

My Gratitude Speaks
When I Care
And When I Share
With Others
The N.A. Way.

THE
N.A.
WAY



N.A.

N.A. is a non-profit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovered addicts who meet regularly to help each other to stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only "One" requirement for membership, the honest desire to stop using. There are no musts in N.A., but we suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. Our program is a set of principles, written so simply, that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that "They Work".



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*Please mail all articles, subscriptions,
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**The N.A. Way
P.O. Box 110
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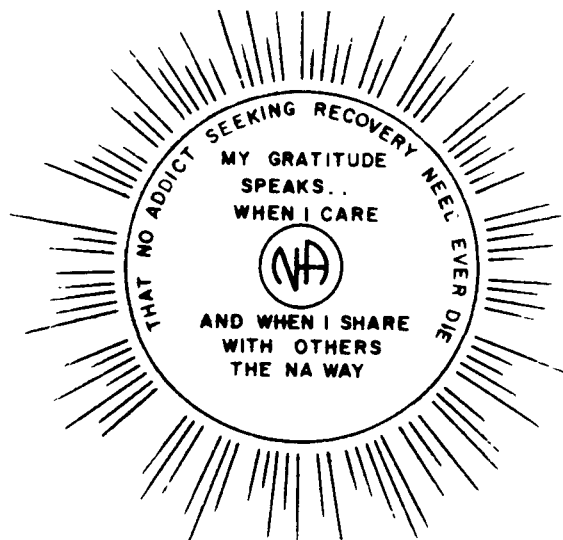
Light Shows...

I was just about to go to bed. Winding down at the end of the day is a habitual process for me. The trade journal I was reading seemed just like so many before it and my mind was wandering. I was bored. Today I had been semi-responsible, but typically my mind was dwelling on the negative. I was taking myself too seriously again. Self-obsessed, on the edge of self-pity I knew that sleep wouldn't come easy.

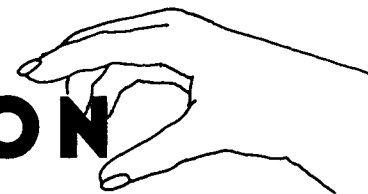
An R.V. clattered up my drive and rattled to a halt just west of the house. My sister and brother in law were working late again and would be even later if I didn't help them. The black dog of my diseased mind told me to shut off the lights, crawl into bed and ignore them. My responsible side, my recovery mind told me to dress, go out and offer my help. Resentment awoke and anger rose up in me. Didn't they know that I was about to go to bed? How could they be so inconsiderate? I yawned and began pulling on my pants. After all I thought, I love them and they've been so supportive in my early recovery. What's an hour or so less sleep? Amazed at the ease and simplicity of new behavior I trudged into the overcast darkness. There had been a full moon earlier. Why wasn't it out now, making my way easier? Was this God-thing making new ways difficult to test my resolve? Paranoia is a familiar old friend. I thrust myself into helping. Physical work feels good to me and in the midst of a task requiring some effort, I thought, "this is just what I needed to sleep well tonight".

They were very grateful for my help, especially my sister who had strained her back yes-

terday. I felt good about me. Not all that long ago I couldn't have acted on recovery. My disease yells at me, threatens, cajoles, even conns me into acting out my old familiar ways. The faith to act can only come from acting on faith. I must make the first move. The rewards are often invisible unless I relax to see the obvious. Tonight I felt good about me. That was enough. I knew that I was part of the solution, and grateful for the relief, but my God had more in store for me. The job was finished and I was walking back toward the house when I noticed that I no longer had to stumble my way in the darkness. The full moon had come out and I looked up. The sky was filled with its soft silver fluorescence, and this moon was encircled by the most spectacular halo I've ever seen. A halo around the moon. I called my sister and brother in law to see it. We called it a good omen. It made me feel beautiful. I knew it was just for me, a light show from my Higher Power to reinforce my willingness to change. Clean, I can see and feel again. Recovery means change and as I change, I am changed. I don't take the miracle of my freedom and my life for granted. I am awed by the power of my God and humbly grateful.



The Hands of ADDICTION



Understanding the disease is important, I'm sure. I've read several articles in different N.A. oriented newsletters and our magazine on this subject lately. I'm very glad to see this happen for a lot of our members are somewhat misguided on exactly what "our addiction" is in Narcotics Anonymous.

When I first found N.A. I was one of those who always wanted to know why. My sponsor told me not to think and just accept. This attitude helped me, as it kept me from a lot of confusion in those first few days. In our book, Narcotics Anonymous, the very first words are: "Simplicity is the keynote".

The simplicity of not figuring everything out was really important for me at first. My program at first was a program of complete abstinence from all drugs, very simply, I just didn't use anything. After some days of clean-time allowed the "drug-fog" in my head to dissipate; my program also became a program of recovery from addiction.

The simplest definition of our disease is found in our book... "...Addiction is obsession and compulsion..." These are the hands of addiction. The hand of obsession-- it pushed me into the horrors of active addiction. The hand of compulsion-- it had me by the throat and kept me in that horrible way of existence for a long time.

Not until I found N.A. was I able to shake free from the grasp of these hands. And even today when I allow my recovery to take a "back seat" in my life, these hands rise up in a lot of situations; subtly, quietly grasping me. To allow them control spells relapse. So I work my program Just for Today, and go forward with recovery.

SERVICE: What It Means to Me.

I became involved in service work the first day that I came to an N.A. meeting. The handful of people that I associated with at that time were very much involved in service; therefore I followed suit. When they went to a service meeting I tagged along, simply because I wanted to be exposed to as much N.A. as possible. At first it was confusing, but, I continued to go and I learned quickly to ask questions. I asked for, sent away for, and conned people out of anything in writing that had to do with N.A., and N.A. service, i.e., a service manual, an approval copy of the text, stories, unapproved literature, WSC minutes, P.I. and H.& I. handbooks, anything and everything. I learned quickly and became involved just as quickly. At sixty days clean I held two trusted servant positions which became very important to me. There came a point in my life soon after reaching the sixty day mark, that I started to feel. I didn't think that I would ever be able to live with those feelings and I wanted to run. Getting high became a very real way out. I sat in the middle of my living room floor one night with a bottle of barbituates in one hand and my key tags in the other hand, thinking about what I was about to do. I thought about my involvement in service, those two trusted servant positions. It was the first time in my life that I had a feeling of worth. People had placed their trust in me and the gratitude I felt is something I cannot express in words. I threw the pills away.

I credit my involvement in service with playing a major role in my recovery that spe-

cific night and today. I have tried several times during my clean time to rationalize my way out of service, but I keep coming back. I know today that there is a reason for this and just recently I have accepted that reason. I need that involvement. Not for ego reasons, at least I don't believe so. It is a very real need for me. I need that feeling of worth. Today I am able to look at my assets and accept them and I honestly feel that I have something to give. Service work provides a medium for me just as a paint brush and canvas provide a medium for the artist.

I have a drive and desire to do what I can to help to assure that N.A. will be here in future years, for myself and for others. It's my dream. If I can do anything at all to contribute to making that dream come true, I am willing to do it.

Other people cared enough and were willing enough to assure that N.A. was here for me. I have that same willingness.

Someone said to me the other day that I should not be looking for that feeling of worth from outside sources. To that person I would like to respond:

I feel that finding a feeling of worth by being willing to extend my hand to another suffering addict is the best way for me. I am grateful for having been given the gift of life. The N.A. Program gave me that gift.

Thank you N.A. You're special!



A newcomer was reading "What is N.A" in a meeting one time. Everyone got a laugh when he misread this line... "Just that much sooner do we become responsible, acceptable and REproductive members of that society."

First Experience with SERENITY...

Last night I felt the greatest euphoria I have ever felt in my life.

Never before, either during my active addiction, or since coming to N.A. have I ever felt so calm, peaceful, full of love, trusting of another person, okay with me and secure all at once.

It wasn't a thought, it was a feeling. It felt like a blanket of the softest velvet and silk wrapped around me, and clean warmth flowing smoothly and steadily throughout my body. I was floating on the highest high I had ever been on and it was all natural.

This frightened me. I remembered that first chemical high and the euphoria I felt then. I searched for it over and over again but never recaptured that feeling, it was never the same. Would I lose this new feeling forever too?

At the time I didn't know that the feeling was serenity. I shared the experience with another recovering addict, and was reminded that my Higher Power was responsible for that feeling. I said a silent prayer and that feeling of peace I feared lost, suddenly returned. I freely shed tears of happiness and joy, unashamed.

It's real. Thank you N.A. for sharing your experience, strength and hope with me. Thank you H.P. for that taste of serenity.



If I had an answer to all of my problems, then I wouldn't need to question them, but if I had no questions, I wouldn't get any answers.

Inside Enterprises

Eyes burning with tears of rage, "Oh no, you're not going to fool me with your spiritual sayings! There's got to be a catch! Somebody's deriving personal profit from all this! I don't believe you love me!"

The trouble with the Sixth Tradition of Narcotics Anonymous as it is now applied within N.A. is that there seems to be a big lack of definition as to what constitutes an "inside enterprise". The Sixth Tradition reads: "An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose." Most of our members have no difficulty in understanding the part about related facility or outside enterprise. Everybody agrees that recovery of even one addict is more important than money, expensive thing, or personal glory. Very little is explained however about how the service boards or committees we form may function to carry out their objective in service, how we may employ special workers, or what constitutes an inside enterprise. The reason for this it seems, is that we have only a few recognized service boards and committees and almost no recognized special workers. We have had to struggle so hard that only today, in 1982, do such things exist on such a broad scale throughout the Fellowship that many of us are prompted to reach a new level of understanding about these things and how they might relate to the needs of those we serve.

Enterprises can be actions undertaken by individuals or groups to make money. They can involve the elements of greed, lust and

power. Certainly we are all susceptible to these things to some extent. Enterprises within the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous are undertaken to serve groups and members and share recovery. While they can appear to the uninformed eye to be "big deals" involving "huge sums of money" undertaken for reasons of "personal power, and prestige", with a possible "profit motive", the results usually speak well of the intent, dedication, and spirit of N.A. members trusted to serve. No matter how they appear to those not directly involved, all N.A. service efforts result in recovery for some sick addict. If not, they aren't N.A.

These inside enterprises, within N.A. give body and soul to the promise of new freedom. The chains of our addiction deny us many things. One of those things is the ability to trust others. Faith leads to trust providing the opportunity to meet together in groups and share our recovery. Recovery teaches us to be unafraid. We become able to admit our personal need for help. We find a personal contact with the God of our understanding, are freed from restraints within and without and allowed to go our way in peace.

The first example of an inside enterprise is the group itself. A group passes the basket for money to buy literature and coffee. We also pay rent and financially support N.A. services so that we can maintain our autonomy as a group and as a Program. If there are problems with money, property, or prestige which take precedence over the primary purpose of carrying our message, the group soon ceases to exist. Problems within the group are usually dealt with directly by the steering committee. Only an extreme violation of our Traditions would warrant alarm in neighboring groups, areas or regions. Group attendance and participation can remedy most all Tradition problems.

Extreme Sixth Tradition problems seldom occur and when they do they are only examples of how it doesn't work. Much could be made of ownership and possession of a large coffee urn.

"That's quite a basket--who gets the money?" "Where does all this literature come from?" If these questions were not easily answered, we might have a problem. Actually this inside enterprise, the group, managed by group officers or a steering committee composed of members in regular attendance is so commonplace that it is not thought of as an enterprise at all, just a meeting.

Area and regional committees collect money from groups and fundraisers, spend it through their sub-committees on local services and pass the balance on to the next level of service. Each sub-committee could be thought of as an enterprise. People coming together, money changing hands, and being spent in various ways, people occupying "prestigious" service positions... an uninformed eye could make much of this. The truth is, without these services the groups would flounder and die. Not all of them, but it takes service to have newcomers. Every addict clean today is the desired result of some form of service. All forms of service are equal when it comes to recovery for those who are dying. It doesn't matter how we get here. All that really matters is receiving what first attracted us to N.A. : relief from our addiction. The necessity of renting a meeting place, going to a printer or a hotel, shopping for food or music for a party or a convention, staffing a newsletter arranging for a hotline, and funding for a service need are all enterprises undertaken by members with one goal in mind: keeping you and me alive and helping us, and others find a life worth living.

The circle of life will be complete when I can
give back to you what I have received.

On those days when self pity tells me I have
nothing to offer, I look in the mirror and
receive a smile.



Powerlessness VS. Uselessness



Yes, I am powerless. Sometimes I am also useless, but not always. I am powerless over my addiction but by recovering daily in N.A., I may become useful. There's nothing I can do to change my past, but I am responsible for my recovery and I can become willing to be changed so as not to repeat those same old mistakes.

My parents seperated recently. I am powerless over that fact. There is nothing in this world I can do to change them, their feelings or decisions, but on the other hand I am in no way useless to them, nor do I choose to be. I've expressed my unconditional love for them individually and have decided to stay neutral, giving them equal support. Being powerless, I've chosen not to be useless, by doing what I can and surrendering the results to my Higher Power. My acceptance comes directly from working the N.A. Program, knowing my God can restore my sanity and believing that He will in His time, sharing myself with other recovering addicts, and allowing them to share themselves with me.

I've allowed myself to be hurt greatly in the past by the choice of others to be useless in a powerless situation. In times like this I've used the Program, my God, and empathy to the best of my ability and have grown in the process. Of course I've thought, and even said things like: "if only she would have said," or "if only she had done," "why didn't you," "why couldn't you have," "you should have," and even "it's because of you I...". Those thoughts and statements are a direct result of my diseased thinking which takes me back time and time again to my old ways. Are you listening?

Does this sound familiar? I own my feelings. I have allowed myself to get hurt and that's on me. I can't expect another human being to make me feel good about myself. Self-worth must come from within. I must learn to love myself before I can unconditionally love others. I know of clean addicts that have gone on for years in this Fellowship repeating sick old patterns and it seems as though they choose to be useless. I say this not intending to take anyone's inventory. It just seems to me that all that is needed to be usefull in a powerless situation is to become willing to change, and let a Higher Power in to do the work. Through pain and gratitude I speak.



An N.A. K.I.S.S. -- Keep It Simple and Smile!



FREEDOM

All this started when I was so young,

Didn't know what it was, I began to run.

It is hard to realize humility,

To face where I ran, to really see me.

Now for me it's time to grow.

To find out who I am, all I can know.

It's not easy to find the right words to say,

Only one thing's for certain, I am clean today.

So whatever happens, I want to be free,

Because my friend, I've just begun,

And now I know I don't have to run.

On Getting Involved with Service...



So often I have felt that my life had no purpose. I fell short of what I wanted my purpose to be. Confusion was a constant state. One one hand, I felt that my purpose could best be served through a profession and I sought to fulfill myself through my job. On the other hand, as a woman, I felt that marriage and a family should be my purpose in life and I sought the "right man" to complete my purpose. I felt lost and confused.

Today I know what my primary purpose in life is. N.A. has given me that purpose. I may be used as an instrument to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers.

I became involved in structural service several months ago, and as many of you who are involved can relate to --- I jumped in--- I didn't wade in. I spread myself thin, and volunteered for everything that I felt capable of.

The more I became involved in different areas within the service structure, the more I began to feel that something was wrong. I didn't feel that anything was lacking in my personal commitment to recovery. I did however feel a gnawing in my gut that my commitment to recovery and the priorities in my service work were being confused. I am grateful that I have loving friends in this Fellowship around me constantly who lovingly tell me when

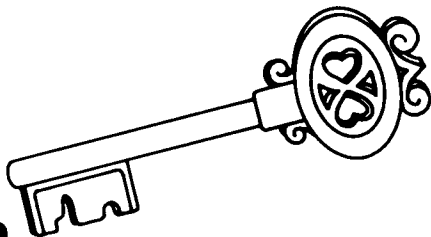
I'm screwing up.

Reading our book helped me find the key that would clear up the confusion in my mind. The collective experience in our book I felt sure would show me the answer. I found it. "We attend meetings and make ourselves visible and available to serve the Fellowship." "Working with others is only the beginning of service work. N.A. service allows us to spend much of our time directly helping the suffering addicts as well as insuring that N.A. itself survives." I looked at my involvement in service work. I evaluated other people's involvement in service. I concluded that I wasn't putting enough effort into working directly with others. Today I understand that sharing at meetings and one-on-one with a newcomer what I have been given through N.A. is the most important way I can help our Fellowship grow. This must be primary in my life, for it is the only way to keep my personal recovery. Helping to insure that N.A. itself survives through the implementation of our Traditions and the service structure is necessary and vital, but without providing my part of the atmosphere of recovery in the groups I attend, our service structure would have less to support. Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. One of the best ways to insure our Fellowship's survival is to share a pure message of recovery with the newcomer who then may share what they have found with the next newcomer through our doors.

No matter what area of service I involve myself in, I cannot, for my own peace of mind, and fuller recovery, afford to neglect my primary role.



SHARING: The Key to Freedom



When I came to this Program I was a total isolate. I had devoted years to building my "protective" walls and I had vowed to keep everyone out of my fortress. I watched those around me, people working our Program of recovery, sharing their feelings, and I wanted so much to be able to do that too, but my fear was crippling. I was truly imprisoned and I had been that way for so long that I had forgotten how to reach out. Fear had taken over and at that point it controlled my life. I wanted what I saw around me --- the freedom to be me and share my feelings with another person. The longer I stayed around the greater that desire became.

I started to share little bits of me with one other person and to my amazement, it was okay. The rejection that I expected did not materialize, so I shared a little bit more. These little bits started to add up and one night the first wall came down. Suddenly I began to trust, a feeling absolutely foreign to me. I shared my fears and dreams and the trust started to grow. Sharing with that one person gradually became easier.

Since that time it has been a learning process. From that one special person, I learned to reach out ---the key to my growth. I have taken that key and I have unlocked many doors and walked down many dark corridors, learning more about myself every step of the way. It has been quite painful at times, but I would not go back to that prison for anything in the world.

Today I can and do share. I slowly reached out to others, one at a time, and developed

a trusting attitude. With that trust came sharing. The circle of those I risk to share with has grown and continues to grow with each day clean. I have come to understand that the only thing that I have to give another is myself; and if I am not willing to share my feelings and my recovery I deprive both of us of the chance to grow.

Today I share my feelings and my recovery with anyone who is truly willing to listen. My feelings and my recovery are precious to me, and they are the greatest gifts that I can give. The icing on the cake is someone else trusting me enough to share their feelings and their recovery with me.

Someone once told me "you take out the first brick and I will help you tear down the walls". I hope this helps another suffering addict as it helped me.

Sharing is my lifeline today and it has set me free!

Letter from a Reader

Dear Folks,

We receive news late here on the tundra, but good news does make it.

Thoroughly excited with your magazine, looking forward to devouring the first issue received in the mail.

There is nothing as powerful as an idea (or magazine) whose time has come.

Thanks for your efforts

Dear Fellow Member,

We the members of the W.S.C. sub-committee formed "...to administer the publishing of a monthly magazine on recovery..." are in a difficult situation.

The September issue of the N.A. Way was edited by interested members who formed an "editorial committee for the N.A. Way". This committee is chaired by a member who was appointed to the W.S.C. sub-committee. The September issue was then produced, distributed, and accounted for by another member appointed to the W.S.C. sub-committee. Most of the distribution took place at WCNA-12.

The October issue was sent to the member who was responsible for production, distribution, and accounting in mid-September. This member is in sole possession of our subscription list, and all subscription and single copy monies received for the N.A. Way up until approximately October 1st.

By mid-October, the October issue had not been produced. The editor wrote to the member who was responsible for production, distribution, and accounting and received no response. After consulting with the chairman of the W.S.C. the editorial committee sent a telegram to the production/distribution member on October 27, stating that the editorial committee would produce/distribute the October issue if there was no response by October 30., and requested the subscription list and all monies or accounting.

There has been no response to date. The editorial committee has produced and distributed the October and November issues to those who have subscribed since mid-September and others who we think may have subscribed. We have accounted for all monies received at our P.O. Box since late September. New enthusiastic members have helped us produce and distribute November and December issues.

Our best estimate of total subscriptions is 165. We know for sure of only 50-60. We are holding enough issues to fill 165 subscriptions.

The only way we know of to resolve this situation responsibly is to ask those members who subscribed before Oct. 15th to send their name and address to P.O.Box 110, Lisbon, Ohio, 44432.

Please help us contribute to N.A. unity. Anyone who subscribed to the N.A.Way before October 15th, 1982 should send name and address to our magazine's P.O. Box.

Thank you for helping us be responsible to those we serve.

In frustrated,
but devoted service,

The Editorial Committee for:
W.S.C. sub-committee ...
"...to administer the publishing of a monthly magazine on recovery..."

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DECEMBER FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Starting Balance \$ 90.07

Assets

New subscriptions- - 12- - -\$144.00
Single copies- - - -230- - -\$345.00
Donation- - - - - - - - \$ 18.00

BALANCE \$507.00

Expenses

Printing Nov. issue - - - - \$131.40
Tapes (workshop)- - - - - \$ 27.00
Checks/accountants supplies- \$ 27.15
Phone- - - - - - - - \$ 55.19
Mailers- - - - - - - - \$ 17.90
Postage and freight- - - - \$108.73
Office supplies- - - - - \$ 13.31
Copying expenses - - - - - \$ 28.94

BALANCE \$391.72

FINAL BALANCE \$115.28

In loving service,