

Where Did New Attitudes Go?

Dear Subscribers,

As you probably figured out by now (nothing gets by you does it?), you haven't seen a New Attitudes in a while. The reason for that is twofold. One, there wasn't enough articles sent in till now to fill a newsletter, and two, the editor has been through some deep personal pain and growth that now, has made him even more grateful for N.A. and all of you. The good news is that we are back on track, and all of your subscriptions have been moved forward to make up for the lost issue - you will still receive the same number of newsletters that you would have before. We apologize for the delay and we will make it right to you all.

-New Attitudes



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"WHERE DID OUR LOVE GO?"

Do you remember that great song by the Supremes a few years ago that went; "Baby, baby, where did our love go?" Well, that is exactly what I have been asking myself lately with regards to the incredibly sad events that are threatening to destroy the NAWOL literature project.

For the longest of time I had been blissfully writing away in the company of people I really love. I felt that we were united, we were one, we were putting principles before personalities at all times. We were all selflessly putting down on paper our experiences, strength, and hope. All the new tools for fulfilling our lives and finding God that we had learned in our journey of recovery since the Basic Text came out were finally going to be written down so that all addicts could benefit.

For years and years we wrote and served together in Unity and Anonymity. Since the established service structure no longer believed in the literature process that had given us our beloved Basic Text we had patiently and lovingly formed a grassroots literature movement so that we could again have literature written "by addicts for addicts". From the early gatherings at the "Pink House" in Miramar, Florida to the later literature conferences at the Isle of Capri, Jonesboro, Ga., etc., hundreds of us worked together with love. Then, all of the sudden, without me even having a clue that there was anything wrong, I look around and we are totally torn apart. I am flabbergasted to find myself right in the middle of a pitched battle between recovering addicts who have, up to that point,

loved and supported each other for many, many years. What happened, What did we do wrong, Where did the love go?

Now please keep in mind that most of us are not newcomers, most of us all have considerable clean time and have been selflessly serving N.A. for many years, and yet here we are vehemently accusing each other of treason, of cheating and lying, of manipulation and greed, of hiding self-serving ulterior motives all along. How does something like this happen? Can we ever trust each other again? Where is the Love that must reign supreme if we are to continue to write as one?

What a predicament, for me personally this is a real disaster, I am terrified, only my faith in God gives me any peace of mind these days. These are my mentors, my leaders, my teachers. These are the few people I have ever loved and respected, my spiritual guides. What do I do now? How do I continue to grow in my recovery? Who will guide me? I have spent my years in recovery diligently looking for the winners. Having found them, I naively thought that somehow they were immune from the ravages of addiction.

It is certainly a terrifying thought to me that addiction can, just like that, with a simple twitch of its tail put a stop to the NAWOL project. Now both sides want to own the rights to the book (CONTROL!) One side had filed copyright on NAWOL in the name of an individual addict, supposedly to protect us from the other side giving the book over to WSO. The other side now accuses that addict and his cohorts of trying to steal NAWOL probably to sell it and make a fortune with it, like the WSO has done and continues to do with our Basic Text. Both sides want to continue to write in order to finish the book but they also insist in excluding the "enemy". What insanity! Will the real NAWOL please stand up!

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 \$0.52 (includes postage) each so 1 yr, subscription would be \$3.12 (.72x6) Please send articles and newsletter money to:

**New Attitudes
P O Box 447
Vestaburg MI 48891**

please make checks payable to:

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[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 ½ x 11), ink cartridges for Lexmark WinWriter 150C.

THE BEAT GOES ON

Ever have something happen in your recovery that you never thought would happen? Oh, there are many things that will shock us and excite us, and some that will devastate us. I am speaking of the unbelievable ways that the disease can effect us and produce results that we never thought would happen. Well this is one of those stories.

Someone in my life and the lives of others has acted so out of character that it's taken months of discussion and soul searching to get past. The attempts have been made to seek resolution with this person and all we seem to reach in our variety of approaches is a blank wall. Worse, this person has gone on to lie about and slander a number of us to others.

He hasn't had to use to act this weird. Ego and being on the stage in NA is what took him away once again. I had tried for the last year to find a way to deal with this tendency in his life. Talked with his sponsor and many friends whom had know him for years. They all simply wished me good luck. So when the final activity took place I was somewhat prepared but not as much as I thought I was. Pain is still that...Painful

Well we have used the standards to cause the least amount of disruption to the activities that this has effected. Group conscience has spoken out about these behaviors and we go on. This somehow does not seem to be enough when these things happen. If there are ways to find a simple solution to these occurrences we have not talked about them much in the program.

Holding out a helping hand can and has resulted in it simply being slapped. Keeping the love in our hearts that we want others to have for us can get tiring and seem worthless. These are the things we must hold on to for the principles are there to work for us in Gods time. Sometimes that seems so very hard to wait on. It seems easy to forget the power of the disease and how easy it is to forget who we are. Un-dealt with defects arise and catch us in so many ways.

The greatest thing is the power of love and openness that occurs in NA. The people involved showed great strength and purpose in rallying and staying on track through this disruption. As much as many wanted to simply walk away, few have. The bonding of the Group is stronger. The dedication is stronger and the beat goes on.

Conversion Tales

Here's the story of how I stopped being an NA Nazi, and became a human being of sorts. It happened in one day, and I swear it's true.

I was sitting in a meeting, and this girl comes in with about a week clean. She starts sharing about going to the doctor's office, and looking for rigs as she's waiting for the Dr. to come in. Then she shares about how she'd like to do a water shot (inject water without dope), because she just craves the rush. She was obviously having a hard time. So what did people do after that? They slammed her. They shared how she was breaking the traditions, and wasn't speaking properly in a mtg.

Now, for years before this, I slammed newcomers in mtgs, and was a big tradition thumper-I was an asshole about it too. Suddenly, I realized how mean we are to newcomers, and how stupid we get-how much we expect from people who don't know any better. And if they aren't really, really, compliant, we beat them down-or try to.

So, in a calm voice, I ripped the meeting a new asshole. Since then, I haven't ripped on newcomers, and said a lot of stupid crap I used to say, like, "Work the steps or die Motherfucker!". I mean, I don't like being called a Motherfucker, and I didn't know shit-all when I got clean, so why treat others like they do?

I look back on how I was treated as a newcomer, and wonder how many people didn't stay clean that were treated the same way. Yeah, yeah, it worked for me, but how many more might have stayed if they were shown a little respect, or god forbid, spoken to nicely.

So, I'm not perfect at this, but I try to treat newcomers better than everyone else around me, figuring they might want to be treated like a human being, instead of some dumbfuck junkie to be abused and controlled-which is what I see a lot of from the gurus around here.

That's my story.

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.

GILS?

There has been some local controversy regarding the correct pronunciation of GILS. Some pronounce it "getlost" while others seem to prefer "gutless". There are also a few holdouts for "gotlaws". (This would also create a cool possible subtitle for a hypothetical future history of NA.) "From NO MUSTS to GOTLAWS, One Fellowship's Experience in Organization, Government and Promotion"

WHAT IS THE 'REAL' PROBLEM?

There seems to be a lot of confusion going on about the latest "great controversy" in our beloved South Florida Region. Everyone seems to be focusing on a different part of the problem. But, in my humble opinion most of us are missing the point in identifying what the real problem underneath this whole thing is. Unfortunately we sometimes forget that our disease of addiction is so insidious that it's often really hard for us to pinpoint exactly where it is that we are being attacked by our disease.

It may shock you to hear that this whole fiasco is not just about the SFRCA 6 program committee picking a speaker who does not fit the guidelines as an N.A. speaker because they attend other 12 Step Fellowships. Actually, they originally picked 2 speakers (out of 4), not just one, who cannot share a PURE N.A. message because they directly endorse outside enterprises by the mere fact of attending other fellowships. Fortunately, one of the speakers had some Traditions understanding and graciously backed out when approached. He was then properly replaced with an N.A. member. The other one, however, selfishly and stubbornly refuses to step down, insisting in spreading disunity, separation and confusion, even though it is the group conscience of the whole Region that someone else speak. I guess one can only give what one has after all. Some N.A. message!

It is a really sad reality in our region today that a lot of members are totally or at least partially ignorant of our 12 Traditions and their absolute necessity for our survival. They feel that even if you attend other 12 Step Fellowships, as long as you talk about N.A. that makes it an N.A. message. In other words, what these members are saying is that, it really does not matter what you do as long as you can sound good, or, it is not O.K. In N.A. to forget about 'walking the walk' as long as you are good at just 'talking the talk'. Well, you may not want to hear this, but I was taught that the message that we carry is not simply a verbal one. "This is an ACTION program". In order for us to practice Self-Honesty the message that we carry must be exemplified by what we do and how we live; who we are, not just what we say! We addicts are not only the best liars and promoters in the whole world, but we also have a progressive disease, 'with or without drugs'.

Our Basic Text tells us that... "we get this program by example, not by direction...". We are about "attraction rather than promotions". We 'live' spiritual principles not just 'talk' about them! Our Sixth Tradition tells us that we should "NEVER endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise" at the risk of being diverted from our primary purpose.

Then, in the essay to this Tradition it goes on to explain that; "This Tradition is the basis for our policy of non-affiliation and is extremely important to the continuation and growth of Narcotics Anonymous." It is real clear that attending another fellowship

implies a direct endorsement. It also goes on to say that "An outside enterprise is any agency, business venture, religion, society, organization, related activity, or ANY OTHER FELLOWSHIP. Most of these are easy to identify except for the "OTHER FELLOWSHIPS". N.A. is a SEPARATE and DISTINCT fellowship in its own right."

These are the reasons why we can ONLY have DEDICATED N.A.> members who do not attend other fellowships speaking at our conventions. This is why the guidelines were written they way they were. Which brings us finally to the real problem, the real 'nitty gritty' shall we say.

Showing great courage and determination (knowing well the insanity that could possibly follow) and a proper understanding of the principles of our 12 Traditions, our Regional and Convention Guidelines and Roberts Rules of Order, the ASR/RCM's brought to the floor of our last Regional Committee Meeting and passed a motion (6-0-1) for the BOD to pick a new speaker for the Saturday night meeting.

At the following SFRCNA Board of Directors meeting the president of the BOD tried, in vain, during new business, to get from the BOD some ideas as to which procedure could best be used in order to pick a new speaker in order to comply, as quickly as possible with the group conscience of the Region. However, it soon became crystal clear that a controlling majority of the BOD (5 out of 8 members present, the president having no vote) had no intention whatsoever of complying with the group conscience of the Region. Sure enough, right away a motion was made to pick as a speaker the same member whom the Region had previously rejected and had instructed the BOD to replace.

The BOD President immediately called this motion out of order but his decision was challenged and the vote was 5-3-0 in the favor of the challenge. This brought the original motion back on the floor and it was then voted in 5-3-0.

And here is where the REAL problem lies. Our Basic Text tells us and we read it at every meeting because of its utmost importance that "There is only thing more than anything else that will defeat us in our recovery; this is an attitude of indifference or intolerance toward spiritual principles."

Anyone could mistakenly think that these BOD members are just ignorant of Traditions and the spiritual importance of Group Conscience, Unity, and Anonymity. But, these BOD members all have long service experience, they are not ignorant, they are caught up in self-centeredness, ego-centricity, and manipulation. They know best and they have decided to teach the rest of us a good lesson!

Ignorance of Traditions is understandable. Those members that think that AA and NA are the same thing because they were told so by their treatment center counselors or their AA sponsors, etc., there is hope for them because they may come to understand the reality of the Traditions as they continue to come around. But, those of us who KNOW the truth and yet continue to ignore it caught up in the indifference and intolerance which are the byproducts of ego and arrogance, that is another matter altogether.

As of the writing of this piece the BOD was still refusing to follow the Regional Group Conscience, SFRONA 6 will take place less than 10 days from today. The Regional Admin Committee was polling itself to see what they could do and the ASR/RCM's are doing nothing. Look into your heart, what would you do?



Why Do I Do service?

A story first...

The man came home from work late again, tired and irritated, to find his 5 year old son waiting for him at the door. "Daddy, may I ask you a question?" "Yeah, sure, what is it?" replied the man. "Daddy, how much money do you make an hour?" "That's none of your business! What makes you ask such a thing?" the man asked angrily. "I just want to know. Please tell me, how much do you make an hour?" pleaded the little boy. "If you must know, I make \$20.00 an hour." "Oh," the little boy replied, head bowed.

Looking up, he said, "Daddy, may I borrow \$10.00 please?" The father was furious. "If the only reason you wanted to know how much money I make is just so you can borrow some to buy a silly toy or some other nonsense, then you march yourself straight to your room and go to bed. Think about why you're being so selfish. I work long, hard hours everyday and don't have time for such childish games."

The little boy quietly went to his room and shut the door. The man sat down and started to get even madder about the little boy's questioning.

How dare him ask such questions only to get some money?

After an hour or so, the man had calmed down, and started to think he may have been a little hard on his son. Maybe there was something he really needed to buy with that \$10.00, and he really didn't ask for money very often. The man went to the door of the little boy's room and opened the door.

"Are you asleep son?" he asked. "No Daddy, I'm awake," replied the boy.

"I've been thinking, maybe I was too hard on you earlier," said the man. "It's been a long day and I took my aggravation out on you. Here's that \$10.00 you asked for."

The little boy sat straight up, beaming. "Oh, thank you Daddy!" he yelled. Then, reaching under his pillow, he pulled out some more crumpled up bills. The man, seeing that the boy already had money, started to get angry again. The little boy slowly counted out his money, then looked up at the man. "Why did you want more money if you already had

some?" the father grumbled. "Because I didn't have enough, but now I do," the little boy replied.

"Daddy, I have \$20.00 now. Can I buy an hour of your time?"

How many of us grew up with (a) parent(s) who did not have the time to throw a ball? Pitch a tent? Sit down and read a book with you? The list is endless...

I grew up feeling less than before even having walked out of the door. Never was a kid... had to grow up and "do things for myself because no one else would do it for me." A child's innocence smashed because "no one cared." My parents were out busy earning the proverbial dollar and "no sense" in order to provide for the family - to survive in a world where such things, "power, property, and prestige," are more important. It is more important to die with the most toys...

I vowed that when I became a dad I would not be like my father! A bold affirmation expressing the pain I had, and continued to experience at the point of the decision. I did not want another person to feel and experience what I felt and lived. My son would have it better! A covenant based on passion is not easily tossed aside by mere inconveniences of life. Yes there are many chores to eek out, and there are many grains of rice we ants scurry about to gather, but our children need attention too; and our cries of, "I have a life" should never stand between us and the things that matter most.

I'd rather pay a bill late than not put my son to bed without reading a book, or praying, or wishing good wishes, with him... yes I would. I'd rather be late for work, than see my child rushed off to the sitter's or his mother's home minus a hug from one of the more important people in his life: his dad!

Such is the nature of my obligation... my commitment to him and to myself to do the right things for the right reasons. It takes a strong sense of self, prayer, and a slew of other positive re-enforcers, to stay on a vigilant path - making sure, that priorities are set in their proper order: "All of the ducks are lined up in a row."

Why do we do service? It is a direct result of an awakening - where we find out that the universe does not revolve around our own personal jewels. There is more to us; there is more to our lives; there is more to the outside world.

Our old self-centered ego is crushed against the rocks by a tide of spiritual principles and a new one takes form as we work the steps and learn how to change. Finding a new hope for ourselves we are consistently placed in a position of giving it away - we do so unselfishly and for no personal gain other than a self-satisfying belief that in giving we do get back: and not necessarily is that gratification physical in nature. We may think that we have the power to cut our path through the terrain, but usually, our obligations are fabricated by others and other things, our sense of gratitude overfills our cup and we gain this undying sense to carry what has been "given" so that others may partake as well.

We need articles!!

New Attitudes consists of articles sent in by you, the readers.

We are always in need of more of your experience, strength, and hope.

Please consider sending yours. We all have something to offer.

In essence my commitment to NA was formed well before I even attended one of its meetings. My obligation lies in wait each and every moment I breathe for it not only is the reason why I found a new life, but it is also the reason someone else may too.

Something to think about next time you feel an urge to spew:

"I only go to one meeting, or I have already done my bit, service wise, and I have a life today." Get busy before a loved one, who loves you to pieces, forks out the bread for a smidgeon of your precious time... hopefully reminding you that your life is more than just "you."

Excerpts from the N.A. Way of Life

(this excerpt is from the developing book the NA Way of Life - Chapter One - Learning to Live)

In the past, making compromises may have been difficult. Recovery teaches us that we can disagree with others without being disagreeable. Most of us have witnessed two or more addicts arguing passionately over different sides of an issue. The conversation may have become heated, and the atmosphere of recovery may have seemed in jeopardy. Then suddenly the right answer became apparent to everyone. We can have a feeling of accomplishment when we work through our differences by listening, rather than bullying each other. Only minutes later, those addicts who were once arguing so forcefully are hugging, sitting together and planning what to do next. As long as we show love and respect for one another, we can always find an answer that will work. How different this is from our old ways of doing things when all we knew was to fight with, or flee from those who might disagree with us! We have learned to stand our ground for the principles in which we believe while allowing others their right to do the same.

We have learned how to appreciate and enjoy life. Many of us look forward to trying new things. Whether it is something simple or complex, we learn that getting together with other addicts, outside of the group meetings, can be a very enjoyable experience. We give ourselves permission to have fun in healthy ways, both inside and outside the fellowship. We know that laughter is both spiritual and healing. The more we learn to laugh and enjoy ourselves, the better we feel. While we take our recovery very seriously, we try not to take ourselves too seriously.

We have quite a story to share. In our active addiction we lived secret lives. We did not want other people to know what we had become. As a result, we began to believe our own lies to the point of blocking out the truth, even after we got clean. One of the

miracles we experience in Narcotics Anonymous is to help each other get a grip on reality. Recovering addicts understand the courage it takes to walk back from our own destruction one step at a time.

We have every right to aspire to all the good things of life. Perhaps for the first time in many years, we are able to express love and kindness to people when we first meet them rather than waiting to see if they deserve our friendship. As we gain self-acceptance, we have no reason to hide behind walls of paranoia and fear. First we learn how to like ourselves and then to love ourselves. We express our gratitude in service to others by the things we do. Today we have an intuitive feeling that we are being cared for and that we are no longer alone.

As one addict shared:

"I learn how to live from watching how other addicts live their lives. The steps teach me to look at myself and how to achieve my dreams. The birth of my dream often comes from seeing someone else exhibiting the qualities I want. I ask questions and observe what they do to keep these spiritual gifts so prevalent in their lives. The answers have never been hard to discover: people who feel the most love are the most loving; those who seem the most humble usually are the most grateful; those who are peaceful pray and meditate, and those who are generous gain from their giving.

I am learning to live by taking what I experience working the steps and putting it into practice wherever I go. If I want more love, I make a conscious effort to express love. If I want more inner peace, I pray to be peaceful and serene. If I want more gratitude, I try to help someone else and be thankful that I can. It seems that doing the "little things" that people told me to do when I first got clean are just as important today as they were then."

In our meetings, we learn that the most precious gift we can give is our loving attention. We listen actively, trying to establish empathy with other NA members. We apply what we've learned at meetings by giving this same level of attention to our families, friends and co-workers.

The concept of "our common welfare should come first" extends to our families, neighborhoods and communities. We surrender our egos into a larger group conscience, by trusting that a loving God will speak through us all.

Life gets better as we practice unconditional acceptance with others. We simply give our love unconditionally. We experience freedom as we learn to make our own decisions, trying to hurt no one in the process.

Today we have a purpose for living. We don't allow money, power, property or prestige to divert us from that purpose. We are self-supporting, contributing our fair share in all areas of life. We carry our own weight to avoid being a burden on others and society. We also gladly give our time, talents and resources to benefit others wherever and whenever we can.

As we learn to live we discover that we are not alone; we are not separated from one another. We are connected through a Power greater than ourselves. As we begin to believe that things can get better, hope grows into faith. We realize that if we continue on this path, we will be cared for. Faith gives us the courage to examine who we are, what we have done and who we would like to become. We trust enough to share what we find with someone else. With the new perspective gained by sharing our regrets, resentments, wrongs, assets, hopes and dreams; we become willing to change. Knowledge of who we are, and the vision of who we can be, gives us the humility to ask for that change. We begin to take responsibility for our past and for repairing our relationships. After we forgive ourselves and anyone who may have harmed us, we seek the forgiveness of others. Pursuing consistency in our lives, we monitor our behavior. As we pray and meditate regularly, we discover God's will for us and the power to carry it out. Our self worth grows when we give service in all areas of our lives. We find that the more love we give, the more love we have.

We recognize our diversity but we do not allow our differences to divide us. We have learned to mind our own business, to pursue our purpose, unswayed by outside issues. Recovery is so attractive we have no need for self promotion. Principles come to our aid and disarm any personality conflicts. We see others as equals, like part of our extended family. Changed, renewed, revitalized, we continue to let go of fear and live in love. Learning, ever learning, we bring this vision to life.

NEW ATTITUDES

P O BOX 447

VESTABURG MI 48891