

# THE RAINBOW CONNECTION

MARIETTA, GEORGIA

JANUARY 1984



# The Rainbow Connection

" ... caring and sharing the N.A. way ... "

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## POWERLESS

How much is said in this simple word. At least, in recovery, we know that the reason things sometimes seem to go wrong, unfairly and against all logic, has a lot to do with our limitations of vision and personal power. The thing I could never have predicted or even suspected before passing through the doors opened to me through the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous is that the sense of personal helplessness doesn't go away or even lessen with clean time and the process of recovery. Acceptance can give me peace. The "tools" of N.A. can help me become more effective. Powerlessness is more like a fact to me today that I have learned to live with than a sneaky way of getting over on a hopeless scene to a point of advantage.

In the beginning, it seemed to me as if what the people on the program had found was a way to be powerful "among themselves" or a pack to run with that gave them power. This may have been a part of the attraction in the beginning, but mainly, I just wanted some relief. A place out of the cold of what I had known before.

Surely, we appear to be more powerful to others. We are generally warm, happy, attractive people to non-addicts after we have been clean awhile. They can't see into us except for the instances of spiritual insight from what I've seen. I guess we can appear that way to other members too, from time to time. As we know, however, alone we are either nothing or at most, not much. Our travesties of self-will only weave nets which trap us in plots where it is hard for us to get help for ourselves. Even those who love us cannot find a way. N.A. throws

the game and the responsibility for asking on me. All I can do is share the fact that I need it.

It's not that I've become weaker since getting with N.A. I've become better at not wasting so much time in butting my head against a brick wall. I can avoid my areas of total powerlessness and apply myself in areas which seem to be God's will for me. It may appear differently to others but that's how it is with me.

One of the saddest things that can happen in my new way of living is to see some addict convinced of their powerlessness and surrendered to the truth of the First Step of N.A. and do O.K. for awhile and relax on their laurels at some point as if the rules didn't apply to them. We know if we're staying clean today that there is some force for good alive and doing good things in our lives. We're sure not doing it. The best we can do is stay clean, go to meetings and follow the directions God gives us in the Twelve Steps, through others and in our daily lives. When we stop seeing ourselves as the instruments of a power greater and godder than ourselves, we fall into an area of great risk and powerlessness. Just the same as the using will attract us sometimes because we are addicts. The quest for personal power will attract us. This whole thing is further made diffecult and confusing if others put us on a pedestal. We need always remember who we are, what we are, and where we came from if we expect to stay clean and aspire to happiness. The way we stay clean today came from many sources. It is the slow and painfully accumulated wisdom of the ages. It has been passed on in it's essentials from person to person. The truth is hard to put into words sometimes. If you see God

as all loving and all powerful, you know what I am trying to say here. The facts of God's love for us can accumulate indefinitely for us but the temptation to take it back and run our own lives again is always there. Only through applying spiritual principles to our lives among which is giving credit where credit is due can we expect a change for the better. The instant we try to take personal credit for what only God can do, we fall into pain. Hopefully we don't have to fall very far. The miracles we see around us and the miracles we experience clean can go on forever a day at a time but we must not try to take credit for them in all honesty. There is a difference between the instrument and the hand which guides it and gives it strength.



RECOVERY

Don't use  
by Steve J.

Go to meetings  
Work the Steps

A POEM

By Steve J.

Roses are red.  
Violets are blue.

I like peanut butter.  
N.A. works!

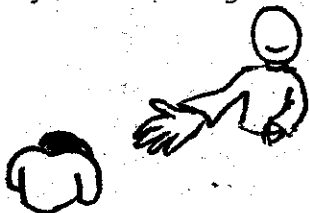


ANONYMITY IS THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION OF ALL OUR TRADITIONS, EVER REMINDING US TO PLACE PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES.

What does this really mean? Does this just mean I cannot talk about who I see at meetings or what they say about themselves?

Or maybe like some people say: it means you don't tell people your last name or where you work, or what you do for a living so that no-one can make trouble for you in these areas. I wonder how WE can expect people who don't understand us anyways to not look at this disease WE have with moral complications, if we as individuals are going to imply morality upon ourselves. As I came to grips with this problem, it was explained to me that I don't brag on the good either I have done or some one else had done for me. I was asked not to be specific about anything that happened if any credit was to be given it was to be given to the program, and not to any one individual. For instance, if my sponsor told me how to do something, I was told not to say his or her name but to say either "A member told me this or my sponsor told me this." That way I would not be creating any graven images. We have had people at times who have been hurt by being given too much credibility. They have found themselves in a position where they were no longer allowed to make mistakes. When you hear some one's name being stated in a meeting as having said something, this is then a break in the tradition. I thank you for your indulgence.

Don A.  
Atlanta



## SURVIVAL KIT



I was leaving a fellow member's house tonight, when it dawned on me that my briefcase was still in his livingroom. So I went back in, picked it up, and said in a half-joking way that I couldn't leave it behind because it contained my survival kit. Explaining, also, in a sort of joking way, that it contained all the things necessary for my survival - like the NA Book, some service work material, a copy of a newsletter (The Rainbow Connection), a meditation book, pen and paper, my address book being in my pocket.

In the past, my survival kits contained: money to rid me of the fear of not having any money, and to assist me in the role of feeling like I was somebody, a toothbrush in case I went to jail, drugs to kill the pain of having to live in a world I felt apart from and that promised me joy, peace, and acceptance, phone numbers of those I might use in case I was in trouble and needed someone to bail me out. All the usual items that helped me to feel safe secure and better about me.

Today, my survival kit is in the Spiritual, so I don't have to carry all of those things around with me anymore and there is a true freedom in that! Contained in my briefcase today are the things necessary for my survival today. I can't imagine anything that isn't covered in there. There is a loving God working through people in their stories, in the Steps and Traditions, and in other material. If something happened and there were only a few of us left scattered around the world, we could get together, start where you started and begin where you left off. And with the help of a loving God, we would survive and grow. I'm

really not joking, my survival kit, my recovery, you people, and a loving God are real for me today.

In gratitude,  
Rick

# Service!

The Trusted Servant's position is one of responsibility to the God of our understanding, fellow members and the addict that still suffers. It carries accountability for your actions to all three. It's a means of passing on the unconditional love God has given us thru being of service to others. It's self-less service in the highest form.

At first, most end up in service with little time in the program to save our own ass, to get what we need. The self-respect of having a title, when we have a very poor image of ourselves, helps us to feel a part of something, a feeling we badly need. We have the need to get out of ourselves, and get our thoughts onto something good - on helping others to help fill the gap in our lives when we stopped using.

During this period of our recovery, we tend to feel important again, to have all the answers, we're going without sleep, trying to be everything to everybody, trying to save lives and thinking of very little of ourselves - just working as hard as we can.



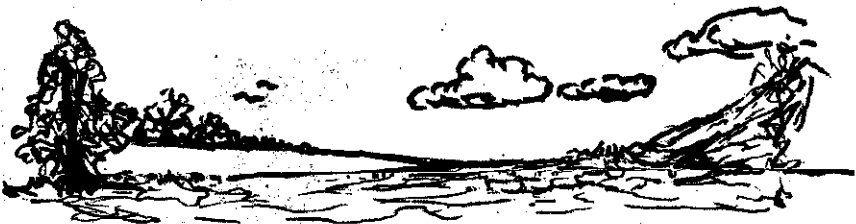
Then comes the realization that others are doing better. Their lives are getting straightened out, they are able to buy a car, have money and time for the movies and so forth, but we don't - we're doing without! So, our thoughts return to us and finally we are using the Steps on ourselves. We start learning to put our own house in order and realize that we don't know how, so we reach out to God and others to help us. We start learning to be responsible for ourselves and this is part of the spiritual awakening. This is what is meant by this is a selfish program - this so far has been selfish service - it was all taking!

Many reach this point in recovery and their main concern becomes their lives, how to get a better job, a new car, a new home and they do only enough service work, go to only enough meetings to keep from losing what they have. They are never really happy or satisfied and are always in the danger of relapse because they've forgotten others. A few reach this point in their recovery and realize they could gain the world but lose the spirit! They are very much aware of the fact that God has given them their lives back to them and they have the choice of doing anything in life they want to. They can have money, property, or prestige, or they can choose the way of the Spirit and live a life of service to God and others and they find true freedom, happiness and peace. They put God's Will and others first in all their affairs, they realize they may never have any money, nights without sleep, writing, reading, and praying for guidance on how to serve. Their physical life becomes less important as their spiritual life becomes the most important. They walk with adversity because others who haven't reached this point think that it is ego - still selfish service.

Others don't realize that it's no longer a selfish program - that God has become the center of their universe and that they have become willing to serve, even willing to die that others may live. They have become the greatest servants of all. And they are considered the least important and a threat to most men because their motives are misunderstood, and when the self in others looks upon the Spirit of God in them, it scares and confuses them and then it's fight or flight into denial. Self-less service is a result of a full spiritual awakening.

Some people in the program don't get into service in N.A. at first. They get into service after they developed the selfish program and are doing well in their lives. This is really an opportunity for growth to learn of self-less service and helping others. Some never realize this and pass it up, remaining selfish - thinking really only of themselves. Others just pass the service work up.

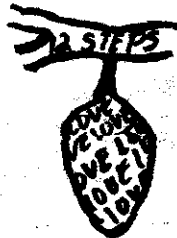
In the fullness of a spiritual awakening we are searching for God's Will in all our affairs and are of service in all areas of our lives, N.A. being just one area! It allows us to be of maximum service to God and those about us, where ever we are, doing whatever we are doing, by example of God's love, His power, and His way of life.



You loved me when I got there,  
you said I'd get what I need.  
I laughed and silently scorned you  
with my pride, ego, and greed.  
My selfishness soon found me in a place  
of dark and deep despair!  
My defects were catching up with me,  
and I was becoming more aware...  
Of why my life had slowed and stopped,  
like a stone when it hits the ground.  
You said you had felt that way yourself  
and told me to hang around.



"Don't use and go to meetings,"  
and sooner or later I'd begin to see  
That I could stay clean one day at a time,  
If I'd replace the "I" with "We."  
As new life fell upon me,  
like a rainbow from above,  
You filled my heart with wonder  
and gave me a new kind of love.  
I started looking inside myself,  
where I had never looked before.  
All I could see was my powerlessness,  
and the 12 Step staircase to freedom's door.



I saw I needed to take an inventory  
to see where I had been to blame  
For wrecking mine and other lives  
with misery, lies, and pain.  
As I write these lines to let you know  
the gratitude I feel for you,  
I feel a warmth inside of me  
and something else I must share, too.  
Actually, it's only a realization...  
one which I hold very dear.  
As I compare the me today with me of the past  
no human power could have gotten me here.



So it turns out God has a will for me;  
I no longer have to run.  
He gives me the help and the strength I need,  
and it's through you he gets it done!  
Every line here is a "Thank you..."  
for what you have shared with me.  
I thank you all for just being there,  
and for this new found serenity.



## WHY I GO TO MEETINGS

I am writing this article primarily because I see a need to explain to some people why people like me continue to go to meetings. I have been a member of AA and NA for many years now and one of the questions I get asked many times by new people is: "What do I tell my wife, husband, or parents about why I go to meetings?" In the beginning, I wasn't sure why I was going to meetings myself. The people at the meetings were treating me well, they seemed interested in how I was doing. They asked me how I felt and if I had a good day that day. I had been so sick for so long and I felt so abused by other people that I didn't seem to understand what I felt, so this was a nice change. They didn't seem to push me at all. If I did not respond, no one seemed to get too upset. They just seemed to be glad to see me. Now it had been a long time since any group of people including in my case, my whole family, had been really glad to see me. I had destroyed many family gatherings just by the condition I was in when I showed up. Here was a group of strangers openly accepting me and honestly seemed to be really concerned with my welfare. I really didn't understand why. They suggested that I make as many meetings as possible at least 90 meetings in 90 days. Well, I wondered if I really needed that many. I asked some one sitting along side of me how often they went to meetings and he said, "Well I used every day so I try and attend a meeting every day." After ninety days I started asking my new friends how long do I have to make these meetings on a daily basis. The usual response was how long did you use or how

often. I remember asking an old-timer and he said people who go to meetings stay sober.

I can remember saying, "My wife thinks the only reason I am going to meetings is because I am trying to get out of work around the house." Someone said, "If you go back to using, will you do any work around the house?" My answer, quite honestly, was NO. After awhile my wife said, "You are going out almost as much now as you did before and now you are even going for coffee after the meetings, or so you say, and aren't there other women at these meetings?" I said yes to both, I had no real defense against what I could figure she meant. I would ask her to go with me to some open meetings, I wanted her to meet my new friends. She would say no. Now I understand she was feeling left out of my life. But by now I knew I really needed those meetings. I was finding out about myself. Things like why I had used instead of facing life. Things like acceptance and love and understanding and fear. My new friends helped me to feel good about what I was doing with my life. My life was changing I was becoming a better person - a better human being. I really needed the meetings now just as I had once needed dope and alcohol. My wife decided that I didn't need her anymore. And for that I am sorry - all my explanations of what I was doing seemed to fall on deaf ears. I guess I was not capable of explaining to her what the meetings really mean to someone like me. I still attend meetings today, sometimes out of appreciation or gratitude, sometimes because I can still get lonely or miced up. And at times it still feels like the only ones who understand are the people in the meetings with me. That is why I wrote this article. I hope you can understand now why

I go to meetings. I do not go to avoid anything - I go to find me and people like me there. If the people who do not suffer from addiction could come to understand the desperate need we find within ourselves I would be extremely grateful.

Just another member,  
Don A.

Dear Rainbow,

I've really got to cop a tenth step with you before it gets to me. First I have to tell you that I am grateful you are there and still around. It has been a long time since I last wrote you. Because I believe in you and want to support you-- that is the nature of my wrong. I can't very well support you when people like me are your life-blood of carrying the message of recovery, if I do not write something spiritual that needs to be shared with the fellowship. You are one of my H.P.'s handy tools to do this with. I have been clean for a while, and on occasions I find that I get tired of repeating my new ideas and want to try and hold on to the old way of life. Today I am trying to give myself the right to be wrong and the right to change my mind in matters affecting my life. After much thought I have finally concluded that my life is important to me, and I can't be or do all things to all people, especially everyone in N.A. I guess N.A. conscience has to rest a bit at times too, much to my chagrin. I want N.A. to grow perhaps too much at times when we seem not to be ready and I get sick inside when it seems that we miss growth opportunities. There is no magic wand, and the gold at the end of the rainbow to me construes enjoying the jour-

ney along the way, and enjoying the sights and sounds inside that N.A. has given me today. With every pot of gold, like a selfish child, I want more and more. Today, I have to realize that the spiritual axiom "Just for today" is really where it is at; and who am I to disagree, or try to manipulate as much as I do to get my way all the time? Because of my defects of character I have lost opportunities for growth with others in N.A. and set myself aside too many times to try to direct the players, and that is exactly where I have stayed at times, without being a part of. Please help me and allow me to come back into the flock where true growth occurs with the fellowships! For I am afraid that I have lost the way IN and I need help in finding the door or gate way to surrender to the inside where others are playing and seeking peace, harmony, and joy in their lives. I've never felt like I've been a leader, but I have been a hell raising instigator and watched others enjoy the fruits of my labor without enjoying the process at times. To me this is being between the leader and the strong members (that N.A. needs and also has). Just because some of us have been around awhile doesn't mean that we all have our shit together. Intellectually, I know where the answer lies, in the long run and the short haul, too: It amounts to working the steps and surrendering to the God of my understanding and the group conscience of NA, and doing God's will for me. A spirit without a body is a ghost, and I need the spirit to fulfill its mission for my life thru the body of Narcotics Anonymous and all that it represents. I CAN'T, WE CAN!

WITH WARMEST REGARDS,

AN ANONYMOUS MEMBER



## Two Aspects of Service



To me, there has come the awareness of the two different aspects of service: Selfish service and selfless service. The 12th Step speaks of giving what we have been given in order to keep it (this is a selfish program) but there hopefully comes a point in our recovery where we give what we have in order that others may also have a chance to live, out of our for the others. It is no longer the fear that we may die if we don't, but a concern that others may die if they don't have a place to go and people there to help them.

This is especially true for some of the trusted servants. At first some of us get into service for the prestige-- to be somebody-- it's like doing the right thing for the wrong reason. This will hopefully pass and the motive will change. For the true trusted servant, being in a position is no easy matter. It is selfless service at its highest. They don't need the title to feel important, and would prefer not to have one-- they have to give of their time and money and weekends, attending business meetings, talking to others on the phone, reading new literature, making arrangement for activities, and etc. When you are in selfless service, you walk with a lot of adversity, you lose your anonymity. There is a lot to lose, and all there is to gain is the thought that some addict somewhere might not die, because of your little efforts, and you can't even take credit for,

it, because you know that truly the Father doeth the works. You are but an instrument of God expressed through group conscience and answerable to those you serve. With the title of trusted servant comes also the responsibility that goes with it and the accountability to those you serve. A lot of work, no money, property, or prestige, sometimes adversity, but just the thoughts that someone somewhere might live as a result of your efforts makes it all worthwhile. Selfish service is love of yourself; selfless service is love of others! But, like in a lot of other things, selfish service comes before selfless service can. You have to love yourself before you can truly love others selflessly.



We live by faith, so we are seldom discouraged, and then only for a moment in which we pray, and our spiritual strength is renewed. The small and temporary troubles we suffer bring us growth and much greater is the growth than the trouble. We fix our attention not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen, things of the Spirit like patience, tolerance, understanding, love, willingness to suffer hardship that others may have the chance to live, and humility; realizing that a loving God really does the work, we are but fragile instruments making ourselves available, asking where we may serve! A loving God that works in our programs gave us our lives back and in gratitude we offered them back to Him thru being of service to you!

## News & Coming Events



**MORE TEXTS ARRIVE...** We have more books again. This newest shipment included 10,000 copies, and the first part of the back orders of the book were sent on the day the new shipment arrived. There were over 2,000 orders for the book on hand. The remaining 8,000 will go pretty fast, however we have ordered another 10,000 from the printer, and we do not expect to have shortages of the book again at W.S.O.

**CONVENTION NEWS...** G.R.C.N.A. III will be held on February 17-19, 1984. This year's theme will be, "The Miracle Lives On." The convention location is the Sheraton-Atlanta, 590 W. Peachtree St., N.W., Atlanta, GA 30308. Registration is \$12.00 Banquet \$14.00, Sat. breakfast \$4.50, Sat lunch \$8.00, Sun. breakfast \$7.50. Mail to: GRCNA III, P.O. Box 8687, Atlanta, GA 30306. For hotel reservations call (404) 881-6000 (1-4 person occupancy @ \$55.00)

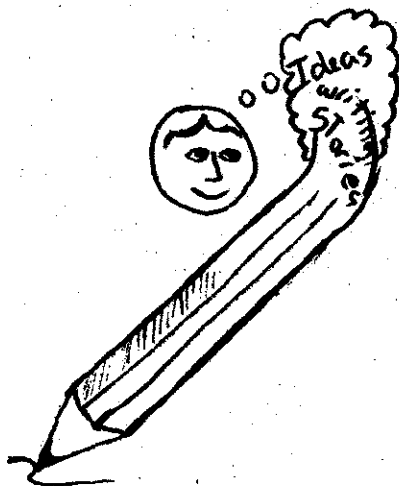
The 5th East Coast Convention of NA will be held on June 22-24, 1984, at Yale University, New Haven, CT., featuring work shops, Mararhon Meetings, Dances, swimming live music, and more. Registration \$10 Banquet, Dances, & Registration \$30, Total package (including rooms and meals) - \$75 Mail to: 5th E.C.C.N.A., P.O. Box 611, Hartford, CT. 06142-0611.

Northern California Regional Convention, March 30-April 1, 1984. This year's will theme, "Just For Today." Location is at Cathedral Hill Hotel, San Fransisco, CA.

The Mississippi Regional Convention will be held on Feb. 11-12, in Jackson, Registration will be held at 9:00 A.M. at the Holiday Inn North, Hwy. 55N. \$15 covers the banquet and the dance, rooms are \$44

The 2nd Louisiana Convention will be held on March 2-4, at the Holidome in Lafayette, LA. Registration \$10, Banquet \$12 Rooms between \$42 and \$48. Mail check to LRCNA, P.O.Box 90853, Lafayette, LA.70509

WORLD LIT NEEDS HELP!!! Do you know anything about relationships? Have you ever felt like a loner in the middle of a big meeting? Have you ever made a total commitment to NA? What's all this talk about cooperation not affiliation? YOU can help by writing about these issues and anything else of interest to other addicts. You can only keep what you got by giving it away, and if you don't do it it won't get done. WRITE ABOUT IT!!!!!!



Subscriptions: \$12.00 per year.  
Mail to: Rainbow Connection  
890 Atlanta Rd.  
Marietta, GA. 30060

Keep those cards and letters coming!!



The back page...

Yes it has been a while for us, but once again we have high hopes that this will be the first of a good, long, and unbroken series of our favorite N.A. newsletter. Thanks for this issue go to all of our contributor and to Rick, Sheryl, Bo, Bryant, Anita, Jaye and the Higher Power who makes it all happen for all of us. We hope you like the results of everyone's efforts, and look forward to hearing from you for the next time!

A SPECIAL NOTE: The W.S.C. Policy Sub-committee is meeting this weekend in Ft. Lauderdale, FLA, to work on the service manual of N.A. Let's all pray for their guidance!