

**THE
RAINBOW
CONNECTION**

The Rainbow Connection



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

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 *
 * LOOKING FOR ANSWERS *
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For me, when I was using, I was always looking for answers to the problems I had. I tried new friends, clothes, lovers, books and last but not least - drugs. I continued this search for quite a few years. I never found the answer. Then I found Narcotics Anonymous. Here I was told not to use drugs, no matter what, and work my Steps.

While working my Steps, I've found that I still look for answers from jobs, friends, etc. I've also learned that when I'm tired of this compulsion, I can finally humble myself enough to talk to my Higher Power and He holds the, all the, answers for me.

This isn't that easy but it is a way out, the only way out. It hurts me to see other people, including myself, trying to find the answers, knowing that H.P. is there willing to help, willing to listen, most of all willing to answer. A special thanks to the people who have brought this to my attention so bluntly.

A Still Recovering Addict

Women in Recovery

For me, this is a very touchy subject. I don't really know why. Maybe it's because in the past, women have always been put under men. This is not so today. I have found that with the WILLINGNESS, I can do anything I want, except to use drugs. I have also found that even though I can be a hard-ass, deep down, I still have feelings and, they still get twisted. I used to find myself wishing that I was a man. Not so today. It is a privilege for me to be a woman. I still have a lot to learn and a lot to share. I still have a hard time talking to other women, but it does get easier with practice. I feel that a lot of the tension is caused by the fact that other women know the game that I'm playing, and they can, and do, call me on my own shit (game). That hurts and is very scary and frightening. Today, I have learned that they actually do care, and I have found the women in recovery are my closest friends today. This is very real for me. Women really do understand and care. They stick by me in my recovery!

ANONYMOUS

SHADOW

a shadow
follows my every waking
until sleep
once again comes
to reclaim my inner sanctity
the shadow
whispers tender urgings
coaxes begs
coerces teases
menacing me
with demanding reason
exploiting feelings
that have long been dead
my shadow
gains its strength
and substance
from complacency and pride
twisting good deeds
into lies
fade into light
shadow of a former life
where pain and loneliness
darkened your form
into mystic depth
and untimely storm
begone
cast not your spell
my way
disperse and disappear
into the brightness
of this new day.

W.A.S. 1985

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT?

It's important for me to see a difference in my life today, from what it was when I was using, or what it was last month or last year. Recovery is a dynamic, ongoing process, and I need to see the changes to know that it is real and working in my life.

However, I have a way of getting drawn into the stuff of my life, by which I mean the details. Like a craftsman weaving on a loom, who gets very involved in threading the shuttle and watching to be sure it flies right, or choosing yarn, or whatever else, and then something goes wrong. Then he gets all caught up in fixing it. Finally, somebody may come along and hold up this beautiful blanket, and say, "Hey, what's this? Is this yours?", and the beauty of the work amazes him because he had never looked at it before.

I have to pay attention to the details today because I feel this is a requirement for working successfully at anything. It's when I let the details take over that I get into trouble by losing my perspective. One or two things go wrong, and my life is a failure. Wrong! I have to step back and look when I start to lose faith. I am clean today. I have love, trust, and responsibility. I care for others and am learning new things every day. Today, I look forward to

reading books, discussing ideas, loving people, seeing new places, and trying new things. I even like working because I learn from my job. This is different for me. I am not like I was yesterday. Today I am growing. When I step back and look at my growth, I am grateful.

ANONYMOUS

Battle for Life

Recently I had an experience that started out as pure hell and ended up being the best weekend of my life. My monkey was on my back and hanging on for dear life. When I had felt like this before, I had ended up using, and that reality scared me to death.

I had almost died by my own hands the last time I used, and I could remember the thoughts and feelings as if it were only yesterday. I told myself that I would not go back to that, and if I did anything, I would kill myself rather than go through the suffering that I go through when I use.

That scared the hell out of me. For the first time in five years of trying to stay clean, I was finally completely willing to do anything that was necessary to stay clean and ALIVE!

I made six meetings in a period of one and a half days. My disease kept trying to tell me that I was okay and didn't need to go to that next meeting, but the fear that my disease was waiting

SEVEN

around the corner to jump on my back again kept me going. It certainly wasn't my energy that kept me going because I got very little sleep, but it was okay.

When I would get to the meeting, my disease would tell me that it would be okay if I left. But I stayed. That weekend, I experienced true love, true willingness to live, and the true cunningness of my disease.

It took me four years to become truly willing, but by the grace, and with the help of, my Higher Power, I won this round.

I would be sitting in a meeting, about to fall asleep, but when it came time to get in my car and drive somewhere else, I was wide awake, and driving usually makes me sleepy!

I have complete FAITH that there is a power greater than myself and that He is always there to help me, otherwise I would have fallen asleep at the wheel this past weekend. He was there for me because He knew that I had finally become truly willing to do whatever it took for me to stay clean and alive.

Simplicity

As I have come to know myself clean, my respect for the word "simplicity" has increased constantly. It has been said that addicts are "complicated people", complicating people. I believe it. N.A. recovery has tended to resolve all my complicated living problems into a few simple things that I can do on a daily basis.

The Twelve Steps of N.A. are enough for me. Each is simple and clear, and they have proven effective for thousands of addicts seeking recovery. Being able to surrender to those things which are beyond me and a sure and lasting belief in my Higher Power which I give permission to CARE for me -- these things have broken down my prison walls. Reducing my personal shortcomings to a simple list of specific things I KNOW I'm doing wrong gave me a sense of threshold excitement. It never really hit me before that a real change of personality was possible for me until I got to the Fourth Step. I did not feel like my Fourth Step was complete until my list got real simple. When I shared what was really bothering me, I knew I was not alone. I knew that I would never be alone again.

It took me a while to realize that my Sixth Step was a lot like my First Step-- I had to surrender to the fact that I was powerless to change the things on my Fourth Step list without the help of my Higher Power. Like the Third Step, all we

NINE

can do in the Seventh Step is to ask the God of our understanding to help us.

My Eighth and Ninth Steps took away the feeling of "endless wrongs", which my addiction blew up in my mind. After the first 15 or 20 people on my list, it got really hard to remember more. The idea that my list would go on forever lost its power over me. Furthermore, many of the people on my list were people that I was unable to locate or had to really change my ways to makemy amends.

The Tenth Step is a great simplifier. No more do I have to persist when I know that I am in the wrong. When I can admit fault, my resentment and guilt evaporate. Like most addicts, I had feared admitting fault. My ignorance of spiritual principles made me think that admitting fault would give the other person power over me. The exact opposite has in fact been true for me.

When my life gets complicated today, I can simply pray and meditate on God's will for me. Then it gets simple again. ALWAYS, after an Eleventh Step prayer, there is some simple, easy, and obvious thing to do.

N.A. recovery is a deeply personal matter, shared out in a special atmosphere and in special program relationships with friends and sponsors. Find the simplicity of the Twelfth Step for yourself.

One of my favorite prayers is "God, grant me the serenity to see and do the obvious!"

ANONYMOUS

ACCEPTING MY DISEASE

Acceptance is a hard thing for me to conceive, especially when someone I love very dearly is going through a growing process. This is the time when I get pissed off about our disease called ADDICTION. It seems like everything is going great, then all of a sudden - BOOM! Everything is shot to hell.

The disease grabs a hold of anything it can and runs with it. It has done it to me more than once. I find it so hard to believe or understand that sometimes a relapse is what is needed in order to get to the point that we are willing to go to any lengths.

It seems like when times are hard and I don't quite understand what's going on is when I need to go to someone (a sponsor maybe), and say, "I need someone to take care of me." I know that if I just don't use, I am being abstinent, and for me abstinence didn't cut it. I still find it hard to understand that I have to change and accept whatever comes my way and just not use, no matter what. You hear it repeated over and over, "Work the steps, work the steps."

Today, I think I might be trying to work the steps. I have found through personal experience that what people share with me has a lot of meaning and truth. So I try to listen to what people share with me. Using is no answer to any of my problems, and I have found from experience that it doesn't even ease the pain.

ELEVEN

I pray to God that if one day I do have to go and improve on my story, that I make it back to the rooms of NA, where my true family is. I love you all, and hope I can grow to accept this disease. I hope that I can live my life to the fullest each and every day.

A WOMAN IN RECOVERY

MY FRIEND

Crippled by fear
Your touch calms me

Lonely or sad
I feel your love

Overwhelmed by pain
Your presence is soothing

Angry or enraged
Sharing it cleanses me

Feeling joyous
We laugh together

In peaceful moments
I appreciate you

Because I trust you
I can be vulnerable

Alone, I always have you
My friend, My God

robin f.

ALIVE BY THE GRACE OF GOD

Having been around the program of Narcotics Anonymous for a few years, I'm appalled, shocked, and disgusted at the rapid and recent deterioration in the structure of some meetings in this Area.

I have carefully and thoroughly thought about this and discussed it with some others who have been around awhile, and we, the ones who HAVE been around awhile are to blame for not showing the newcomers the errors of their ways.

Each N.A. meeting has but one primary purpose. This is to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers.

The meetings have taken on several forms:

1. **THERAPY SESSIONS**- meetings where one shares a problem or pain and others try to give advice. That is not an N.A. meeting. An N.A. meeting is where one shares a problem or pain and others share **EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH, AND HOPE.**

2. **SPEAKER MEETINGS**- an Open Discussion meeting should not be monopolized by a few people speaking for 15 or 20 minutes each. An Open Discussion meeting is where everyone shares for about 2 minutes.

3. **ANNOUNCEMENT TIME** (read Starter Handbook!) Why spend 10 to 15 minutes on announcements when flyers are all over

the place, plus we have a monthly magazine that tells us what's coming up. Also, as far as announcing meetings, the only ones that need be announced are the ones that are not on the schedule. READ THESE THINGS!

Trusted servants- learn what is allowed in meetings, as well as what's not allowed.

SOMEONE WHO WILL DIE WITHOUT RECOVERY

Carrying the Message **UNCONDITIONALLY**

I have had the privilege of carrying the N.A. message of recovery into an institution for over a year. During that time, there were months when no addicts from our fellowship would support this meeting. When asked, the response would come, "I don't like that meeting because nobody in the institution ever talks", or, "Man, I don't see how you can do that meeting. That is one tough bunch that never says anything!"

You see, the people in this institution are required to attend the meeting, and when they first come in, they tend to be hostile. Then the group turns over every 3 months, and there is a new group of hostile people. The addicts who did attend and lend their support to this meeting would only come to one meeting, so they never saw past the hostility or silence.

FOURTEEN

There is no way for me to tell you what an experience it is to watch the downcast eyes and sad faces look up and smile, or the angry faces begin to soften and all of their eyes begin to shine with the love these people feel in an N.A. meeting. To hear the quiet voices say, "Thank you, I don't think I could have made it without N.A. It was the only thing I looked forward to while I was stuck here." Or at least I didn't think I could tell you what it feels like!

I will share this with you as my higher power, whom I choose to call God, saw fit to share with me in my selfishness. The residents of this institution wrote and produced a play. I had been very discouraged by all the comments from people in our fellowship and began to feel that I wasn't the one to carry the message here, that I had nothing to share, no seeds were growing. The residents asked me to attend their play, and although I had other plans, I changed them and went.

The title of the play was A Change of Life. The story had a ghost of the past, present, and future. The message was about recovery and finding a higher power. When the play was over, the author walked up to me and handed me a copy of the script. I cried. You see, the author of this play was one of those people that never talked in the meetings.

After the cast party, where we all danced and hugged, I went home. I got on my knees and thanked my God for carrying the message to me. Mine is not to watch the seed grow, only to plant it, unconditionally.

ANONYMOUS

CHANGE IS COMIN'

Feelings inside, I hold so deep,
 Are not ones I need to keep,
 And these feelings I hold inside,
 Are not ones I want to hide.
 On your shoulder you might find me cryin'
 And this is when they start comin' out,
 I just feel like I wanna shout!

Change is comin', all over me.
 Change is comin', look and you'll see.
 Places change, and things do, too.
 I feel it comin', and it's overdue.

My heart is burnin', like a fireball,
 Kickin' me in the ass, no time to stall.
 Yesterday's, yesterday. Tomorrow's, tomorrow.
 Today's right now, and I wanna holler.

Right is right, and wrong is wrong,
 But sometimes it takes so damn long!
 Kinda like a roller coaster,
 Makin' you sick,
 Several warnings won't do the trick.
 Life's not what you want it to be,
 But your eyes are closed,
 And you just can't see.

But change is comin', all over me,
 Change is comin', look and you'll see.
 Places change, and things do, too.
 Change is comin', yes it's true.

Bill Diehl

FREEDOM FOR AN ADDICT

From a place of darkness
A prison of my own making
A living hell on earth
Bound by drugs and self

I am reborn, free of the bondage
Free to live again
By the grace of God
One addict helping another

ANONYMOUS

OUTLINE OF HISTORY

Introduction -

In a historical work such as this, we are dependent on documents gathered from our Fellowship minutes, flyers, reports and newsletters as well as any reliable published materials. Direct personal interviews can provide an immediate, personal touch and pertinent details which can take us beyond the dry facts. We are biased in our work inasmuch as it is our belief that our growth has been a result of the successful efforts of our membership to help carry our message and start meetings. We know their courage. Some of our failures will be dealt with in less particular terms in the hope that they will not be repeated through ignorance

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of our history. In this way their efforts will not have been in vain. Still, what we all share in today, our common welfare in N.A. is the product of both and we are grateful to all whose selfless giving has resulted in our being able to find recovery in N.A. today.

There is every likelihood that efforts for a twelve step fellowship for addicts seeking recovery occurred several times and several places. Most important of these are the efforts of Daniel Carlson in New York City around 1948 and Jimmy Kinnon in Sun Valley, California in 1953. Neither effort succeeded in its original form. Both were sincere enough and effective enough to result in an ongoing series of meetings in their respective times and locales.

The effort in New York attracted addicts seeking recovery and meetings were held in a location provided by the Salvation Army. Sister _____ in particular played courageous roles. In the final analysis, Mr. Carlson felt he had failed in his efforts due to his inability to attract a public personality to lend credibility to his efforts. Public support and interest resulted in articles published in major magazines such as Life and the Saturday Evening Post. References in these articles mention the formation of

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'chapters' of Narcotics Anonymous formed in Chicago and Los Angeles.

N.A. in Sun Valley suffered a similar fate inasmuch as meetings were discontinued for a period of weeks in 1959.

In the early sixties, a group of members who had attended the N.A. meetings in Southern California in the fifties got together and formed the Parent Service Committee and committed themselves to the continuance and growth of Narcotics Anonymous. Soon after the original form of the N.A. White Booklet was originated. At this point there were no other meetings known to us in the world. At the end of the 1960's, there were twenty meetings in the world.

The foundations for a world service office were established and in the first few years of the 1970's the World Service Office became a reality through the efforts of volunteer staff members. The World Service Board of Trustees had been formed in the late sixties.

One of the members helping out with WSO and active with the Board of Trustees was moved to develop one of our first non-recovery publications: "The N.A. Tree". This booklet was subtitled, "The Service Structure of Narcotics Anonymous". Including sections on the member, the group, areas and regions, the structure outlined created for the first time a Fellowship body at the world level of service to gather input from the Fellowship, process the input through a committee system and present the results to the Fellowship for approval. This service body was called

NINETEEN

the World Service Conference. While some members were apprehensive, the first WSC was held in 1976 after the N.A. Tree was approved by the Board of Trustees in 1975. ONE of the first acts of the WSC was to approve the N.A. Tree which had in effect created it!

The Fellowship grew during these years. The literature shipped to the Fellowship from WSO increased in volume and the number of meetings and members grew steadily. Having a central office, mailing address and a permanent phone number to allow for communications among members was crucial to our growth. Central to the activities at WSO was Jimmy Kinnon who had helped found N.A. in California in the early 50's. While many helped with the Office and the Office had moved several times, it wound up in Jimmy's home. Having a well known contact person went even further to consolidate our Fellowship.

Members within N.A. began to travel and meet one another. In many small towns (as well as larger towns!) meetings were held and addicts began to learn how to get clean and stay clean the N.A. way. While many of these meetings failed, the idea that recovery was possible was planted in the personal experience of a great many people.

(To be continued)

STAFF REPORT

What can we say? The Rainbow Connection came out monthly for years. Since then the various committees have gotten out several issues.

The new Rainbow Staff is Karin B., Sandra W. and Bo S. We will do our best to get back on a regular schedule. We have some material for next month and more is coming in all the time. This support as well as the support of the Marietta ASC is an inspiration to us. Thank you.

Announcements and Calendar will be included next month. Please let us hear from you to include your event!

SUBSCRIPTION

We are honoring all past subscriptions but will emphasize distributing copies locally to help carry the N.A. message and keep the groups in our area and region informed. Send articles to Rainbow Connection, 2818 Atlanta Road, Smyrna, GA 30080.

I Love You Each and Every One

