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## No. 8 April/May 97

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### Motion 17

The 1997 C.A.R. contains Motion 17 submitted by the California Inland Region. This motion is about R.S.R. only voting at the W.S.C. The following is the intent of the motion that was printed in the CAR:

"To keep the decision-making process grounded in the Second Tradition by placing the final responsibility and authority for NA services with the NA groups (Second Concept) through their regional service representatives."



This was NOT the intent originally submitted by the California Inland Region. Why is this? Because the WSC Admin. Committee REFUSED to include the original intent as written and informed the region that if they didn't change the intent, the motion would not be put in the CAR.

Now this seems kinda funny as the World Boards and Committees ARE allowed to write lengthy pros and cons (with regional motions usually cons) to give their feelings on how us poor dumb addicts should vote, but to not allow a region to give their views on why they are submitting a motion is outright manipulation and control of our fellowship

media. Please read on, this will become clearer. The original intent as submitted by the region was:

Intent: " This motion is intended is intended to keep the decision making process of Narcotics Anonymous grounded in the Second Tradition. The ultimate authority-" a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience" needs to be adhered to within the World Service structure.

The "group conscience" is directly carried by the trusted servants elected at the regional level. Only regionally elected trusted servants should be casting a vote based on the "Group Conscience". Regional Service Representatives are directly linked to the "Groups" that they represent, and therefore carry the "Group Conscience".

The Seventh Concept states, "All members of a service body bear substantial responsibility for that body's decisions and should be allowed to fully participate in its decision- making processes." This motion in no way negates "All members of a service body" from participating in the decision- making processes. "They" will still be able to influence decisions by participating in all discussion and debates. Their range of influence does not stop there. The committees and individuals involved also have the conference digests, conference agenda reports, articles in The N.A. Way, The Newline, and Their regular reports to the conference as forums for influencing the decision-making process. This range of influence already far surpasses the ability of the Groups to express Their opinions and views.

There was a time when the fellowship was small enough that we needed the "individual's" opinion and voice to guide the decision- making process. We are now many and our fellowship has matured We need to put the decision-making process into the hands of the Groups.

This motion is intended to put the final responsibility and authority for NA services with the NA groups (Second Concept) through Their Regional Service Representatives. The California Inland Region believes that only Region Service Representatives are able to make decisions that are in the best interests of the Groups they represent, and are also willing and able to make decisions for Narcotics Anonymous as a whole".

*the following is from the RSR of the California Inland Region:*

Hi, I would like to answer the question about Admin refusing to print our intent as written. CIRNA formally requested that admin include our intent as written. In 2 different letters we were told to develop our arguments as issue papers to be included in the March Conf. Report. We did and submitted them on time. Well I just got my Conf. Report and I was saddened to see our articles were not printed as promised. So I will send one of them now. Please copy and distribute to anyone interested:

**Is the Tail Wagging the Dog?**

## February, 1997

Greetings from the desert. The California Inland Region conscientized and submitted a motion to the '97 World Service Conference (WSC). We are submitting this issue paper to the March Conference Report. We hope to spark more conversation on treatment of regional motions in the Conference Agenda Report (CAR). We are concerned about what happened to our motion (#17), the attitude of the WSC Administrative Committee on this issue, and the role of the WSC boards and committees concerning regional motions.

When the California Inland Region submitted a motion for consideration at the '97 WSC, we sent an intent that actually explained what our intent is. The WSC Administrative Committee (Admin) sent a letter that stated we needed to keep our intent short. We received further communication that Admin would not include our intent as written with our motion in the Conference Agenda Report (CAR). They felt our intent was a pro argument and there is nothing in the Temporary Working Guide To Our Service Structure to support our request. If we insisted on that intent, our motion would not be included in the CAR. One of the suggestions Admin made was to submit a request to them to include our intent as written and explain the rationale for why the protocol be changed to meet our request. We complied and our request was denied with no comment on the rationale submitted.

We realize that not everyone thinks regions should be allowed to even make motions much less speak to the reasons they are being proposed. Admin states "The Administrative Committee feels that a single region alone should not have the ability to move the fellowship into action, for such individualism both dilutes the purpose of the WSC and its committees and boards, as well as minimizes the principle of unity found in our first and Fourth Traditions (November 1996, Conference Report, page 2)." We feel that statement is divisive. Such an "us and them" statement brings up some troubling questions. Is the WSC's purpose to serve the groups or does it serve the WSC's boards and committees? How can the groups speaking through their regions minimize unity? How many (if any) regions will it take to move World Services? Are not the groups Narcotics Anonymous as a whole? Are we really willing to turn our service structure upside-down? Should the groups and their Regional Service Representatives be second class participants in a service body that was set up to serve them, unable to make motions on behalf of their groups?

We feel with statements such as this coming from our trusted servants, and the major changes being proposed to our service structure, it is vital that the regions that represent the groups make the most informed and educated group conscience possible.

CIRNA felt that, after carefully examining both the '96 and '97 Conference Agenda Reports the reason behind our request becomes apparent. The various WSC boards and committees, including Admin, stated their opinions on the regional motions submitted to the Conference. Their opinions in the CAR were widely distributed to the fellowship. On several motions more than one committee commented, and they did not limit themselves to only one or two lines.

In the '96 CAR the WSC boards and committees submitted 12 motions and the resolutions. There were 14 pages of pro arguments of why they were submitting their motions. The regions also submitted 12 motions. There were only approximately 20 lines of text that stated the intent of the motions. The WSC boards and committees made 24 recommendations using approximately 148 lines of text. On the regional motions there was only one recommendation to approve, 22 to disapprove and 1 no recommendation. The Policy Committee recommended to approve motion #16.

In the '97 CAR the WSC boards and committees submitted 15 motions with 11 pages of pro arguments. The regions submitted 18 motions with approximately 42 lines of intent. The WSC Boards and committees make 66 recommendations using approximately 198 lines of argument. There are 3 recommendations to approve, 24 to reject, 30 to commit to the Transition Group, 3 to commit to other committees, and 6 no recommendations.

Most of the WSC boards and committees' opinions were to not approve. Are not such statements a con argument? If the recommendations from the WSC boards and committees are con to a motion, who speaks pro? One of the explanations now is that the regions are attempting to "micro-manage" the Transition Group. Will the Narcotics Anonymous fellowship be allowed to give concrete direction to the Transition Group? The members of our fellowship, reading the CAR will notice one or more WSC boards and committees recommending to not approve a regional motion. Conversely there is not a real explanation why the motion is being submitted or what it hopes to accomplish. The average member is left with very inadequate information to develop an informed group conscience. Is it left to an area service representative or a group service representative to explain a pro to a motion they may not understand?

We want to know what the WSC boards and committees feel about the regional motions being submitted. We value their experience and opinions. That being said, without more information on why the regional motions are being submitted, a balanced and informed group conscience is not possible. Should the regions who have worked on and conscienced the motion involved not be given equal opportunity to voice their opinions? Can one or two sentences really equal up to several paragraphs written by the different WSC boards and committees?

The region that makes the motion would be the natural choice to speak pro for it. They could explain what they hoped to accomplish and why they felt it was necessary. It was suggested that we send our intent to all the regions. To really expect that it would be distributed to the fellowship as widely as the CAR, or be taken as seriously, we feel is unrealistic.

We realize that we have barely touched on several complicated issues in this paper. Our intent is to generate discussion. The California Inland Region welcomes any comments from the fellowship on this issue. Thank you for considering the issues involved.

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### *New Attitudes...*

We shall attempt to print all articles promoting a change in our intolerance and indifference towards spiritual principles. We seek any and all ideas for this publication to become a venue for change. All materials shall be printed in a spirit of anonymity.

We encourage the use of humor and lampoon to stimulate thought and levity. Our hope is to find ways to transgress the perceived separation that exists amongst members of our society.

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## **ATTRACTION NOT PROMOTION**

I came to N.A. not because I wanted to but because I had no other choice and nowhere else to go. I found out about N.A. in treatment, I had never heard of it before. I had no intention of staying clean, or changing my life even if I had believed then that it was possible, which I didn't.

But having said all that, the fact that I have kept coming back and stayed clean (10 years so far) is proof positive that I continue to this day to be constantly attracted to N.A.. Of course, that means that I am attracted to you, because you and me are N.A.

One of my favorite lines in our Basic Text talks about how we get this program by example rather than direction. I am really glad that is the case because I doubt that I would still be coming around here if we were about promotion or direction. Promotion is all buildup and hype and it implies intrinsic control and manipulation. On the other hand, attraction is a positive force that tends to draw things together into a unified whole. That is why our program is about attraction rather than promotion.

While attraction is a natural force, promotion is always artificial. We feel attraction in our hearts, while promotion can and does compromise our better judgement. Promotion caters to our baser defects of greed and fear, but attraction is fueled by our virtues like empathy, compassion, and brotherly love.

Because yesterdays recovery will not protect me today this attraction that keeps me coming back one day at a time must be comprised of a never ending stream of loving spiritual energy. This energy has the power to heal and we know it as the "therapeutic value of one addict helping another". In its most universal form it is recognized as "goodwill" which is one of the tenets of our service symbol.

This all pervading goodwill is actually one of our basic spiritual principles and is experienced by us at the instinctive level, it is in our hearts and in our guts, and it is impossible to ignore. It is impossible to "promote" or fake because it is only generated as a byproduct of right spiritual action.

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This Newsletter is being provided to any and all interested members of N.A. at COST please feel free to copy and give out as many of these as you like. We will be printing bi-monthly. Our cost is \$0.64 (includes postage) each so 1 yr, subscription would be \$3.84 (.64x6) Please send articles and newsletter money to:

New Attitudes  
P O Box 447  
Vestaburg MI 48891

please make checks payable to:

"New Attitudes/I Can't We Can"

[e-mail: frbeetz@nethawk.com](mailto:frbeetz@nethawk.com)

P.S. We also deal in the barter system if you would like to send supplies instead of \$, we need stamps, paper (#20 8 x11), ink cartridges for Lexmark WinWriter 150C.

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### **A Parable**

There's an active addict walking down the road. He falls into a hole in the road, the hole is addiction. He's in pain and can't get out no matter how he tries. Along comes a doctor, the addict says please help me. The doctor writes a prescription and goes on his way. Along comes a psychiatrist, the addict says please help me. The psychiatrist says some things about the addicts mother and the addict says some things about the psy's mother and the psy. goes on his way. By now the addict is writhing in pain and knows he's dying. Along comes an NA. member and looks down in the hole. The addict says god please help me, and the NA. member JUMPS INTO THE HOLE!!!. The addict looks at him and says are you nuts! Now were both down here! The NA. member says I know but you see I've been here before and I know the way out!

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**REPORT OF THE ..... AREA AD-HOC SUBCOMMITTEE TO  
REVIEW THE PROPOSED GUIDE TO LOCAL SERVICE**

The area has asked for our informed opinion. The members of our ad hoc review have carefully and thoroughly read this proposed service manual, aloud and together, over several months. We tried to be objective and thoughtful in our review. Our discussions touched on the ideas presented, the new service structures proposed, and the emphasis and purpose of the proposals. In an effort to be farsighted, we tried to consider the effect the proposed guide would have on our Fellowship in general, and on our area and groups in particular.

With regret, we must offer the .....area our strongest and most emphatic recommendation for the disapproval of this document. To our considerable surprise and dismay, the review group discovered that the proposed guide was not an updated description of our service structure. Rather, it is a detailed plan to dramatically alter it. It invents a totally new service structure, in many ways quite unlike the one our groups have created over the last 44 years. So far as we know, many of these proposals have never been tried out anywhere but; they are proposed for the reshaping of the whole Fellowship. And apparently, to our even greater surprise and dismay a vote for the guide is a vote for the new structure. The unfortunate fact is that this guide, if approved, would radically and permanently change our service structure. It is evident in a careful reading that the new Guide to Service would turn our service structure upside down. It would centralize power, control, decision-making and planning at the world level, and effectively gut the power of Group Conscience in our Fellowship.

These changes might aid the purpose of business-streamlining, and would make sense if N.A. were merely a business. But since N.A. is a Spiritual Fellowship, and not a business, we believe that the proposed changes in our service structure that this guide introduces would have a destructive, and possibly devastating, effect on the spiritual nature of our services and our Fellowship. In fact, never have we seen a document from any part of our service structure that so thoroughly edges God out.

We have tried to be fair, and see the good that there was in this booklet. There were many good ideas and proposals in the guide. But we feel it was dramatically outweighed by damage and harm that this new structure would bring to our Fellowship's services. Some of our members were so frightened by the implication of some of these changes that they expressed fear for the future of N.A., as a whole. Others of our members attempted to reassure them that the local groups would be able to go on as before, though they had to admit that in time the chilling effect of reducing the emphasis on Traditions and Group Conscience could very well reach and affect the groups as well.

Since this is an "approval" document, rather than a "review and input" document, we are prevented from suggesting specific changes or corrections to the guide. The approval form means that no further input is desired -- only an up or down, yea or nay vote on the guide as a whole. We regret that our area was not able to offer review and input suggestions in the past. While certain pieces within the guide are excellent and worth preserving, we feel that the guide in its totality is so flawed and so potentially destructive and disruptive to N.A., that it should be voted down as a whole.

We offer this recommendation with sadness because we didn't realize the magnitude of division of thought within the Fellowship regarding principles of service that could give rise to such a document; and because we fear that if this structure is imposed, it could have the undesired effect of dividing the Fellowship for years to come and possibly even splitting the Fellowship in two. The fact that this serious outcome either did not occur or was of no concern to those who developed this new service structure is, to us, perhaps the most disturbing of all.

We would like to respectfully offer the specific reasons why this ad-hoc review group recommends that this Area vote No on the proposed guide:

1.) The new guide radically alters the service structure of N.A. It virtually invents an entirely new service structure that we believe the groups, areas, and regions never asked for. The proposed new structures, bodies, relationships, and decision-making processes are, to the best of our knowledge, totally unprecedented in any 12-Step Fellowship. Since these new structures would be created and adopted within the body of a general service guide, rather than in a series of motions submitted to the Fellowship, it would have the virtual effect of evading the scrutiny of a Group-Conscience review of the new structure. In other words, if you vote for the guide you vote for the new structure. We suspect that a closer scrutiny of each proposed change in structure might not be so easily ignored by the Fellowship as a whole, and might have been far more fully argued in the light of day.

2.) The new guide substantially shifts the focus off the Traditions and onto the concepts of service. Group Conscience is not listed in the index; according to this guide, carrying Group Conscience is no longer mentioned in the job description of our representatives, who are now elected for the strength of their decision-making ability, rather than their willingness to carry on the Conscience of the groups. The Traditions are a program of spiritual principles, while the concepts are a system of business principles. The Guide to Service is indisputably a concepts-centered rather than

a Traditions-centered document. There is a lot of good business advice: in the guide, but there's almost no heart.. We are concerned that the more our service becomes a business, the less we can work a personal and collective 12th Step -- and the less attractive NA might become to addicts.

3.) The guide centralizes authority, money, power, and influence at the World level. The traditional image of the "inverted pyramid" with the groups at the top and the World at the bottom offering service is no longer shown, or apparently guiding the structure.

4.) The guide inhibits group, area, and regional autonomy. Representative advised by the guide to stop thinking of themselves as furthering or even representing the unique interests of the body that sent them, and rather to consider themselves as officers of the greater fellowship at large. By de-emphasizing the role of GSRs, ASRs, and RSRs as carriers of the Group Conscience, and by the strong re-orienting of these roles as being decision-makers themselves rather than vessels for the will of the bodies they represent,



the guide virtually assures that the bodies that elect these trusted servants will only be able to consult and advise them, rather than direct them.

5.) The guide attempts to enshrine non-representative WSC practices throughout the rest of the service structures ( ie. most of the other service bodies, such as areas and regions, democratized their structure in the 80's. The principle was: one group/one vote, or one area/one vote. Committee chairs and other officers gave up their personal votes, so that one person ought not have the power to overrule a whole group or a whole area. But that change never happened at World, where to this day each trustee, each WSC vice-chair, and each committee chair has a vote, same as a whole region. Rather than democratize the WSC into a fully Group-Conscience-guided body, as the areas and regions have done, the new guide restructures areas, metros, regions, and zones so that the officers are all drawn from the representatives -- hence they all have votes.)

6.) The guide restructures the fund flow. Repeatedly, the groups and areas are advised (and pictured in repeated diagrams) to send funds directly to World, rather than up the chain through the regions as in the past. This would effectively eliminate the "power of the pocketbook" that our areas and regions have traditionally had over world services.

7.) The guide says that the groups are responsible for teaching their members how to carry the 12 Concepts of Service (page 38). Since the concepts have virtually nothing to do with personal recovery, and almost nothing to do with service at the group level, this suggests to us that the groups are being told to indoctrinate members in the business principles of the concepts, rather than emphasizing carrying the spiritual message of recovery.

8.) The section on NA Communities was very poorly written, and lacked coherency. We would be loath to see so disorganized a section be part of our primary service manual, even were it not for all the guide's other problems.

9.) The section on P.I. (Page 47) muddies the distinction between attraction and promotion.

10.) The guide undercuts the importance and the influence of regions, by creating new structures as group tally, metro, and zonal forums. Regions in the past could sway votes at the WSC level; the direction suggested by this guide is that regions are to be subordinated by more manageable "zones".

11.) The guide creates the need for vast new bureaucracies in its new structures, such as "metros" and "zones", without explaining where all the new trusted-servant-power is going to come from. As hard as it is to get officers to serve our groups and areas now, it will be doubly hard to fill all the needed positions in the future if these broad new structures are created. It appears to us that these new structures were invented with no consideration for the practical effect they would have on manning service

12.) The guide inhibits new regional and area formation, and hence it inhibits N.A. Growth. Repeatedly, the guide uses language to caution and discourage new regions, inferring that such formation is usually harmful. Historically, new regions result in new areas, and in NA services penetrating to new communities. Since regions have also historically been the troublesome authors of motions and ideas that could impinge on WSC power, it seems clear to us that the regions are being discouraged (and ultimately phased out) to strengthen World influence, without regard to their immense historical usefulness in building and supporting N.A.

13.) The new structure outlined by the guide undercuts the role of experience in our representative bodies. The guide would change the decision-making process on WSC and CAR items from the traditional chain (group-area-region-world) through ever more experienced representatives, and replace it with group tallies made at region-wide GSR forums. In our experience, the GSRs are the least experienced representatives in the service structure, typically very young in service. Thus they are the most likely to respond to emotional appeals at these forums, and to have the least experience or knowledge of the history of supposedly "new" ideas, motions and resolutions which did not work or were debated and voted down in the past. ASRs and RSRs who have learned the ropes and know the background can better understand such tricks, and are better able to protect the interests of their groups and areas than green GSRs. But in the new forums they would lose their capacity to intervene on their bodies' behalf.

14.) Most groups in N.A. have historically gone unregistered by the WSO. This was often because groups had ever-shifting trusted servants and thus no permanent address. They nonetheless were welcomed at their area, and carried their conscience there. But in the new structure, unregistered groups would not be entitled to have their votes tallied on general NA matters. If for a wide variety of reasons the majority of groups continued to be unregistered, the decisions of NA as a whole would be made by the minority of groups, i.e. those who had chosen to register with WSO. We thought that any group that followed the Steps and Traditions of NA was an NA group, not when the WSO said they were.

15.) The guide undercuts the principle of Group Conscience. See page 49.

16.) The guide exhibits an attitude of indifference toward Spiritual Principles. Except for a few bright paragraphs we do not see the motivation of a loving God in it.

Writing a book that imagines a new service structure, and then imposing it on the Fellowship in one fell swoop, seems to be a radical act in the extreme. The guide to service did not arise organically out of need, as the TWGGS and our present service structure did. It is an invention, a colossal experiment, and it is being brought in through the back door. It would be a tragedy if the experiment failed, because NA would be the loser, and addicts might die.

The guide would reshape this area into an entirely: new structure not of our making. We believe that the groups of our area should decide what the future of our area should be. We do not believe that it would be wise to let this service guide decide that future for us.

We are not all convinced that this guide and the politics that surround it are motivated by an "attempted coup by a small but powerful minority in the service structure", as some have claimed. But we are fairly sure that this guide is a good example of "the tail wagging the dog", of a "solution in search of a problem", and of "colossal overkill in revising NA service". (One a funny note: we have heard of supporters of the guide calling opponents of the guide "radicals". Ironic, because it seems to us that totally revamping the service structure would be a most radical act, while advising greater caution and more gradual change would be a very conservative act.)

We are also not convinced that the service structure is so hopelessly broken that it needs this revolutionary upheaval. If the service structure needs amendment, or even major overhauling, then we feel it ought to be subjected to a normal Group-Conscience process like everything else. After all is said and done, if we are afraid to subject our ideas to the conscience of a loving God who may express Himself through our Group Conscience, then what have we learned?

With respect, In loving service,

Review Ad Hoc Subcommittee .....Area

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## 5 YEARS IN FIVE HOURS

While most sharing in newsletter formats are drawn from our personal experience, I am among those known as the uncaught. Certain forms of addiction and related activities are subject to criminal prosecution in this country and so there are two types of clean addicts: those who were caught and those who were not. My subject is a friend I hadn't seen in a good many years. I was around five years clean in Atlanta and ran into him in a shopping mall. We had known each other on the 10th Street Atlanta Hippie Strip years before. While we talked, I told him I was in recovery. He told me an interesting story.

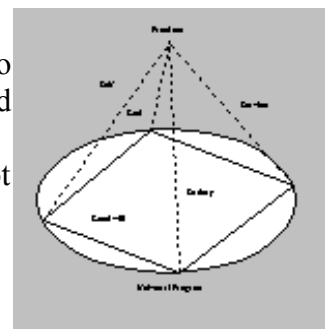
He said he was coming back from LA with a suitcase full of weed and that the police were using dogs to sniff out dope in the luggage. He got paranoid and became certain that he was going to be busted when he got off the plane in Atlanta. His imagination took over and for the entire flight back to Atlanta he played out the scene of him coming off the ramp and getting arrested at the doorway. He imagined being taken to jail, tried, sentenced and having to serve some prison time. If they didn't get him when he was coming off, they would get him at the baggage claim area when he claimed his suitcase. This would let them arrest him and take him directly out to the waiting police car baggage and evidence in hand! He couldn't see any alternative to claiming the luggage.

He had to claim it, it was in his name. He had the sweats, the shakes, his stomach was doing back flips. He felt like throwing up, everything.

When he arrived in Atlanta, he waited in his seat for them to come get him. He would go quietly, he didn't want to be shot in the gangway for trying to escape. When the plane was empty, a flight attendant came and told him he had to deplane. Shaking, he walked off expecting the police to be just inside the terminal. He was caught. He felt useless and wasted. It was so stupid, going to miss all those years in jail over some stupid weed. He had his own business so money wasn't his objective, he just had to be cool and bring it in himself. Now, all that was finished. He thought about his little kids crying in the courtroom and asking Mommy why they couldn't sit with Daddy. He was miserable and when there were no police in the terminal, he was worried that they were going to do something horrible to him in baggage. He went to the restroom. He was washing his face, trying to clear his mind when he realized that by being late, he would only increase his risk because there would be less people around. So, he went down to the lower level and took the escalator out to the baggage area.

As he approached the carousels, he saw his flight number on the screen. He realized he had to stand there and wait. A few minutes went by while he realized finally what was going to happen. They would wait for him to claim his luggage and then bring out the dogs. They would jump on him and officers would open his luggage revealing the marijuana bricks inside. He would be dragged out the door at gunpoint with handcuffs on his hands. Suddenly he saw his bag come out and down the belt. He reached for it and turned around. He could see two armed policemen headed straight for him. He damn near passed out. He stopped and looked down, his life flashing before his eyes. He felt helpless and sick. The policemen walked up to him. One of them took out his handcuffs and, and - stepped around him. He heard something, it didn't sound like they were talking to him. He turned and over his shoulder he could see them arresting someone else. They shook the guy down, opened his luggage, did everything he had seen in his vision but it wasn't being done to him.

Now, he was almost sick with relief. He just couldn't believe his luck. He told me it was like the biggest grace of God thing to be standing there, headed home with his dope. With his dope? When he realize all the horrible loss of personal control, the years going to the toilet in an open cell, deprived of normal contact with his wife and children, and on and on his imagination combined with the slow realization that it could still all happen to him. All he had to do was keep doing what he was doing and it almost surely would happen, sometime. He said all that stuff you were supposed to get in jail, over a period of years of incarceration... all that he got on the flight from LA. Five years in five hours.



I told him about the clean life, recovery, the company of others and he said he didn't need it. That he was out of dealing and away from using. Somehow his story helps me and makes me realize how fortunate I am to be clean - and free!

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## LUSTSEXLUSTSEXLUSTSEXLUSTSEXLUSTSEXLUSTSEXLUSTSEXLUSTSEX

*or*

### **"One is Still Too Many and Substitutions Will Never Be Enough"**

No, you are NOT seeing things! This IS an article about lust/sex in N.A. today. I know what you must be thinking, I haven't seen another article or heard anyone share about this topic in all the years that I have been here either so I figured that it was about time that someone took the chance to talk about what really goes on.

The reason that this is such a taboo subject is that the majority of our members continue to live in deep denial of this most powerful character defect; lust, and that sex is by far the number one substitute used in our fellowship today instead of drugs. Let's face it, at a real superficial level sex is a great fix. The sad part about it is that this problem can only get worse as our members become younger and younger.

Sex for the sake of physical pleasure is such an integral part of our lifestyles as drug addicts that our disease of addiction uses this lust very effectively in thwarting us in our efforts to find recovery. It is not unusual to find a member with substantial clean time and well respected in our N.A. community who nevertheless continues to use and abuse brother or sister members, regardless of their cleantime. They can then be heard justifying their actions at the altar of a sexual drive so powerful that it will not be denied. By the way, those of you who may think that sex and lust are two different things think again.

We are so afraid of it in fact that instead of just humbly asking God to remove it as we would any other "regular" shortcoming by working our sixth and seventh step, we would rather co-sign each others bullshit and tell ourselves that we just can't help it. We ever kind of glorify this copout by solemnly "suggesting" to our members that they should "try" to stay out of "relationships" for at least the first year (like a year was some kind of a magic period of time or something !). The fact is that since we really don't know how to do relationships in the first place, what we are really suggesting is that they stay away from the opposite sex (this is one of those "do what I say not what I do" kind of deals). I guess than that if we were to follow that same kind of sexual logic for our gay/lesbian members they would have to stay away from everyone of the same sex and our bi-sexual members must stay away from everyone altogether and thus recover in total isolation  
What fun!

Fueled by that same fear of lust, and in order to continue to justify our reservations, we then also tell ourselves "men with the men", and "women with the women". On the one

hand we pay lip service to the principles of Anonymity and Unity and read before every meeting the part about "regardless of sexual identity" and then, in reality what happens is that we tell each other that only men can sponsor men and women sponsor women and anyone who dares to challenge this restrictive suggestion is attacked and accused of having ulterior motives. We automatically cut ourselves off from half of the fellowship, from half of the experience, strength and hope, from half of the therapeutic value of one addict helping another! And our disease of addiction is laughing all the way to the bank because it has used our defects to keep us divided.

If we are indeed honestly and sincerely trying to change our lives and start living by the spiritual principles of the program we must not reject our brothers and sisters because of their sex or sexual preference. Personal recovery depends upon N.A. Unity NOT on division and isolation according to the sex of the member. We are all one, we are WE, we must practice principles before personalities in all our affairs. I will even go as far as to say that any meetings that cater exclusively to men, women or g/l/b's are not really N.A. meetings and should not be included in our meeting schedules because, by their very nature they are exclusive instead of inclusive and therefore corrosive to the very foundation of all our spiritual principles, Anonymity. Anonymity is who we are. We are Narcotics Anonymous.

Our lust for sex is equal to our obsession for drugs They are two components of the using lifestyle which we must change if we are to recover and carry the message. We can not honestly say we are trying to change and live by spiritual principles, yet continue to treat our brothers and sisters in the rooms like mere pieces of meat who are here just for our sexual pleasure. The price to pay for this continuing behavior is horrendous. Many addicts leave our rooms and die. If you are interfering in someone's recovery with your own personal agenda you had better think again and keep your genitalia to yourself lest you find yourself in the grips of karma and paying a horrible price for your selfish actions maybe even death.

We all come here destroyed by our disease and in dire need of compassion and healing. We must be able to nurture each other and we need ALL of our brothers and sisters to participate. Under no circumstances are we to continue using and abusing each other because all we have left is jails, institutions, and death unless we find this new way to live in which we are ALL equals at ALL times, not just when it seems convenient.

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## **POSITIVE UNCERTAINTY**

While conflict, burdens and the routine demands of daily living have their place in keeping us active and healthy, so much of the human race has lived in adversity that living in peace may seem uneventful to many in early recovery. Many of the things we

failed to achieve were the result of our being interrupted in some necessary progress towards our goal rather than a true disability. We will find many things are possible in recovery simply because we are able to complete the things we set out to do!

Recalling the wonder and excitement felt as children over the early learning experiences may help us adapt to a non-threatening environment. We may come to believe that learning basic skills is a process that can proceed throughout lives. Loving and learning may be the only real things we do in our existence. The acquisition of things, the sense of power over others and obsession with gratification of the senses may not be real in the spiritual sense because they come and go. Many seem to find that spirituality is beyond time. The person who is able to walk among the temptations of life without getting caught up in things is more than lucky; such people enjoy life in a way that is of a different quality. They seem to have more time than other people and stay in touch with the basic importance of people and their need for internal direction.

Addiction filled many of us with predictable hopelessness and despair: recovery can fill us with a positive sense that something good is headed our way. We may not be sure just what form it will take, but it gets better - and realer. Positive uncertainty may be hope.

NEW ATTITUDES  
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