grow which have been the essence of my recovery to date, I want to maintain my freedom to grow and change in ways which promote a good feeling inside and goodness in the lives of those I touch in recovery. My personal self is still with me because I'm still breathing but to me recovery from addiction involved a lot more than just not using drugs today.

To me learning what I am and what I want to be and bringing those two as close together as I can is what personality change is all about. The only thing I want to use today is the principles of recovery as outlined in our Twelve Steps. This opens me to grow along spiritual lines and to allow the Power of a Loving God to guide and protect me as I let go of defense mechanisms on which my life once depended. It feels sometimes like I'm acting out a part God wants me to play. Only the feeling within of warmth and comfort lets me know that I'm in tune with my Creator at these times. I mention all these things to let you know where I'm coming from in this article.

When I first came to NA, the only contact I had with other recovering addicts was the little white pamphlet. Although I was intensely interested in recovery for myself and others and read the material, there just wasn't enough in writing for our attempted meeting to keep even one addict clean, including myself. Three years passed and I again sought help and God granted me a meeting to go to. It worked for me that time. Contact with other addicts, serious about their desire for recovery, must have made the difference because there was no more literature than when we had tried before. Certainly my three years of trying

to make it work had softened me up some and I was more than willing, I was compulsive about recovery. After another three years, clean a day at a time, there was still no more literature than before. By this time it was really getting to me. What, after all was going on? I had made my first contact six years prior and been working my program three years and there was still no more literature than before. Finally I couldn't stand it anymore and I went to California to find out what was going on. I had been corresponding with the World Service Office. While the letters were answered promptly and contained a spirited feeling, there had been no word on new literature. Finally the spirit moved me to find out what was going on and if there was anything we could do to help from my own small NA community.

I went to the Seventh World Convention held in San Francisco and that was the beginning of a love affair which has resulted in hundreds of members coming together from all over and writing the approved basic text for our program. I played a part in it all but it was obvious from the beginning that no one could do it alone. At that time there was an estimated NA population of about ten thousand. Many of you know this story because you played a major role in it.

During the last five years, NA has grown so terricallly that a great strain has been placed on our world services. Today in 1982 NA regional service committees are coming into existence the way groups were in the early seventies. Gross sales of NA literature at the WSO were \$10,000 in 1979, \$20,000 in 1980, \$35,000 in 1981, and \$65,000 in 1982 (fiscal years May to May). This is the barest stastic of our growth in recent years. More members, groups, areas and regions are pulling together than ever before to make it better for ourselves and those to come. Still, there is a strain. During any period of heavy chat addicts will instinctively revert to gossip, second guessing moives and generally get very uptight. This is going on in the fellowship at this writing. I have always served to the



best of my God given ability and yet have fallen short in ways I cannot see. Along with many others I have been vilified and condemned. My aggressive position on increasing communication between groups and members in service and in general have compromised my ability to serve by placing me at polar extremes in relation to other good, loyal NA members who feel we are moving to fast. To me five years is a long time and yet I can imagine their viewpoint though I cannot share it. Two weeks ago I was told that the huge mailing list which resulted from the mailing of the Memphis Review Form last Feb., the Approval Form of our book last Dec., the stories last Feb. as well as the Two Fellowship reports last Jan. and Feb., this list has somehow been made unavailable to the Fellowship. Even the World Convention was unable to obtain a copy. This saddens me. I hate to see such a pathway of communication as the list so patiently compiled become unavailable. Members who think they will receive future communications from the fellowship have no way of knowing they will not. I reckon when they find out, they will just do another list. I would propose a "free mailing list" to serve the communication and travel needs of the Fellowship. Members signing up for the list would do so with the understanding they might get some junk mail from merchandizers, but that could be dealt with easily by a warning to a lawsuit of some sort. Really, who cares? Anyone on the "Free Mailing List" would understand. Anyone who didn't want to be on the list could ask to be on the list could ask to be removed or simply place the mail in their waste basket along with any other unwanted mail. Personally I would love to receive all sorts of NA mail, even the merchandise. I've never ordered any but it's nice to see the variety and I might want to someday. I don't see how it would hurt addicts seeking recovery. Mainly I want to remain an informed NA member who is in touch with what's happening in the Fellowship. At least I want a choice as well as a say in matters which affect me as a member and also other members who feel they have benefited from the mailings in the past. What will be, will be, God willing.

The newsletters which have grown up in the last few years have allowed the Fellowship to grow in understanding of both the recovery process itself as well as the art of NA service work. Almost any member can express themselves freely and many outlying groups have survived to start other groups because of the newsletters. Newsletters help give notice of coming events, publish service committee material and current articles to let the subscribers keep pace with our growth. I have recommended that many members who have come to me with concerns or problems have written material which got the feeling out of them and into the Fellowship. I have come to believe that it's difficult if not impossible to feel concern or experience a breakthrough in recovery which would not make good newsletter material. Many members have stayed clean some days with what they found in newsletters.

There are three main newsletters coming out currently: the Northwest Pacific Newsletter, the Memphis Miracle and the Rainbow Connection from Georgia. Other newsletters have come out recently from Mid-America, Philadelphia, Nashville and Indiana. At the World Service Conference in May of this year, there was a new sub-committee formed to address our need for a Fellowship-wide newsletter. It takes a lot of love, spirit and dedication to do a newsletter and the new sub-committee will need support to do its job. This is the first new WSC sub-committee to be formed since the WSC was formed years ago. It is a sign of our growth.

The pay off for me in service is to be able to step down and feel like I left something good for others to come. The joy of being useful and the danger of ego attachment, God has to handle since I can't. If somehow I could have stayed clean without service, I can't imagine that it would be as much fun. The real pay off is to see the new blood take over with the same spirit and enthusiasm which has always guided NA progress. The strength and guidance I got from those who have gone before helped me stay effective and avoid error. They gave me the vision of NA growth.

ing and spreading physical, mental and spiritual  
health and well being where before there was only  
the loneliness and uselessness of addiction.  
It helps keep me clean and gives me great joy  
when my God sees fit to allow me to pass this vision  
of NA on to others.

Bo S.

#### ON FORGIVENESS...

Words written in a concentra-  
tion camp

When a nazi concentration camp was liberated  
this prayer by a Jew was found on a scrap of paper:

Peace be to all men of bad will, and an  
end to all revenge and to all words of pain and  
punishment...

So many have borne witness with their blood!  
O God, do not put their suffering upon the scales  
of Thy justice,

Lest it be counted to the handman, lest he be  
brought to answer for his atrocities.

But to all hangmen and informers, to all traitors  
and evil ones, do grant the benefit of the  
courage and fortitude shown by those others, who  
were their victims...

Grant the benefit of the burning love and sacrifice  
in those harrowed, tortured hearts, which remain  
strong and steadfast in the face of death and unto  
their weakest hour. All this, O Lord, may it count  
in Thine eyes, so that their sins be forgiven.

May this be the ransom that restores justice.  
And all that is good, let it be counted, and all  
that is evil, let it be wiped out... May peace  
come once more upon this earth, peace to men of  
good will; and may it descend upon the others  
also. Amen.

From "Dimanche", a  
French weekly

Dear Fellow Recovering Addict,

I just want to thank you for sharing with me the strenght and hope you did tonigh. You didn't even know you did it, but I sure feel it! When you picked up a pen and shared your inner feelings and experience on paper, you gave me a gift that I needed, badly. I've been in a situation where I'm working 60 to 65 hrs. a week, and haven't been able to spend as much time absorbing recovery as I'm used to. I arrived home tonight feeling tired, burnt-out and alone. My roommate subscribes to the Rainbow, and I spotted the latest issue there on the kitchen table. I just finished reading it, and now I feel alive, not alone and a spark of hope deep down inside. It's a real good feeling. Thanks for sharing!

For about my first 2 yrs. in recovery, I was in the habit of writing my thoughts and feelings down on paper. It helped me a lot just to get it out of my own sick head and down in black and white. I reched a piont where I fancied myself a great writer, and became obsessed with the written word. Needless to say, that was a dead end street called "Ego", and I had to get away from writing for awhile.

Today, I guess I see it back in the basic light that it really is. It's just another way of sharing with another addict what's worked & what has'nt worked in my own recovery. Right now I feel positively inspired & lifted from reading what you wrote about your experiences. So I know this works, It's so simple. And such a valuable tool. I remember back in my first few Literature Committee meetings, something we always did at the beginning of the meeting was to pray to have God remove our egos as we wrote. I'm going to set out to cultivate that habit again. I need this tool for my own recovery. My own subtle sick ego robbed this tool from me, and I have suffered from it's loss.

Today I have it back, in the form of a gift, and I pray to God that I don't lose it again. I know, from hearing this a thousand times, that in order for us to keep what we have, we have to give it away. So, just as you've given me this gift, I give it back to you. This is a beautiful program and I give it back to you.

love,

Pete B.-

The following is a pamphlet that will come up for Fellowship Approval at the World Service Conference in May. It originated in Pennsylvania and was written by members there of high school age. We hope that it will also meet a need here.

#### YOUTH AND RECOVERY

##### Part 1: HITTING BOTTOM

The nature of addiction is such that we will inevitably hit bottom or a series of bottoms. Our bottom can be wherever we allow it to be. We don't need to fail school, lose everything important to us, land in jail, or reach the brink of death. Many of us did come to these ends before making the decision to seek recovery, but others among us were more fortunate. We got off the road which lead us to those inevitable bottoms before we encountered worse ones than those we had already experienced.

As our addiction progressed, our lives became increasingly unmanagable. We began to deteriorate in every area: at school, at work, and at home. We began to lie and make excuses to cover up our using and the problems it caused. Denying that we had a problem and rationalizing our using was also symptomatic of hitting bottom. In the course of our self-destruction we also hurt many of the people around us, especially our families and close friends. Before coming to NA many of us felt lonely, hurt, afraid, and angry. We were tired of being controlled by our emotions and our need for drugs, and of hiding our feelings behind the facade of "being O.K.".



In spite of all this, we could not quit using. Our addictive personalities would not permit us to let go of our destructive behavior. We were slowly committing suicide. We were sick of feeling like nobody, and being disgusted with ourselves and our lives. We knew deep down that we were worth a lot more, and that there was more to life than just drugs. The turning point came when we had hurt bad enough, and couldn't live in that misery any longer. This gave us the incentive to do something about our problem. We asked for help.

#### Part 2: We made a decision

We realized that our lives were going downhill as a result of our addiction. We had to accept that fact before any relief could come. We finally realized that we could never truly be happy the way we were living. Using drugs had become a way of life for us, and we became sick and tired of hurting inside. We used to live and lived to use. Our using and everything connected with it was slowly killing us, and the pain was growing. We had to make a difficult decision, even though we were young and had a whole life ahead of us.

Once we reached this point, the first thing we had to overcome was the denial of the fact that we were addicts, which was often based on the myth that we were too young to be addicted. We had to make a choice. We could either live by admitting that we had a problem and needed help, or we could die by our old ways. We sought help and found it in Narcotics Anonymous. Once having made this decision, our lives began to get better.

In recovery we adapted to a new way of living by working the steps. As our heads cleared, we saw how sick we really were, and became grateful that we had the chance to recover at our young age.

#### Part 3: PEER PREASURE

Times can be hard for people making the change from using drugs to living clean.

People, places, ways and habits from our active addiction will attempt to persuade us to return to them. They can lead us to feeling uncomfortable with our new-found and hard-won cleanliness. Having a need for acceptance, we found it hard not to be drawn into the syndrome of role playing and people pleasing. Those people who continue to pressure us into returning to the old ways show their true colors. They never were true friends.

Until we established a foundation in the program, firmly anchored in the Twelve Steps, Most of us felt isolated, uncomfortable, and scared as hell. We established this foundation through the understanding, compassion, and support of the other addicts we found in NA. Those who are successful with the program are almost always involved with the fellowship of NA. Returning to old people, places, and lifestyles has been the downfall of many clean addicts, and some of them never got a second chance at recovery. Those who did make it back to the Program found that all of the old miseries of active addiction only worsened for them. Eventually, we had to make a decision to let go of our old ways in order to survive.

#### Part 4: Family Problems

Our addiction affected all persons who were close to us, especially our families. Addiction is a family disease, but we could only change ourselves. For some of us this was a tough thing to accept. We found that just because we changed, that didn't mean our families had to change. We had to take responsibility for our part in the family disease of addiction. Although we had stopped using, it took time to heal the wounds that our disease had inflicted on our families, and found that time and patience were required of both ourselves and our families to re-establish that trust.

We found that we could help our families trust us by being more responsible and considerate. By letting them see the changes through actions, as well as our words, we eventually regained their trust.

#### Part 5: Just for Today

We have seen young addicts who are clean for many years. A question often asked is "How did they do it?" Since most addicts rebel against the idea of staying clean forever, we suggest staying just for today. It is our experience that by making a decision to stay clean just for today, or even just for this moment, we find the necessary strength to gain recovery. Just for today we will deal with life's problems. Just for today we accept where we are. Just for today we work our program, we go to meetings, we share, we care, and we hug. We begin to live the steps and experience the NA way of life. We learn to live and live to love. We try to keep life simple, just for today.

We have come to realize that we can't live in yesterday, and we don't know what tomorrow brings. However, we do know that we can stay clean JUST FOR TODAY.

#### Part 6: Message Of Hope

NA offers only one promise and that is freedom from active addiction. There is a spiritual program of recovery available today for all addicts. We no longer have to suffer and die without hope.

After coming to NA we have found that our problems haven't disappeared. But we have learned how to deal with them. We have seen our lives change for the better. We have learned to accept those things which we could not change. Through total acceptance of the fact of our addiction, we have found a true freedom in Narcotics Anonymous.