



**THE
RAINBOW
CONNECTION**



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Rainbow
Connection**

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

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FAMILY ILLNESS

The day after I got my review copy of our recovery book, I stuck it in my back pack and hiked on over to visit my granny. She wasn't expecting me but I was in the mood to see her and I wanted to show her that recovering drug addicts really can get together and write a book.

"Are you in it, dear?" she asked sweetly.

"Well, sure. Here's one of the Chapters I did a bunch of work on and here's some I helped review," I beamed.

"Did you tell your story in the 'Personal Stories' section?" she asked.

"I sure did but you don't want to see that, do you? I mean, its not all that good and I didn't even have time to proof it, and ..." I stammered.

"Yes. I certainly do want to see it. Unless there's some reason why you'd be afraid to show me..." She had me over a barrel.

"Well, alright," says me. She had to see it. "You asked for it."

Granny started reading and I started squirming. A moment later, she looked up and gasped, "Your father is not a drunk."

"Uh oh," I thought, but I bit my lip and looked her in the eye. "I know that he is," I said.

She read on. Suddenly, there was a knock on the door. "Anybody home?" laughed a familiar voice. Mama. My

THREE

grandmother got up to answer the door. I grabbed the book and shut it quickly, heaving a sigh of relief.

"Well, well, what are you doing here?" my mother asked, turning to me.

"Just thought I'd visit. I'm not staying long." I said casually.

"She was showing me the Book she's in," said my grandmother. "I think you'll want to read it too."

There was no hole in the floor, so I just sat there, watching my mom read, then watching my grandmother take up where she had left off. There was a long silence. I thought about my grandmother's life. She had married a practicing alcoholic, who had died without having ever gotten well. When my mother was only ten, there had been a shameful divorce, which had left both of these women bitter and confused. Mama, more than my Grandmother, was an expert at covering up for addictive behavior around her, but both of them were pretty talented at it.

Although my family has been grateful that I'm no longer on the streets endangering my life, they still don't like the idea that I am sharing y feelings with 'those people' in the meetings.

Then, I thought about the words printed on the pages that they were reading. My story dripped with rebellion, resentment, degradation, promiscuity and dishonesty. I had left little to the imagination and I hadn't pulled any punches. But, my pain and my fear had also poured off of every page.

FOUR

I put myself in my mother's place, then in my Grandmothers. Suddenly, I lost my guilt and all I could feel was compassion for these two older women. In the sunlight of the afternoon, I could see every line in both of their faces. Somehow, the wrinkles made them beautiful to me and the bones in their faces looked like my bones. I was part of them and they were part of me.

Finally, my Grandmother spoke, "How could you live with yourself that way?" she asked. Good question.

"I couldn't. that's what the Program is for." I replied.

My mother and I stood up and walked over to her. We all put our arms around one another, tears streaming down our faces.

"I'm so glad that it's all over with now. It's all behind you." sobbed Granny.

"I'm glad too. I'm grateful for today." I said. "I'm grateful that I can love you now and I do love you. I love you both very much."

We all stood together, hugging and crying for a few minutes. Then, Mama and I walked down to her new car and I let her drive me to my apartment. She squeezed my hand and I walked in and sat down, facing the window. I gazed out at the setting sun, smiling as I said aloud, "Another miracle. They just keep coming."

Gina from Nashville
May 1981

SPIRITUAL ADVENTURES

A vacation in the Sunshine State. Four days to just relax and discover me, sun, surf and fellowship while soaking up some pre-WCNA 11 ENERGY. Those were my plans. H.P. on the other hand had me scheduled for a spiritual experience of the First Degree.

On Sunday night my new room mate and I went home from Ft. Lauderdale's "Natural High" meeting for a quiet introspective evening of reading the Review Copy of **Narcotics Anonymous** and working a new 4th Step. The closed meeting recovery atmosphere followed us home and our quiet activities helped our attention for some time. Earlier in the day we had repeated the 3rd Step prayer together with another addict in that same house and had attended a convention planning meeting. Spiritual harmony had filled our day and set the stage for a memorable interlude.

We decided to take and go to the beach. En route we passed the seductive excitement of spring vacation beach front night club activity. The music and dancing excited us nearly drawing us in but something kept the car rolling towards a quiet stretch of beach. Earlier we had shared our gratitude for sensual feelings: sights, sounds, smells and tastes.

A storm building up off shore and cool damp sand heightened our feelings. Rough, high waves broke on the shore. Ragged white capped waves with mirror

smooth water in between. Clouds heaved upon each other in the sky and a smatter of rain cooled our faces. Nature raged mildly all around us and time lost all meaning.

Strange gelatinous animals had washed ashore and we cautiously examined them, tasting salty spray and smelling sweet seaweed rot and cleansed sand. Progress back to our car was very slow as our senses drank in the texture of this slice of time.

Three pretty figures walked towards us attractively and sat facing us looking lonely together draped with a blanket. They lit a joint. We walked on past and back to our car, still surrounded by spiritual magic.

As we passed, the street side night life was like a 50's movie early teenplastic, nearly surrealistic. While passing the still waters of inland canals, we pondered the words 'tranquil' and 'placid', asking each other if they were OK to use in this context - words which held such special negative meanings for us. The still water-serenity drew us.

We stopped the car and sat on the sea wall making the colored lights go out of focus and blending them together in optical gymnastics. How beautifully wonderful this simple scene became.

Clean, we were free. Free to be euphoric, to sense the world and get as high as only spiritual reality can allow. Drugs never did and never could get us this high. We are free in the Spirit.

SEVEN

NOTHING TO FEAR (LOVE IS REAL)

Had to tread the left side
Before I could fly the right,
Heal my broken wings
So I could be free,
Learned to seek sunrise
To sail through endless night.
Looking out of blind eyes
Makes it hard to see,
A closed mind
Won't let you find truth.
Learned to live and die before
I found out life has just begun.
Blossoms that had to wither
On the dark side
To allow fresh growth
To seek the light.
Still the roots run deep
In Mother Earth.
Howl at the barren moon
Until the warmth of rising sun
Leads you to the Higher Power
And warms your curdled blood.

Bacchus rules with selfishness,
Sedation, and lust,
Offer your soul on Satan's altar,
Kill the fatted calf.
Your heartbeat stops
And bones turn to dust,
A new way found in eternal embrace
With self's other half.

Then inner beauty glides in,
Like a blooming rainbow,
Joy seldom tasted,
But it was always there.
Karma speaks, "Don't stop,

EIGHT

Change crawls slow."
You've hurt ten thousand people
Before you learned to care.

Lost lovers wandering
Through a misty, purple haze,
Bumped into each other
When the fog cleared,
Felt they'd stay together
The remainder of their days.
"Then the morning stars
Sang together
And all the sons of God
Shouted for joy."

Divine union of souls,
Making halves whole,
Seeds that lay silent
All burst into bloom,
Spreading life's colors
In natural ways.
Harmony flowing from the new birth,
Trial by fire
Found diamonds in the coal.
Love that is real won't fade away.
Now there's nothing to fear,
Love is real.

SCOTT H.

WONDERIN'

- " an ode to the spirit" -

Lord, I've been wonderin'
As the past gently fades away
Sometimes I find myself plunderin'
But the Miracle continues -
I'm clean today.

FROM A FRIEND

Dear Friend,

How are you? I just had to send a note to tell you how much I care about you.

I saw you yesterday as you were talking with your friends. I waited all day hoping you would want to talk with me, too. I gave you a sunset to close your day and a cool breeze to rest you - but I still love you because I am your friend.

I saw you sleeping last night and longed to touch your brow so I spilled moonlight upon your face. Again I waited, wanting to rush down so we could talk. I have so many gifts for you! You awoke and rushed off to work. My tears were in the rain.

If you would only listen to me! I love you! I try to tell you in the blue skies and in the quiet green grass. I whisper it in the leaves on the trees and breathe it in colors of flowers, shout it to you in the mountain streams, give the birds love songs to sing. I cloth you with warm sunshine and perfume the air with nature scents. My love for you is deeper than the ocean, and bigger than the biggest need in your heart!

Ask me! Talk with me! Please

ELEVEN

don't forget me. I have so much to share
with you! I won't hassle you any
further. It is your decision. I have
chosen you and I will wait - because I
love you.

Your friend,
H.P.

HIS WAY

God, grant me your eyes
So I will see
All the earth's beauty
Surrounding me.

God, give me your lips
And I'll express
Your love for all people
With gentleness.

And Lord, let my hands
Be tender, like yours,
So I will be one who
Renews and restores.

God, grant me these things
And then I'll share
Compassion and mercy,
Praise and prayer!

"All these," the Lord said,
"I already impart:
They're found when you're living
From the heart."

P.M.

I BELIEVE

I was born with this disease I call my addiction and always had difficulty feeling like I could fit in somewhere. I always tried to tag along with people in my "peer group" as I was growing up, wanting to fit in with them but feeling apart from deep down inside. In a way I wanted to feel different, because it made me feel unique and made it easier for me to think I was better than others. I wore a mask to suit the occasion. If I wanted you to think that I was OK inside, I could find a way to do that. I would battle within myself over whether I really needed people or not. Years later, when I got clean, I realized that I had chosen to be a victim.

I began using in college because I had lost objectivity and wanted drugs to make me into a better person and make my pain go away. Once I started using, my addiction brought me out of my isolated world and made me have to face myself for the first time ever. Unable to retreat back into my isolated fantasy world again, I used more to cover up the parts of me that I was seeing that I did not like. I found myself wanting more of the drugs and angry if I could not get more. Turning to a therapist, I got some relief from some things, but when I bared my mind to this therapist about my spiritual disease, my addiction, it

THIRTEEN

upset him because he had no answers for me that I could apply. "Drugs are not your problem!" is what I was told. A part of me really wanted the drugs that I could hit this doctor for because of the escape they provided.

As the years went by my addiction progressed. My living skills became minimal as I could take more and more drugs and not feel good from taking them. I was now almost unreachable and past the point where I would admit I had a real drug problem - addiction!

Being forced to get clean was the beginning of a new life for me. I had not realized how self-destructive I had been using. My old feelings returned and I then had a broader range of feelings. I could love, care, feel, touch, taste food, enjoy simple things - things I had missed out on for so long while using. I never take these simple things for granted today - I had to work hard to stay clean to do that.

Having real friends for a change was a real responsibility for me for a change. I had to learn how to give and take. But by staying clean, a day at a time, everything has fallen into place. I believed that I had to stay clean to have a shot at anything in life, and I still believe that today.

I love the fellowship of NA, and pray that it continues to grow and carry the vital message of a new way of life.

Anonymous

FOURTEEN

A MORNING PRAYER

Lord, in the quiet of thine morning hour,
Let me feel thy love and power.
Let me so full of spirit be,
That others can see the God in me.
Let me reflect thy presence sweet
To everyone I chance to meet.
Let me a friend to people be
That they, too, will search for thee.
Let me add to this, thy day,
Love and Peace in every way.

E.W.S.

HISTORY

(continued from April 1986)

One major development which portrays our history and our funny way of turning our adversity into gifts from God occurred in California. Some members in Los Angeles took issue with some of the approaches to recovery in current practice.

Exactly what they were dissatisfied with is not clear but about thirty or forty members moved to San Francisco and started meetings there. In Californiaese, San Francisco is simply 'up North'. It is said that they were a

FIFTEEN

little more outgoing and patience with newcomers but it is more likely that simple population pressures led them to make the move. After all, someone in L.A. had been patience with them!

At any rate, more addicts got clean and stayed clean and a basic clean chemistry was set in motion. The 'Northerners' decided, after some fierce debate, to support the efforts to establish a World Service Office 'down South' (in Los Angeles). Meanwhile, members elsewhere got clean seeing California as the land of N.A. giants. This was not in error. Stories are still told of members traveling two hundred miles to an H&I meeting in a prison and driving another two hundred miles to get home. This in a single evening for a meeting which couldn't have lasted much more than ninety minutes! Every week for two years! What incredible energy and dedication. Their love and spirit was felt by recovering addicts around the country and was an inspiration to our young Fellowship. It helped members get clean, start meetings and keep coming back.

With the formation of our World Service Conference in 1976, our system of World Services was structurally complete. Of course, there were many blanks to fill in but the slots were there. There were only a few meetings outside of California. The major exception was in Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania.

differences had some substance. N.A. literature was printed and distributed through WSO in L.A. At some point the members in Eastern PA had trouble getting literature and started printing their own. There were outcries and recriminations on both sides. The matter was settled years later but the significant point was that members were doing things and taking N.A. seriously. It is sad when our members get so caught up in changes that go beyond their field of vision that they relapse behind apparent difficulties without being able to read between the lines and find out what is actually happening. If there is one lesson common to our recovery process, it is our incredible ability to home in on something that 'really' upsets us and ignore consolations, alternative viewpoints and even physical evidence which goes against the focus of our concern. While it is easy in calmer times to see this as only an instance of our obsessiveness, we know our insanity can become collective without some knowledge of our history. After we've been around a while, we can share a little humor, divert attention to the positive possibilities and overcome the fear which prompts the concern and triggers our ability to justify sick actions for reasons that sound good. We sooner or later have to ask ourselves if the ends justify the means. We learn to seek an answer we can all live with.

While everybody was talking about who was doing what, more addicts got

SEVENTEEN

clean and stayed clean than at any other time in the history of the world. Funny how these minor points get lost in the heat of the moment!

The World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous became a focal point of our growth. The WCNA held in San Francisco in 1977 attracted members from all around the country. Many came from Houston Texas and they got the bid for the 1978 WCNA on appeal and spirit alone. The effort for our Basic Text dates from discussions held at the San Francisco WCNA. There were about fifteen hundred members at WCNA VII and the theme was: "Now We Are Thousands".

In 1978, the World Convention was attended by only three hundred members but the inspiration shared in Houston resulted in hundreds of meetings being formed in the East and the Midwest. About half the attendance was from those dedicated members in California who had there first out-of-state chance to Twelve Step our young Fellowship. They must have done a good job - we're here! The next World Convention went to Atlanta.

Mistakes were made but the Atlanta WCNA resulted in even more meetings in the East. About twenty five members attended from Chicago. Attendance was only about three hundred and fifty. Speakers came from as far away as Hawaii. The Atlanta Convention set a precedent by passing on all the minutes to the next Convention site which was Wichita, Kansas. This first WCNA in the

East helped members serious about N.A. meet one another and forged unprecedented unity of effort. For one thing, a suggestion to a member from Philadelphia that a standing 'token order' for literature from WSO in California resulted in the discontinuance of their printing their own materials! Again, attending members went home all fired up and started hundreds of new meetings.

The Wichita WCNA was held about a year after the first WSC Literature Conference which was also held in Wichita in October of 1979. The spirit was excellent and the influx of members from the Dakotas and Texas as well as the East and West coasts along with the World Convention probably accounts for the formation of one of the largest regional service committees in our history, the Mid America RSC. It services area needs in Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma.

A week later in Lincoln Nebraska, the Second WSC Literature Conference was held in the downtown post office. Members stayed over from the World Convention and worked four days and nights. Their efforts were definitive and Our Book is the direct result of their efforts. The next Conference was set only six months ahead in another city which borders the midwest: Memphis, Tennessee.

(to be continued)

NINETEEN

NO EXCHANGE

I would not trade my lot in life
for anyone's I know,
For in my trials, and happiness,
I've felt my spirit grow.
I've squelched a tear,
and laughed some, too,
And done some things
that others do.
For through the years I've had so much
of human love and human touch.
I would not trade one day of time
for all the years of others,
For even with some heartbreaks
and the pain that sort of smothers,
I've glimpsed through clouds
of darkest hue.

A glorious sight of all things true;
with a silver lining that heads neon
Toward's life's sunset,
with my work well done.
So I would not trade one day of life
for all the years there are,
But keys my chin raised high
and firm, and my eyes upon a star.

V.M.H.

EVENING THOUGHT

The light is fading, the sun is gone
And I pause for a rest, with a sigh.
Now is the time to meditate
On the hours that have drifted by;
This may not have been the happiest
day
But no sorrow did I have to bear.
So for that I want to thank you, lord,
Thank you, just for being there.

V.L.

STAFF REPORT

The Staff of the Rainbow Connection has grown to include every member in our Area. Seriously, we thank our contributors and hope for the continued support which will allow the Rainbow to continue to come out. Thanks to John M., Karin, Jimmy B., Robert B., Bo S. and Phil D.

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

