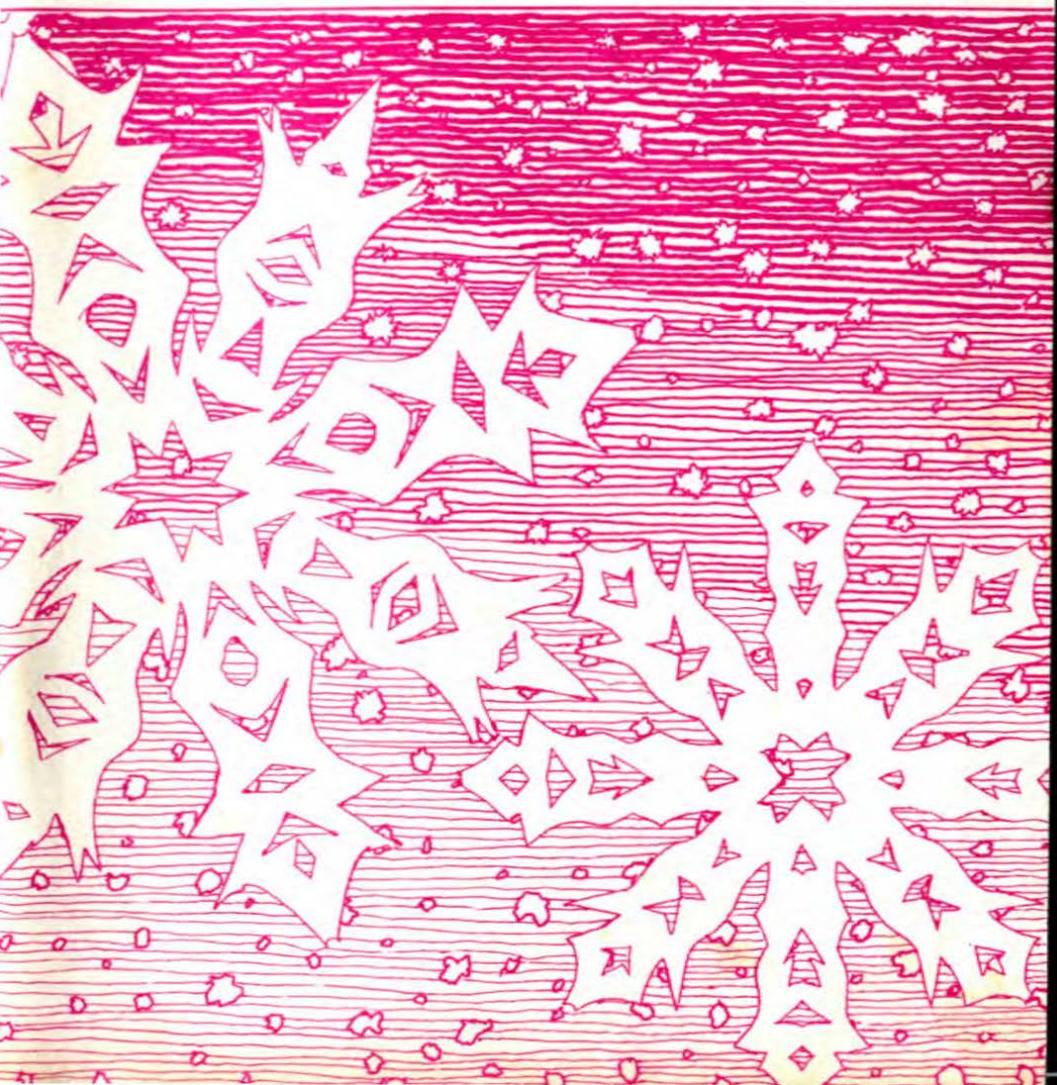


THE
NA
WAY

December
1987

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THE TWELVE STEPS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

1. *We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.*
2. *We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*
3. *We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*
4. *We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*
5. *We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*
6. *We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*
7. *We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.*
8. *We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*
9. *We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*
10. *We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*
We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
11. *Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

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THE INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP
OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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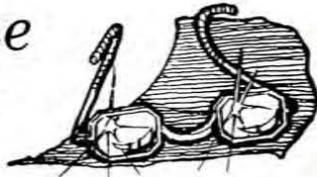
The *N.A. Way* presents the experiences and opinions of individual members of Narcotics Anonymous. The opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Narcotics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by Narcotics Anonymous, the *N.A. Way* magazine, or the World Service Office, Inc.

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From the Editor



You probably received this month's magazine later than usual. We apologize for that. We had a wrestling match with our typesetting equipment this month. I think we pinned it, though, so we should get the January issue in the mail at the normal time. However, be ready for a possible delay in the mail, since we'll be sending it during the holiday rush.

One related note is that we need to get our notices for "Comin' Up" as far in advance as possible. Sometimes we receive notice almost two months in advance of the event, but the magazine is already past deadline. We really need three months' notice. You can send us fliers or notes regarding any N.A. event at all, including one day events and service-related events. We want this section to be as complete an N.A. calendar as it can possibly be.

In last month's "From the Editor" we invited areas and regions to participate in the new "N.A. News" format. Since this is a new concept for us, our understanding of how to best use it to serve the Fellowship is still growing. We want to print feature articles regarding events or developments of interest from various areas and regions around the world.

For example, an area which has had a successful service-related event could write an article about it that would make those ideas and experiences available to other areas. The possibilities are unlimited—P.I. con-

ventions, H&I, phonedines, activities, finances, committee decorum—in short, creative approaches to any kinds of problems.

There are two ways you can get articles like this to us. One way would be to produce it yourselves and send it to us with a copyright release. We would prefer it if the news features we receive would go through some local screening by the appropriate service committee to ensure objectivity and accuracy. Perhaps a literature review committee, a newsletter committee or some other area or regional subcommittee could be given the job of developing the piece, and it could be turned over to the committee as a whole for a final review.

The second way we can develop these articles is for our staff to talk to your committee members by phone and do the actual writing ourselves. We would be more than happy to do it this way. We could talk to three or four different people to get a varied perspective, write the piece and send it back to the area or region for their final review. A final call with an appointed person on your end for any last minute changes, and we would be ready for publication.

We're excited about this possibility. If you plan to do anything like this, we would appreciate as much advance notice as possible so that we can plan for it, and perhaps work directly with you from the start. Write us, and include full information on the contact people we should work with.

Experience, Strength & Hope



This section of the magazine is an international monthly Narcotics Anonymous meeting in print. All members of N.A. are invited to participate. Share your "experience, strength and hope" on any topic related to your recovery from addiction through the N.A. program. Please include a signed copyright release form (inside the back cover), and send it to:

**The N.A. Way; World Service Office, Inc.
P.O. Box 9999 Van Nuys, CA 91409**

What is Narcotics Anonymous?

N.A. is a worldwide Fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other to stay clean. It doesn't matter which drugs you used, or what you have done in the past. We are concerned only with how we can help addicts recover.

It costs nothing to be a member of N.A.—there are no dues or fees. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. 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*.

For more information about the N.A. groups nearest you, write us at the address above.

I was raised in an addictive environment, so my drug use began when I was very young. At ten years old I had already experimented with drinking on weekends and smoking an occasional joint.

I've always been somewhat of a loner, so using drugs has been my way of fitting in and being cool. At twelve years old I began using drugs regularly. In my junior high school, I was known by classmates as the one who could get you any drug you wanted. I thought this was the life. I was cool, looked up to and feared by those who were not as experienced as I was.

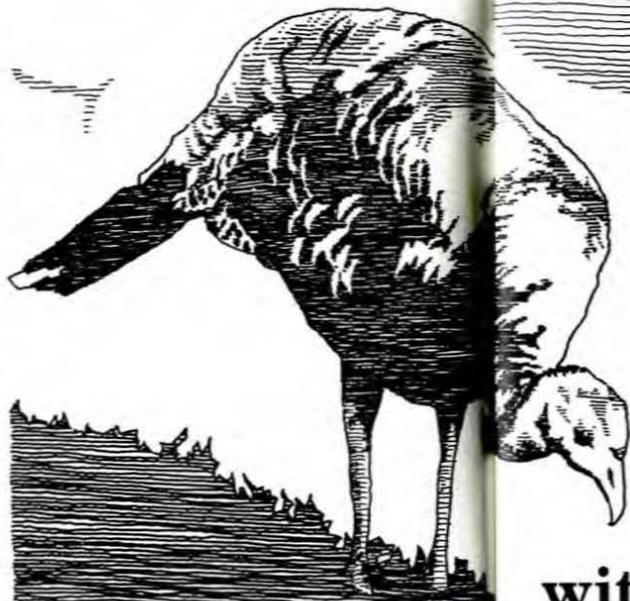
Pretty soon, although I wasn't aware of it, my life began to get worse. My home life was bad; my mother was on her second of four husbands. He and I did not communicate well, probably because he was hip to me. He would search my room and find my drugs, and, of course, trash them. But there were always more where those had come from, and I used them to escape the reality of my home life and my poor grades at school.

At fourteen I started using the needle. I did my first shot to be with the "big boys". Most of my life I hung around older people. I thought I could soar with eagles, but as I look back, I realize I walked with turkeys.

By the age of eighteen, I was getting tired of using people and stealing. Even though I always found work, and only paid room and board, work didn't provide me with enough cash to get enough drugs.

As my age progressed, so did my addiction. I went from job to job, girl to girl, drug to drug. Then I had a brainstorm: I would join the Army! That'll stop my drug problem. Yeah... The moment I enlisted they had me

Do I Soar with Eagles



pegged for an addict because they found drugs in my system.

During the first week of service they sent me into treatment. I stood right out front of that rehab smoking hashish the day I graduated. After all I thought I had learned in there, I didn't learn anything. I was discharged after nineteen months and sent back to the States.

or Walk with Turkeys?

Then I met my wife. We eventually began to use heavily together, and both contracted hepatitis while she was six months pregnant with our second child. All I could say was, "Take out life insurance, because I'm doing my drugs." My daughter was born with hepatitis while I was shackled up with another woman.

At twenty-four I was still using drugs

for income, for sex, and to be cool. I thought I was really somebody when I sold drugs, but the problem was I was my own best customer. I couldn't keep it together. My life was definitely unmanageable.

Finally I got my call from my Higher Power, God. I was arrested and charged with nine felonies and five misdemeanors. At the time I couldn't have cared less. At the age of twenty-five, only eight days after my arrest, my brother was killed while drunk driving. A few months later my brother-in-law died of an overdose of heroin. At that point, I joined N.A. in prison.

Although I'm doing a five year sentence, my life has never been better. I have direction in my life today; I can be responsible for myself. Through this program I am learning who I am. The Fourth Step helped me see what was inside of me. I learned to identify my emotions.

Today I know I have a choice over the direction of my life. So far, I've lost everything—family, friends, car, apartment—but I'm not afraid to start over. I've learned to be patient and to trust in God and to trust in myself. I'm not afraid of mistakes, or of not fitting in. I found I do fit in with the right people.

The eagles I longed to soar with are in N.A. We're winners for sure, as long as we maintain recovery. We don't have to walk with turkeys any more.

I owe my life to N.A., so I try to put back into it what I've gotten out of it. I am presently corresponding secretary of the New Life Group here. I wasn't "arrested", I wasn't "rescued", I was *chosen* by God to live a good life, clean, one day at a time.

D.K., Delaware

A Fresh Start

around. I came from such a self-made hell. I can't express in words what this Fellowship has done for me. I feel blessed, renewed, reborn. I'm in love with the N.A. way.

God saw to it that I got away from my old playground—I did a "geographic"—and got clean. It's amazing, I know, but for today it's working. I started my recovery on the West Coast and brought what I learned to a little town in West Texas. At the time there were only two meetings a week. We were very hungry for the program, so we grew fast. Today, we have two groups who meet at the same address and meetings all week long.

I got involved in service almost from the very first meeting when a man asked me to stay after the meeting for a group conscience. I was intrigued that people would go through all of this just to stay clean. I was later to see just how much we would put into our N.A. community, and how far we would all go.

We started step meetings, book studies, book raffles, spiritual meetings and candlelight meetings. We wanted to stay clean and we knew we couldn't do it alone. Together we grew, and some suffered, and some grew wiser. Though some are still playing around, many are recovering today.

Today God has given me a new opportunity to work in a another city in the East. I'll carry my program up there and do what's required to live clean, happy and free.

Today I can say this and really mean it: I love all you addicts out there who are reading these words. I really don't know you, and it does not matter, because I know you are like me.

Stay clean and love one another.

R.M., Texas



Right now I feel so tired, but it's really okay. In fact, it's great! I was very lucky to have the chance to go on a Twelve Step call last night and I didn't "hit my knees" until 2:30 a.m. I thanked God for the chance to serve another suffering addict, and reflected on the day and on my life in general.

Boy, my life really has turned

The Man Alone



He thinks he has all the power, and minute by minute he does his own will. His disease is like that of every suffering addict, but in his disease he thinks he is the only one.

"Now, he's a recovering addict. He doesn't want more drugs more often, he wants more recovery."

A power greater than himself got this man to a program of recovery. Its name is Narcotics Anonymous. He had to keep coming back until he wanted it. He had to get honest with himself, be open-minded, and become willing to try. He simply kept coming back, "just for today," until the miracle happened and he stayed.

He has been clean all day today. He worked the Twelve Steps, and practiced these principles in all his affairs.

He is learning to live life on life's terms, working the Steps to the best of his ability. Now, he's a recovering addict. He doesn't want more drugs more often, he wants more recovery.

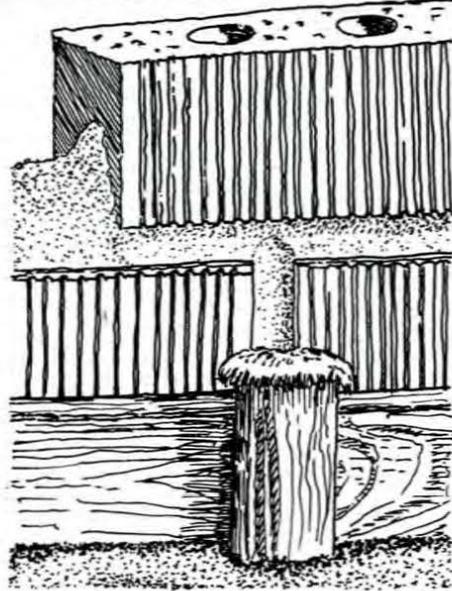
He needs only the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous to recover from this disease. He's never alone, and he never has to use again. This power greater than himself that got him to this program is always here for him. As long as he follows this way of life he has nothing to fear.

The man alone now has friends. He is grateful for his faith in God in himself. The man alone now has real friends, and a real friend in himself.

L.F., Louisiana

The man is alone. He may be riding with someone, he may be using the transits, someone may be with him, but he is alone. His whole life is only about getting and using drugs. Though he may hurt his friends, family and loved ones, most of all he hurts himself. He lives to use, he uses to live. He lives his life, an unmanageable life, on his own terms.

Anonymity Is the Spiritual Foundation



Much is said in our literature regarding anonymity and its relationship to the Eleventh Tradition. So much is written about the "press, radio, and films" aspect of anonymity in our literature that we have to really look to find out how it relates within a group or within the meeting itself.

In our area we hear at the end of the meeting:

"Who you see here
what you hear here
when you leave here
let it stay here."

With this message still ringing in our

minds many of us feel the presence of a higher power intensify as we close the meeting with a prayer in the unity circle. But the cute little verse is immediately forgotten by some.

The meeting is a powerful tool to help the recovering addict. Each and every one of us at some point has said, "I feel safe here." The group provides the forum in which we learn to deal with life on its own terms.

We addicts are very sensitive people as a rule. Numbing this sensitivity to life, and therefore our feelings, was our way of coping with the pain of emotions. Therein came our escape from reality. We no longer reacted to true feelings, but rather to the sedated artificial ghosts of feelings which were much more acceptable to us.

This safe meeting of ours is where we again learn what we are feeling and why we are feeling it. We learn to feel all over again, and we learn how to get in touch with the sensitivity that is inherent in our emotions.

This renewed sensitivity, this reawakening of our ability to feel, spawns all kinds of emotional upheavals. Many times we come to meetings to share about something painful in our lives. Hurting and wanting the pain to leave us alone, we come and share what's bothering us.

Our new family listens in compassion and empathy, and when we are through, hands are raised. The experiences of the past are called to mind by individuals in the group as they share how they too have felt the same way. They look to their own past for some way to help their brother or sister whose suffering they have shared.

Some episodes of our past are bitterly painful to recall, and it is very difficult

if not impossible on some occasions to share these incidents. Yet, we are "safe" in the meeting. We do have our Twelfth Tradition. Even though some things are better off shared one-on-one, we gain the full benefits of recovery and help other suffering addicts when we share in a group. A power greater than ourselves presides at our meetings, and we hear ourselves speaking of things from our past that we previously had only shared with God and another human being. Hesitantly at first, not quite believing it is our hand raised, we open up our mouths and speak words that relate to a past so painful we wished it gone forever.

This sharing of the past as an act of empathy and compassion at a group meeting, or on a one-on-one basis, is truly a spiritual event. To share of one's own self a range of feelings from utter despair to euphoric ecstasy is a talent we did not possess before coming to the Fellowship. This is another small part of how the program can work in our lives to help us learn how to deal with life on life's terms.

We each want our groups to keep functioning so that when we are hurting we will be there for each other, not so that we can take inventories or carry on gossip about each other's shortcomings. And here is the other aspect of anonymity we need to remember. If, as individuals, we come to a meeting and share something of ourselves, it's most important that we come to have faith in our Twelfth Tradition. We need to be able to have faith that what we have shared will help a brother or sister and not be used to make us objects of gossip and ridicule.

There will be some who gossip. There will be some who will exploit our

weaknesses and shortcomings to build their own ego. But as a rule we must try to protect the anonymity of our family.

"Even though some things are better off shared one-on-one, we gain the full benefits of recovery and help other suffering addicts when we share in a group."

It is up to each of us to tell our own story.

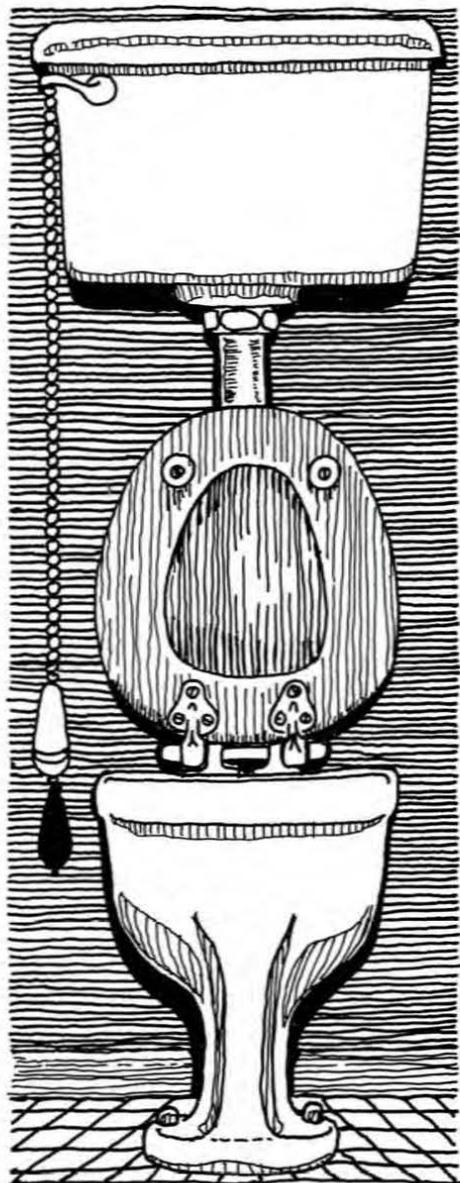
When I dig into my soul to help a suffering companion, when I share in a meeting a piece of me I would not have otherwise shared in a group setting, a power greater than myself must be motivating me, because I for one am very much afraid to tell you who I am.

I have no desire to place myself in any sort of compromising situation. Broadcasting my weaknesses and shortcomings is not my most favorite pastime under any circumstances. Yet when I do share, in spite of myself, remembering the word anonymity, what you have heard is not me speaking. It is a power greater than myself. Left to my own devices, I choose to hide myself. Today I choose, in the spirit of anonymity, to share fully of myself if another can be helped. By choosing not to hide, I am learning how to live.

G.D., Texas

N.A. Way • 7

Bathroom Deja Vu



morbid, yet comforting, for I had lived in that fear for a long time.

My eyes strained in the dim light as I remembered the self-imposed isolation that used to shun the love of my family, and I remembered trying so hard to hide from the God that wanted to save me.

My fever also provided a stupor somewhat like the ones in the old days. I could remember the syringes: broken and dull, some would have coagulated blood in them.

The remorse I used to feel haunted me also that night: I could vividly remember the overwhelming feeling that would engulf my soul when I thought about what I had done the previous day.

And I remembered the fear. It used to consume me and control my every thought and action. I used to live without hope, without faith, and without the knowledge of God's love for me. I trusted no one, and no one trusted me. I felt nothing but contempt for myself and the world around me.

Today my life is not perfect by any means, but it is different. The large void inside me has been filled; I am content with life today. I have been given faith and hope. God has continued to pour out his love on me, and I have been given the ability to recognize that.

Thank you God for the gift of recovery and the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

D.D., West Virginia

I stumbled into the bathroom; an eerie feeling came over me and took control of my senses. Frightening and

Carrying a Message?



I was recently asked by some newcomers, "What can we do about the lack of a recovery atmosphere in our H&I meetings?" They stated that they were uncomfortable, and that some of the meetings were even counterproductive to their recovery.

Initially I thought to myself, "Sure,

we all feel uncomfortable when first encountering spiritual principles," and, "We always try to find fault and exclude ourselves from recovery when we are new." I continued to listen anyway. What I heard were things that I myself had felt uncomfortable about but have been too lazy and complacent to do anything about. (I avoid controversy because it interferes with my approval-seeking nature.) Here are some of their specific concerns:

1. Speaking out of turn during the meeting.
2. Holding private conversations during the meeting.
3. Giggling and making gestures when someone is sharing.
4. Coming in late and disrupting the meeting.
5. Moving about and leaving the meeting unnecessarily.
6. Making derogatory statements toward the patients and the institution.

We talked for about an hour and a half, and it became evident that some of us had been sharing our disease instead of our recovery at H&I meetings.

I feel like our H&I efforts are too important to make these kinds of errors. I have been a part of the problem from time to time, but through awareness God has opened the door for me to become part of the solution.

My hope for the future is that we can all look beyond our own insecurities and personalities when carrying the N.A. message into hospitals and institutions. After all, we can only keep what we have by giving it away. I don't want to keep contempt and disunity, so, just for today, I'll try not to give those things away.

D.D., West Virginia

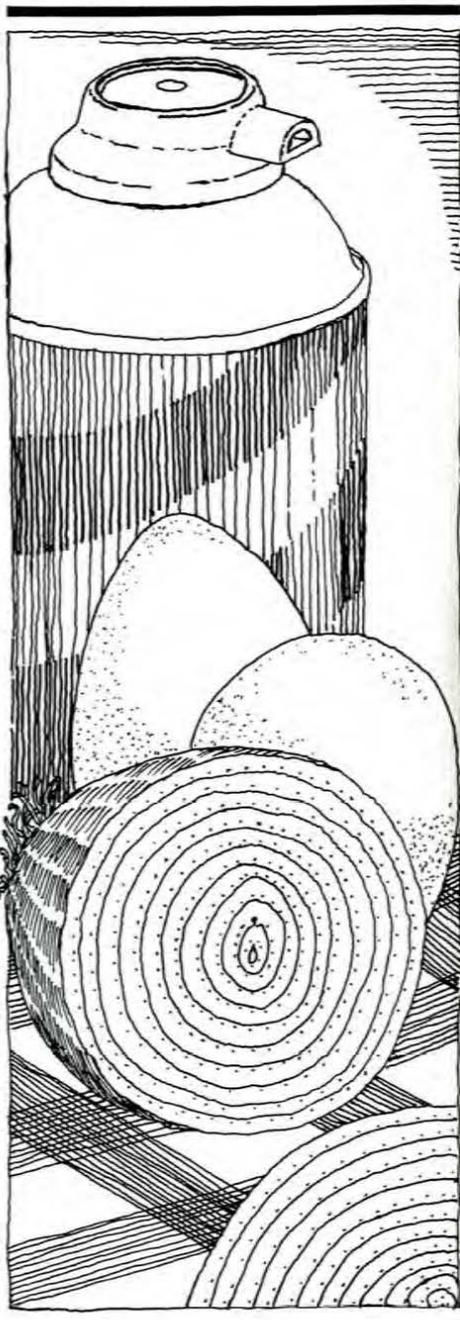
All my life I had sought to belong. I never felt that I was accepted. In my gut I felt I was not good enough to be anyone's friend. I thought that everyone was better than I was; they were better athletes, they were better looking, and they were smarter. Looking out at oth-

What I Did for Acceptance

ers, I developed a theory that people only liked the guys who did great things, the ones who caught the winning touchdown or made the winning basket in the last second of the game. For over ten years I lived my life by that theory. I tried to do great things.

During college, to achieve a feeling of belonging, I pledged a social fraternity. To be a brother, I ate onions, garlic, raw eggs, and shaving cream. But even after I became a brother there were still times when a voice inside would say that those people really did not like me, and sometimes that voice would say that the fraternity brothers were just stupid losers anyway.

My reaction to my inner voice was to continue doing great things. I sought to do the impossible. Although I had a serious speech defect, I wanted to be a teacher. Not having played sports in high school, I still was determined to earn a spot on the college wrestling



team. But "Greek Week" was where I would prove myself to be a remarkable person.

The year before, a member of my fra-

ternity had captured the all-fraternity sit-up record by doing almost five hundred sit-ups. He was carried away on the shoulders of his frat brothers. The hundreds of spectators could not believe that a man was capable of such a feat. I wanted that kind of acclaim. A year later, I blew his record away by doing 3,001 sit-ups.

For days, I was on a natural high. Everyone was talking about me. I could tell that my fraternity brothers were proud of me. But after a while I was once again filled with fear and inadequacy. They were not talking about me very much any more. But what else could have been said? Everyone was all talked out. Still, I wanted to be the center of attention.

I could not accept reality. After all, the ending of World War II was a great event, but people have long since stopped talking about it every day. But when my college friends, likewise, stopped talking about my sit-ups, I felt that I was not liked.

Henceforth, my philosophy of life would revolve around *constant* accomplishments. Although the praise did not last, it felt good. The following year saw me doing 4,010 sit-ups.

Throughout this time, my using slowly but surely became worse. The drugs had put me in a world where I was king. However, like the praise from the sit-ups, it did not last. Moreover, the drugs caused me problems. When I arrived at N.A., I was not able to do very many sit-ups. I weighed three-hundred pounds, and I wanted to kill myself.

After I had been in the Program for a few years, had done service work and had worked the Steps, I discovered that I had the belonging I had always sought. What a difference the Program makes!

Today when I walk into a meeting I can feel the unconditional love. I don't have to be rich or educated or to do thou-

"To be a brother, I ate onions, garlic, raw eggs, and shaving cream. But after I became a brother there were still times when a voice inside would say that those people really did not like me."

sands of sit-ups or eat shaving cream, I just need to be myself.

Of course, the unconditional love was always there, but until I had done what the winners said to do—go to meetings, work the steps, do service work—I did not feel the love. At the meetings, I do not have to be better than anyone, I just have to be there.

In my years in the Fellowship I have seen many miracles. Today I believe that by being there and sharing my experience, strength, and hope, I have played a part in helping others to change. In short, I do not feel useless. I have a purpose, a destiny.

By coming into our Fellowship, we can not only stop doing untold harm to our family and friends, but we can do much good. We have great potential. Today we can use it.

Love, J.S., N.Y.

Just For Today



I'm afraid you are going to know that after three years clean, I still have perverted sexual fantasies sometimes. Also, I'm afraid you are going to know of my temporarily and sometimes haunting neuroses, and that you will judge me as a person of weak character with no capacity for faith. I'm afraid you will learn of my deeper mental twists and

realize I'm a "psycho" and need to be committed.

But I'm really not afraid of these things at all. I have written about them and thoroughly reviewed them in Step Four. I have shared them and let go of them in Step Five. Through this process of rigorous honesty I have transcended and defused these fears. When they do come back to haunt me now, they do not paralyze me. A quick prayer and some time spent working with another addict gets me spiritually grounded again. Before I know it the day is done and it's time for my Tenth Step and my prayers, and then for bed.

I no longer believe that my past fears will become reality. I have come to believe that these fears can be used for good. Only a few months ago I was able to help a sponsoree in similar circumstances. It was really a God-as-I-understand-Him deal. I was able to say, "I understand" and "you are not a bad person." He was able to continue on with the Steps and will have over two years clean as you read this.

So what am I afraid of? What is it? After some thought and talking with others, today I believe I am afraid that you people in N.A. will learn of every fear I can imagine and then you'll say, "Hey we love you and you can stay." And by doing this you will put it back on me, and I will once again have to accept responsibility as a human being. I will have to pick up the tools you have given me and get to work and pray to always do the right thing, knowing I will make mistakes but will be forgiven; knowing I must do it for myself, but I don't have to do it alone; believing that "just for today" someone believes in me and my recovery. "So long as I follow this way, I have nothing to fear."

Anonymous



When I came into the Fellowship I expressed, repressed, and suppressed various feelings of hostility. My self-centeredness was so powerful that I had no real awareness that I was angry and depressed most of the time. Most of all, I cannot remember any feelings of love for myself or others. I felt alone in a hostile world, where the only people who understood my problem were the beautiful people in Narcotics Anonymous. As a result of my addiction, I was still wallowing in anger, hatred, resentment, and hostility, the exact opposites of love. Things are changing. I would like to express what unconditional love means to me at this moment.

For me, love is difficult to define. I find that when I truly love someone, I have a feeling of warmth, caring and understanding. In our area, a lot of my friends tell me that they love me. If I don't love myself that day, it is impossible for me to honestly tell them I

feel the same way. I only tell someone I love them when I feel that way in my heart.

For longer than I care to admit, I

"The mere fact that I would not love and accept some people put me in conflict with myself, God, and our program."

have always put conditions on my love for others. If they were nice to me and acted the way I thought they should act toward me, then I loved them. But if they offended me I wouldn't forgive them. I rationalized that these people were not worthy of my love because they hurt me. Today I can see that my thinking was self-centered instead of God-centered. God wants me to be forgiving, kind, and considerate toward others. The mere fact that I would not love and accept some people put me in conflict with myself, God, and our program.

Through applying the spiritual principles of N.A., I have been able to some extent to unconditionally love everybody I meet. If I realize that our faults are similar, then it is easier to accept and love everyone. By starting on the journey of unconditional love, I am brought to a place where more growth will take place. Ideally, I'd like to get to the point where I can love everybody for just being themselves. In the meantime, I'll keep expressing my love in hope that unconditional love will become as contagious as laughter.

S.D., Pennsylvania

Feelings in Recovery

Even though I have been in this program for a while now, it has always been easier to accept the feelings of others than to accept my own. From fairly early in my recovery I could listen to those in pain and feel empathy for them. I don't remember ever becoming angry at anyone or thinking any less of them for expressing their feelings to me. I have always thought the healthy thing to do was to be able to recognize and accept the feelings that a person had.

Owning up to feelings is not shameful—it won't harm us—but my problem was that when I denied the feelings I was having, they came out directed at anyone who happened to be around to take the blame.

I have always stuffed my feelings, and when I feel as if I am going to explode, I usually do. I have a hard time accepting myself at those times. I can remember saying to others, "It's not the emotion that causes the problem, it's what we do with it." Why could I not apply this to myself?

This past week I had an interesting experience. My H.P. arranged for me to have time away from all my children, which is very unusual indeed. I was also invited to visit another town where N.A. is abundant. There were people whom I admire a great deal brought to the same town at this time. One of them arrived and took one look at me and asked what was wrong. I thought at the time that I was feeling just fine. He



did not seem to believe me. That confused me, because I was sure I was okay.

The same night H.P. brought a lady from a couple hundred miles away to me. She and I were both going through

some difficult times. We shared, or rather she shared with me. I tried to listen, but when it began to get painful I dismissed it.

The next day I went to see some friends, including the lady from the night before. Something happened then that I reacted to very strongly. Instead of sharing about it I went off into another room alone.

After awhile I went back and the same lady was there. She seemed to know what was wrong before I said anything. It was very difficult, but I did the best I could to tell her what was going on without any emotional display.

Then a wonderful thing happened to me. This wonderfully perceptive person started asking all the right questions, and finally I started to share and cry. Suddenly it was okay to grieve over someone lost to me a year ago. She let me cry, and when she saw me trying to fight the tears back she helped me to get them out.

I went home and wrote until four a.m. and cried all night until I finally went to sleep. I was angry at first because she had made me feel, until I realized no one could make me feel. Then I was very grateful that there was someone there who would help me so willingly and freely, someone who knew what it is like to bottle up so many emotions for such a long time. There were resentments that should long since have been past, pain over a year old and a new supply coming in every day. I have had feelings every day, whether I acknowledged them or not, and have been waiting for a long time for them to be felt and accepted so I could let them go.

I thought I had done a Fourth Step long ago. I now know, however, that

what I did was more of a fearful, hit-or-miss, immoral inventory. Today I have begun a Fourth Step that is, to the best of my ability, a "searching and fearless

"This wonderfully perceptive person started asking all the right questions, and finally I started to share and cry. Suddenly it was okay to grieve over someone lost to me a year ago."

moral inventory." I have begun with what I wrote that night, because it covers a lot of feelings and attitudes that I needed to express.

I did feel that night. I was aware of just how human I am. I cried, yelled and leaned on another addict for help. I did not use because of those feelings, nor did I want to hide in insanity because of them. I felt, I dealt (with the help of others and my H.P.), and I lived.

Today, it feels good to be able to express these things. I enjoy knowing what is happening with me. And best of all, I don't erupt over "nothing" today. I can truthfully tell those who are confused over their feelings that if they get in touch with their feelings, accept them as their own and share them with another, the feelings won't be so overwhelming. But don't let me forget to thank H.P. too. He is the one who brought this all together for me. I just went along for the ride.

Anonymous, Kentucky

This an open letter to my friend who just died yesterday from AIDS. I think it would be nice to share my final words to him with the rest of the Fellowship, some of whom may have a special sponsorship relationship.

Goodbye, Friend

Dear Friend,

Let me first thank you for allowing me to be your sponsor. When we first met, I was struck by your hostile manner, but I knew by our conversation after the meeting that night that you were still hurting. I was very glad to see you again the next week at the institutional meeting where you were a patient. I was glad to see later, when we were out for coffee, that you were getting involved with the Fellowship.

I know you had a little difficulty at first, but the courage you showed during that time was magnificent. It gave me hope and courage. We talked often, and I was glad that you were able to discuss many personal things with me. The day you asked me if I would sponsor you I was very surprised. After we exchanged some words I said okay, but I never thought that it would work.

Through the years we shared many lovely moments together. Besides



working with newcomers, we went to movies, socialized, even shopped together. The relationship was turning

out to be more than just sponsorship. We had become friends. We attended the religious services of both your

church and mine. We openly discussed our likes and dislikes.

Buddy, we shared so many good times together. We talked about health problems you were experiencing. Then

"I could do nothing more than give you a hug. I am sorry that I did not then, nor do I now, have words to say to you. I hope that the hug was able to convey to you the feeling of the love this program offers."

we didn't talk for what seemed like a long, long time. When we spoke again, you told me that you were sick, and that you missed the moments we shared. I could do nothing more than give you a hug. I am sorry that I did not then, nor do I now, have words to say to you. I hope that the hug was able to convey to you the feeling of the love this program offers.

Last night when I got the telephone call from a member who told me of the funeral arrangements, he never once actually said that you had died. And he was right. You haven't died. I still think of you often, and sometimes feel your presence. Although I was your sponsor, it was often you who gave me strength and hope. I will miss you, and so will those you sponsored. Thanks for your kindness and understanding in this passage of life.

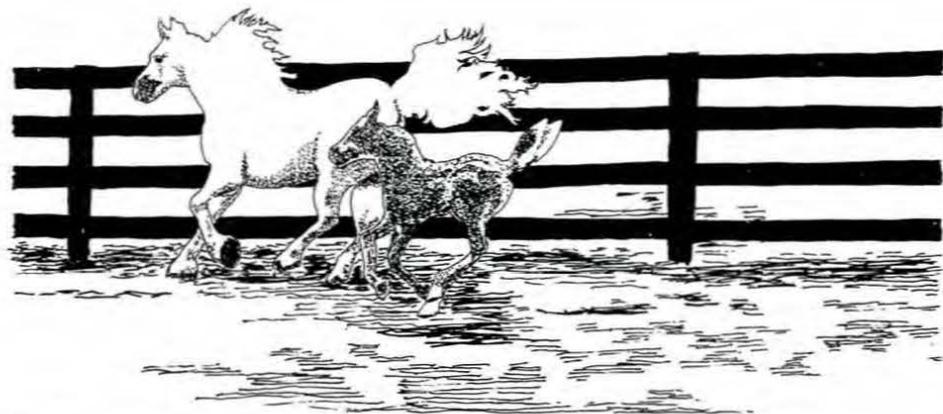
H.J., New Jersey

The Principles that Make Our Recovery Possible

meetings. This was my way to be around addicts who had some recovery to give away, as I was still afraid to

I finally knew I was powerless over a disease that told me I didn't have a disease.

reach out to them. By now, I was on my way to the Third Step, attending service committee meetings, regular



After more than twenty years of using, God brought me to N.A. with a desire to stop. I began by attending meetings at least weekly. But after three months, and more than three relapses, my thinking had gotten bad enough that I surrendered and really wanted this program. I finally knew I was powerless over a disease that told me I didn't have a disease.

I began my recovery, still having trouble reaching out to other members and to my Higher Power. I came to meetings daily. I did personal service work and attended subcommittee

meetings, dances, campouts and conventions. I was using what I'd learned in N.A. to stay clean, to change and grow.

Today, I work the Twelve Steps to the best of my ability and practice the principles in all my affairs. Just for today I'm learning how to live life on life's terms. Recovery is possible. When I seek it, I find more, and I have more to give away. I work the Twelve Steps; I live this simple spiritual program; I live in the freedom I have today, the N.A. way.

J.F., Louisiana

N.A. News



N.A. in Greece

We recently received the first issue of the European Newsline being published by the London N.A. Office. One article in it, written by members involved in the recent birth of Narcotics Anonymous in Greece, caught our attention. We thought you would like to share some of the excitement we felt reading of recovery being offered where it was never before available.

The first author writes:

We are a few Greek recovering addicts in London. We all found recovery in London N.A. and have had to stay in England since then for a variety of reasons. In March 1987 we got together to discuss which was the best way to carry the message to addicts who still suffer back in Greece. We could not start meetings, so we decided that the next best thing would be to translate N.A. literature into Greek. That way when meetings were started they would have literature available.

We formed a committee and got down to work, keeping in touch with

the WSO and the London Region. We found that translation is not the easiest of tasks. It requires organization, knowledge of the program, and is very time consuming. Choosing translations for key words—powerlessness, shortcomings, etc.—was the most difficult part. At times we had our conflicts—open translation or word-for-word—but they were always resolved through our group conscience, and they always produced a lot of growth. We got to understand the program better, drew closer to each other and had a lot of fun! We've only completed leaflets no. 1 and 16—but we've started.

And then the miracle happened: N.A. meetings in Athens!

The second author writes:

One year ago exactly, I was at the World Convention of N.A. at Wembley Stadium in London. In the big conference hall, people from all over the world were getting up and talking about recovery in their countries. A friend from London N.A. got up and talked about Greece. The only thing I remember him saying was that in our country there is no recovery and addicts are looked on as criminals. At the time, things in Greece seemed so difficult; the idea of N.A. there was just a dream for the faraway future. Then, on the last day

of the Convention, there was a countdown of the countries attending. When they shouted out Greece three of us, I think, stood up and the whole hall clapped and cheered. At that moment I made a promise to give anything I could towards starting N.A. meetings in Greece one day. Then, it seemed impossible.

In less than one year, that dream has come true. How do you do something that seems impossible? Everybody said just go ahead, but to me the suspicion of authorities and addicts alike and the chaos which reigns seemed like an insurmountable barrier. But it's true: the only thing you can do is make the first step and see from there.

Our first meeting was held on 1 July 1987 in Athens, V.—another addict who had found recovery in England—and I were there plus a member of Greek A.A. We waited and waited but nobody came so finally we started. After 10 minutes, a group of mothers of addicts arrived to see what it was all about. Halfway through, our first newcomer appeared.

From then on, we had two meetings a week. Sometimes there would be no newcomers and you'd think, "Oh, no, it's all going to collapse over our heads." But slowly people started coming. Sometimes there'd be as many as eight in the room. Sharing was very simple and straightforward.

It's hard to carry the message when there's only two of you because a suspicious addict can say, "How do I know it works? Where's the rest of these clean addicts you talk about?" But still some kind of seed was sewn. Some people who came thought we could help them to get legal drugs or

advise them about treatment and recommend doctors. We explained that we couldn't do that. Some thought we were social workers or bible-bashers. We said we weren't. Repeating the Traditions helps. We found that in a new country we have to stress over and over again that we have nothing to do with outside enterprises.

If I had held onto my old negative attitudes, I would have given up on the first day. But something has changed in me without my realizing. I am more willing to work the Third Step. I don't think anymore that everything is doomed to disaster because I have something to do with it. Also I realized that carrying the message and working the Twelfth Step is not like some kind of preaching. I did it for selfish reasons as much as to help the other addict. It is very important to me to have the N.A. Fellowship in my own country in order to form new roots, let go of old associations and find help when I seek it.

In the past, commitment, footwork and service were words I associated with drudgery. Now, I mostly find great pleasure in it even though at times I don't want to go to a meeting because I am scared of the responsibility or because the heat of the afternoon is too great. Through it I grow, and grow up. Finally I see that only action helps me to work the Twelve Steps and learn more. No hours spent thinking about them offer as much.

I have returned to London, but V. is still in Greece carrying on with the meetings. I'm sure that next time any of us go, they will be bigger and stronger. For me, faith has been restored that if you choose to do some-

thing for the right reasons, it works out.

More N.A. NEWS

It's time once again to take a quick look at the world of N.A. World Services. In September the Conference released another Fellowship Report. Most of what follows is either drawn directly from those reports or summarizes them.

World Convention

Attendance figures from the most recent World Convention in New Orleans are in. Registration topped 3800, with actual attendance estimated at 4400. On to Anaheim '88!

WSO Publications

A number of new literature items have just become available from the WSO. Seven information pamphlets in large print have just come in. Previously, only the White Book had been produced in large print. While the Office has charged slightly more for the large print White Book than for the regular edition, the pamphlets will go for the same cost as their regular-print counterparts. Also available are taped sets of our literature. One set (three tapes) covers part one of our Basic Text. Another five-tape set includes, in addition to the above, the White Book and all our pamphlets.

And, last but not least, the Fourth Edition of the Basic Text (hardcover) has arrived. At this writing the softcover edition is still in production.

Additional Needs Committee

In the August N.A. Way we told you that the World Service Conference had formed an Ad Hoc Committee on Additional Needs. The committee's purpose was "to investigate and disperse the current information on the accessibility of N.A. meetings to those individuals from whom the message or recovery is limited, impaired or inaccessible due to physical, audiological or linguistic difficulties or handicaps." Part of this committee's September report says, "We have been quite excited with our new mission and we are very busy exploring new frontiers never explored before in Narcotics Anonymous. In New Jersey, much discussion was held on the question of direction and purpose. It was decided that the committee could best carry out the task outlined by this year's Conference in the following ways:

1. Becoming a centralized contact for members, groups and committees who wish information about this subject.
2. Establish a base of information for regional additional needs committees to utilize.
3. Pursue suggestions for regions that have a need to establish additional needs committees.
4. Investigate considerations involved in developing specific material or adapting existing literature for blind, deaf and other addicts with additional needs.
5. Develop suggestions for making N.A. meetings accessible to addicts with additional needs."

Administrative Committee

The Conference financial crisis reported in the August N.A. News has been alleviated by new contributions,

but costs for the Denver workshop may push the WSC treasury back into the red. The Conference Treasurer estimates that \$45,000 in contributions will be needed every three months this year in order to keep the budget on schedule. Conference officers are breathing a little easier, but the need for money to keep the WSC's work going has not been eliminated.

Trustees

The Board of Trustees voted on articles their members have written. Thirteen articles written in previous years will be re-released showing each author's name and the date each was written. Those articles will be available through the WSO. Two more recently written articles were also approved for publication, *The Relationship of N.A. to NarAnon and Families Anonymous* and *Open and Closed N.A. Meetings*. Both of these articles will appear in future issues of the *N.A. Way*.

It Works: How and Why

At the 1987 WSC meeting, an ad hoc committee was appointed to coordinate workshops reviewing the two drafts made to date of the Steps portion of *It Works*. By this printing, additional workshops will have been held in each of the following cities: Baltimore, Sydney, Seattle, Dallas, and Kansas City. The remaining scheduled workshops have been set for the last three weekends in January. They will be held in Miami, Chicago and San Francisco. Any N.A. member who desires to provide input for this Fellowship project should contact their closest regional or area literature sub-committee.

Public Information

A mock learning day was conducted

at the Denver workshop covering a variety of topics: speaking to non-N.A.'s and anonymity, P.I. sub-committee start-up and follow-through, P.I. and H&I cooperation, use of public service ads, and information for the Fellowship. These learning days have been very informative for the WSC P.I. Committee. All WSC P.I. members had great fun with this type of a workshop, and hope that the area and regional P.I. subcommittees will be able to utilize this concept as a helpful tool for themselves.

The WSC P.I. Committee is working on a variety of items that will help the area and regional P.I. subcommittees in their continuing work. One of these items which many members will get a chance to see is a Fellowship-wide census. Last year the Conference approved the committee's request to begin development of this project. Beyond merely determining the size of N.A.'s membership, the committee hopes to get a clear picture of the diversity of the N.A. Fellowship in order to provide more factual information to the general public about Narcotics Anonymous. The form and an analysis of the cost involved will be presented to the committee in 1988. The Conference will be asked to give its approval to the census plan in 1989, at which time you may be seeing copies of this census.

Finally, the P.I. Committee had some news for the Fellowship: *our world meeting count has just passed the ten-thousand mark!* In addition, the number of H&I panels has exceeded the two-thousand level. Obviously, it works!

Literature

The committee is working on some changes to be proposed for their guide-

lines. They are looking at such things as how the committee is made up and how its work is reviewed by the Fellowship.

Three draft pamphlets have been sent to the Literature Review Committee: *In Times of Illness, Questions & Answers about N.A.*, and *For Those in Treatment*. The LRC will look them over and see what to do with them next.

The committee was very excited about plans to begin using surveys. These surveys will ask the Fellowship what it thinks about quite a few project ideas the committee has talked about. The first survey, on revision of our Basic Text, was sent to local literature committees late in October. Committee members feel very good about these surveys because they will help the committee become more responsive to the needs of Narcotics Anonymous.

Hospitals & Institutions

The committee is considering revisions to the H&I service guide. The committee's intent is to provide a more comprehensive handbook. Common problems will be illustrated, and solutions proposed. The WSC H&I Committee will continue to work on this project over the next year.

The committee asked that more articles be sent to their newsletter, *Reaching Out*. They need material both from N.A. members in prison or treatment and from those active in H&I service.

European Service Conference

Following the July World Service Conference workshop in Newark, New Jersey, the WSC vice-chairperson attended the European Service Conference in Frankfurt, W. Germany. He says, "The service conference was

attended by members from England, France, Spain, the U.S. and Germany. A written report was received from the N.A. membership in Ireland. The conference featured workshops on group, area and regional service, H&I, P.I. and sponsorship.

"The service conference also featured an open forum to discuss the N.A. Fellowship in Europe and its relationship to N.A. worldwide. It is important to note that the WSC is perceived in the eyes of many European members as being reflective of and dominated by the American experience. As the discussions continued, it became evident that our recovery literature and service tools were in many ways not as usable or relevant to the non-U.S. recovery needs. Most literature contains American colloquialisms and is reflective of the U.S. experience. These service tools in many cases cannot be used outside the U.S. Laws and customs in many non-U.S. countries dictate a course of action which is, at times, contrary to the direction in the service guides and handbooks.

"I also heard frustration at what was perceived as the non-U.S. members' inability to significantly impact action by the WSC. Several members indicated that the WSC decisions reflect the influence of the U.S. Fellowship and that non-U.S. members lacked sufficient voting representation to counter that perspective. There is the general understanding that the majority of N.A. members reside in America and, therefore, it is not anyone's fault that N.A. reflects an American perspective. I did not hear resentment, but rather a valid concern and sense of frustration. Imagine, if you can, having to use literature that even when fully translated in the appropriate language failed to relate

experiences that you could identify with.

"Consider the prospect of trying to set up area and regional service committees. How about trying to provide H&I, P.I. and Literature Committee service using guidelines and handbooks that are not relevant to your culture? Now add to that the fact that your life and recovery depends on the above and you don't perceive yourself as having sufficient influence on the system to be able to impact it in a positive way. THAT'S FRUSTRATION! This situation must be addressed if we are to facilitate the growth of N.A. worldwide."

Select Committee

A few pages later in the *Fellowship Report*, the WSC Select Committee on the Service Structure shared some new

ideas they are beginning to look at as they develop *A Guide to Service in Narcotics Anonymous*. Their ideas seek to address the problems the WSC vice-chairperson became aware of at the European Service Conference.

One of the new ideas is the *national assembly*. The national assembly would develop those recovery and service materials useful particularly in its own country. Another new idea, the *continental service conference*, drawing delegates from the regions on each continent, would act as a focal point of N.A. unity. These continental conferences, in turn, would feed ultimately into a new-style *World Service Conference*.

The Select Committee says that they still have a ways to go on *A Guide to Service*. We will keep you posted as the committee firms these ideas up.

OPINION



Open and Closed N.A. Meetings FROM THE TRUSTEES

This article was generated by the Board of Trustees in August, 1987 in response to the needs of the Fellowship. It represents the views of the Board of Trustees at the time of writing.

The purpose of the World Service Board of Trustees in addressing open and closed N.A. meetings is to

help N.A. members understand precisely what N.A. meetings can offer to both addicts and non-addicts, and how different types of N.A. meetings have different purposes. Awareness of this need for guidance has been sparked by letters and communication from the Fellowship at large. This communication has revealed the need of the Fellowship to know what

Narcotics Anonymous is and how we carry our message.

The population at large is gaining an increased awareness of our Fellowship and an increased interest in our meetings. Input which the Board of Trustees has received highlights examples of confusion which can exist when interested non-addicts or people who are uncertain of their status, attend N.A. meetings. This confusion can be magnified when these individuals participate in our meetings.

Our message of recovery in meetings can be clouded or diluted if anyone other than an N.A. member participates. In our meetings, confusion can be created when people such as parents, spouses, therapists, members of other fellowships, or other people who are not N.A. members share and speak at N.A. meetings.

We always encourage respect, tact, and diplomacy when confronted with circumstances where non-addicts attend regular N.A. meetings. Most of these occasions do not present continuing problems for our groups. However, with continued growth and increased awareness about N.A., all of us must look ahead. It is our belief that, by gaining clarity about open and closed N.A. meetings, our members can be guided well in how we all carry the message of recovery from drug addiction to addicts, as well as to all others who are interested.

For these reasons and in the interest of Narcotics Anonymous, the World Service Board of Trustees recommends the following guidelines and definitions:

1. A Narcotics Anonymous meeting, whether it is open or closed, is an addict sanctuary. It is the one

place where a drug addict can go and hear about and participate in recovery from the disease of drug addiction. As much as we might sometimes like, we cannot be all things to all people.

2. An open meeting is an N.A. meeting which may be attended by anyone interested in recovery from addiction. However, verbal participation is limited to N.A. members only. An open meeting in Narcotics Anonymous serves several functions. It allows people from outside of the Fellowship (for instance - judges, probation officers, professionals, family members) to observe what Narcotics Anonymous is and how it functions. It provides a place for anyone to gain information regarding the disease of drug addiction and how to find recovery. This can be very helpful to those individuals who are striving to reach a decision regarding their personal status as an addict. An open meeting in Narcotics Anonymous is one method our groups use to achieve their primary purpose of carrying the message to the addict who still suffers.

3. A closed meeting in Narcotics Anonymous is only for those individuals who are there because of their own drug addiction problem. These meetings do not generally exclude people who are undecided about identifying as an addict; however, participation is still limited to drug addicts only. A closed Narcotics Anonymous meeting provides the freedom which is necessary for a more personal and intimate sharing by Narcotics Anonymous members.

4. Our service structure provides the

only appropriate avenues for non-addict participation in Narcotics Anonymous. In addition to recognizing the need and value of non-addict trustees (*Temporary Working Guide to the Service Structure*) and non-addict special workers (Tradition Eight), the Fellowship has approved material (*A Guide to Public Information*) which provides for Public Information/Community Meetings. These meetings are the vehicle for service committee efforts which are aimed at communicating information about our Fellowship to the general public. These are not regular N.A. meetings and are the preferred approach to informing the general public about Narcotics Anonymous. This approach avoids confusion, presents no threat to anonymity, does not affect the N.A. message in regular meetings, and allows us to satisfy our recovery and service needs while at the same time meet the needs of non-addicts who are interested in N.A.

Some Thoughts on Special Interest Meetings

This letter was initially written in response to a request for input from the Board of Trustees regarding special interest meetings which appeared in the July 1986 *Newsline*. I wanted to share

my thoughts with more of the Fellowship, which is why I'm also writing to the *N.A. Way*. I feel compelled to address this issue. I hope I can convey my strong feelings without sounding harsh or closed-minded.

I am an addict who by the grace of my Higher Power and the loving support of N.A. has been clean since November 30, 1982. I found and continue to find my recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. I am an addict who just happens to be a nurse by profession. I've tried to go to a support group for impaired nurses, but have kept coming away from it with a bad taste in my mouth.

When I was out there using, there was nothing professional or ethical about my behavior. I lied, cheated, and stole just as much as my fellow brother/sister addicts living on the streets. There was no distinction back then (though in my denial I thought I was "better than") and I feel there should be no distinction now. I am confronted with life just the same as those who work on a "non-professional" level. Just the word "impaired" gives rise to the hair on my neck. Physical or mental disabilities come to my mind when I hear "impaired." I am an addict, plain and simple!

One of the first feelings that I embraced when I walked through the doors of N.A. was identification—a sense of belonging, of being the same. For so long out there I felt separate and apart. I was always trying to fit in. Never succeeding, I was left with an untouchable loneliness which consumed my spirit. That loneliness was lifted from me at my first N.A. meeting. To get back into going to "special" meetings to meet with my "special" problem that I have to deal with in a "special" way would take away that most important aspect

of the program for me—unity. Part of my disease tells me I'm "special," so I do not need to be reinforced by going to "special" meetings.

"Part of my disease tells me I'm 'special,' so I do not need to be reinforced by going to 'special' meetings."

I believe emotions have no profession, gender, race or religion. They simply are. Anger, pain, frustration, and confusion as well as joy, happiness, love, and courage are experienced by the "professional" the same as the "non-professional," or the black member the same as the white one. An atheist experiences these emotions as much as the believer. Does a woman really "feel" differently than a man? I think not.

I was not exclusive when I was using. Quite frankly, I used with just about anyone. Only the circumstances surrounding my insanity were different—"special," if you will. Sharing those experiences is what Narcotics Anonymous is all about for me. I live in a real world, surrounded by real people (all types!) with real problems and real dreams. I need to know how to live with them all, not just a select few.

Needless to say, I do not attend "special interest" meetings today. I am an addict who needs to hear that N.A. works, period, not that it works differently for "special" people. I still get that feeling of oneness when I go to a meeting today, just like my first one. I do not want to ever lose that. And I know I

won't, as long as I remember that I am not "special," that I am not alone, and that "together we can!"

N.S., Louisiana

Language and Tolerance

I very much enjoy reading your little magazine and was delighted to learn that one of my co-recoverers was giving me a gift subscription to it for Christmas.

The magazine is usually filled with special messages of recovery, strength and hope, and often contains one or two articles addressing subjects of controversy within N.A. Most of these letters express legitimate concerns, and even though I sometimes disagree with someone else's opinion, I have learned through the program to be tolerant and take a second look at what they have to say, for it is obviously of concern to them and they probably have a point. And so, I ask tolerance from everyone to allow me to express my feeling about the "language" question.

When I first read about it (for where I live, the topic has not come up) I thought they were talking about sexist language. "Well," I thought, "that's a legitimate gripe. Some do feel excluded by sexist language in the literature." So, I read on. I was really shocked and dismayed to learn they were talking about "sober" versus "clean."

Alcohol is a drug just like any of the street or prescription drugs that are abused. Trying to exclude people because they are more comfortable and

feel more honest by introducing themselves as "cross-," "poly-" or "multiply-addicted" is not demonstrating acceptance or tolerance. I think in many areas of the country there are youngsters who are alcoholic who feel more comfortable hanging out with the traditionally younger group in N.A. and there are those oldsters who feel they can relate better to the older group traditionally found in the other fellowship.

In my area, many recovering people work odd hours and have other commitments of their time. Also, there are limited meetings of both fellowships, so we find folks seeking recovery using both fellowships. And, guess what, everyone is welcomed in both.

That, folks, is recovery in action.

Naturally, because of all the cross-overs there are folks who mess up the language—but who really cares? Re-

covery is recovery and hope is hope, and it really doesn't matter where you find it so long as you do.

Granted, personally I owe N.A. a debt. While I knew when I came into these rooms that I have a problem with cocaine, I learned through the sharing of alcoholics and cross-addicted people that I also have a problem with alcohol. Without the sharing and open language I may have been able to go on denying my "other addiction" a whole lot longer than I did.

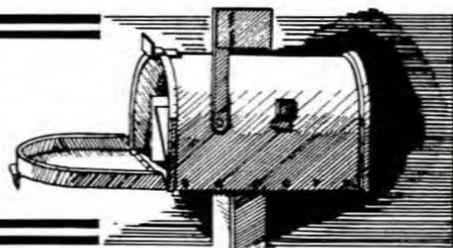
Today I introduce myself as an addict—but I keep it up front in my mind that my addiction extends into many different areas; not just drugs and not just alcohol but anything that I use as an escape.

Please, don't worry about the language; just think about the messages.

Thanks for letting me share.

C.S., Virginia

From Our Readers



Letters and reflections from N.A. members worldwide.

Dear N.A. Way,

After reading our current N.A. Way and a short article, "Gaining Trust—55 Cents per Dose" [August, 1987], a feeling went through my gut. I believe today, without a shadow of a doubt, that suggested clean time requirements for trusted servants are for a good reason.

My personal experience is that, by some miracle, I am clean and didn't steal or get high with N.A. funds. In

retrospect, I am grateful I was not aware of the awesome responsibility I accepted when I became RSC Treasurer with fifteen months clean. There were times my diseased thoughts had free rein. A convicted "expert" with pen and paper and five figures sitting in our account. . . how insane! I am glad I didn't do a disservice to myself and N.A.

I truly believe the experience, strength and hope of addicts who have been recovering longer than I have. At

the time of my election, those suggestions made no sense to me. I had an accounting background, but at fifteen months I didn't have the recovery. The "I can handle it" syndrome still totally prevailed.

Just for today, and two years later with a beginning glimpse of recovery, I believe in NOT jeopardizing our newcomers. Let them grow through our Steps and let us be willing to reach out and ASK our more experienced members for help. I believe we have a responsibility to our newcomer and our Fellowship.

Anonymous

Dear N.A. Way,

I have just returned from WCNA-17 and would like to share some thoughts with you.

I would like to thank the convention committee for their outstanding efforts in providing a wonderful convention. Accommodations, meetings, and speakers were all exemplary.

I have an increased spirituality from the feeling of unity with the entire Fellowship of N.A. I was given there. I am extremely grateful that our main meetings were closed with a spiritual and not religious prayer (the Serenity Prayer). It allowed me to participate and feel "part of."

My thanks also to the speakers who brought an N.A. message of recovery in tune with our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Unfortunately, some of our other members weren't as in tune with our Traditions. I felt in some cases that the message was *their* message, not *our* message. They made references to religious literature and poems, none of which had gone through our Fellowship's literature approval process. I would hope that some day those mem-

bers could be in tune with all of our *twenty-four* principles. In the meantime, as I learned in New Orleans, I will love all N.A. members for where they're at, not where I would like them to be.

I.A., New York

THANKS N.A.

As a French Canadian addict, I'm full of gratitude toward the N.A. Fellowship for the translation process in which we are now involved.

It's hard work for our literature revision committee but it's creating a better understanding of group conscience in our region. Three years ago it was only a dream. What an emotional experience when we recently saw the first draft of the Basic Text in French! The dream is becoming a reality.

From all the French-speaking addicts, thank you N.A., thank you WSO for understanding our needs, thank you H.P. for the process of growing together, thank you to our RSR for years of unbelievable work. Now we can put the hand of N.A. in a tenth more of this planet, one day at a time.

Now that I can better understand the N.A. message, I am better able to carry it to the addict who still suffers.

I know that using a professional translation house is expensive, but what is the price of the life of an addict?

Giving the N.A. message to French-speaking addicts is PURE LOVE. How wonderful it is to see God working with and in addicts! Language is sometimes a barrier between people, but the N.A. language, straight from the heart, will pass through all the barriers of this planet to reach the addicts seeking recovery.

A member of the French Translation Committee

IT'S GETTING BETTER

I've spent most my life abusing myself and my loved ones with drugs. I started in high school, and went on to heavy using in Vietnam. I was in treatment in 1970 but wasn't told anything of N.A. I spent forty-five days in pajamas, and used drugs three days after release. I used up until eleven months ago when my wife of sixteen years and three children decided to leave me. I was taken to a hospital for detox, then to another drug treatment center. I pray I've reached my bottom.

The treatment center I went to last September helped me rediscover my faith, got me back with my H.P. (God), and introduced me to the Fellowship. I haven't been in a fight, jail, or any other miserable mess since. I still ride my Harley, go to lots of meetings, work the Steps the best I know, pray daily, and read the N.A. literature.

By the grace of God and the Fellowship of N.A., I'm clean and feeling great most the time. I used daily for many years. I thought it was the only way for me. Today I have another choice—freedom.

G.B., Nebraska

A MESSAGE TO ALL MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN N.A.

It always seemed as though no one could possibly understand the real feelings I suffered, especially in my current environment. I'm incarcerated, and have been for eleven years flat. I've not re-entered society at all during this time. For years I used drugs to hide my pain, but to no avail! I used drugs and abused myself up until a little over a year ago.

Before that, nothing seemed to help me shake my addiction, nor relieve me

of my misery. My misery came from within, not from being incarcerated behind bars. I tried suicide and was resuscitated and brought back to life. I knew then that I needed help, so I prayed for answers.

My answers came through God, N.A., the Twelve Steps and Traditions, the brotherhood of fellow-prisoners in N.A. and the support from our outside brothers and sisters in N.A. Members on the outside cared enough to come into the prison and share with us their experiences, and to explain how they are learning and recovering from their addiction.

I can't begin to express the warm feelings of gratitude I personally feel for these wonderful people. I respect the effort they've shown, overcoming their fear and showing up here to express their love and concern. They take time out from their normal routines to give us hope and courage, to inspire us to live our program, and to guide us in our efforts to stay clean.

J.S., Washington

P.S. I've been granted the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. N.A. works!

Comin' Up



This space has been reserved for coming events anywhere in N.A. If you wish to list an event, send us a flier or note at least three months in advance. Include title, location, P.O. box, dates and contacts.

ALASKA: Mar. 11-13, 1988; ARSCC IV; Wasilla, AK; Michelle (907) 745-1052; ARSCC IV, PO Box 874935, Wasilla, AK 99687

ARKANSAS: Dec. 19, 1987; 4th Annual Central Arkansas Christmas Party & Dance; Kierre Hall, North Little Rock, AR; Jon or Maryanne (501) 221-2847; Woody 664-6054; Lisa 666-5771

CALIFORNIA: Mar. 4-6, 1988; NCCNA; Oakland Hyatt Regency Hotel & Convention Center, 12th & Broadway, Oakland, CA; Steve (408) 446-4445; NCCNA 10, PO Box 59114, San Jose, CA 95159

CANADA: May 13-15, 1988; 1st Ontario Regional Convention; Toronto, Ontario; Rachel (416) 789-0264; Susan 252-6686; Community Centre, 5597 Main Street, Toronto, Ontario, CAN M4E 2V6

CONNECTICUT: Jan. 13, 1988; CRCNA III; Stamford Sheraton Hotel & Towers, 1 First Stamford Place, (203) 967-2222; Judy 229-0019; Dave 342-4708; 3rd CT RCNA, PO Box 697, New Britain, CT 06051

GEORGIA: Feb. 25-28, 1988; GRCNA VII; Hyatt Regency Ravinia, 4355 Ashford Dunwoody Road, Atlanta, GA 30346, (800) 228-9000; Shirley (404) 535-1626; Mitch 264-9540; Rhonda 252-7137; GRCNA VII, P.O. Box 2226, Gainesville, GA 30503

HAWAII: Feb. 12-14, 1988; 4th Annual Fellowship Weekend; Camp Erdman, HI; Tom C. (808) 262-4631; George K. 262-4394; C.C. 261-3869; Regional Office 533-4900; NA Fellowship Weekend, P.O. Box 27909, Honolulu, HI 96827

INDIANA: Apr. 1-3, 1988; KRCNA II; Executive Inn, 6th & Walnut St., Evansville, IN, (800) 457-3841; Mike W. (812) 424-1672; Donnie A. 422-5815; Bernie T. 426-0357; KRCNA II, PO Box 3184, Evansville, IN 47730

KANSAS: Dec. 5, 1987; Regional Convention Fund Raiser; Chili Feed, Knights of Columbus, 111 East 1st, Ellinwood, KS; Mike (316) 792-7514

KENTUCKY: Dec. 12, 1987; Fund raiser for KRCNA II; Parish Hall 6th & Broadway, Paducah, KY; Brenda 443-0012; Charlie 444-0399

2) Feb 12-14, 1988; 3rd Annual Traditions Workshop; Days Inn, 101 E Jefferson St., Louisville, KY 40202, (502) 585-2200; Ro S. 935-2481; Steve D. 937-1760; KRSCNA, PO Box 72305, Louisville, KY 40272

3) Apr. 1-3, 1988, KRCNA II, Evansville, IN--see under INDIANA

LOUISIANA: Mar 1-6, 1988; LPRCNA VI; Holiday Inn, Covington; Hotel res-Cheryl Hunt, (504) 893-3580; Info-Peter or Mary, (504) 626-7298; John or Kat, (504) 893-9265; LPRCNA VI, P.O. Box 1693, Covington, LA 70434

MAINE: Sep. 9-11, 1988; We're A Miracle V; Bruce & Kim (207) 772-1558; Stan & Jane (207) 784-5863; Bill (617) 563-5885; ASC of Maine, Convention Committee, P.O. Box 5309, Portland, ME 04101

MISSOURI: Dec. 5, 1987; Unity Conference III; Gardenville Community Center, 6000 block of Gravois, St. Louis; Greg S. (314) 277-6407

2) Dec 25-26, 1987; 2nd Annual Christmas Party; Drury Inn, I-70 and Blue Ridge Cutoff, Kansas City, MO; Nancy F., (816) 459-7326; Christin W., (816) 483-6022

NEVADA: Feb. 5-7, 1988; SNCNA II; Las Vegas, NV; Debi A. (702) 453-6653; Dave T. 452-6938; Nancy T. 451-0899; SNCNA II, P.O. Box 4771, Las Vegas, NV 89127-0771

NEW HAMPSHIRE: June 24-26, 1988; "Vision of Hope," 9th ECCNA; University of NH in Durham; Jay N. (603) 437-5501; Brian 452-7875; Shirley 458-4808; 9th ECCNA, PO Box 388, Pelham, NH 03076

NEW ZEALAND: Jan. 15-17, 1988; 1st New Zealand Area Rally for N.A.; Shirley Community Centre, Shirley & Slater Streets, Christchurch; Chris or Dave 859-738; Chrissie 883-544

OHIO: Dec. 12, 1987; Celebrating 7 Years of Recovery; St. Patricks Church, 38th & Bridge Avenue, Cleveland, OH; Dinner & Speaker

2) May 27-29, 1988; OCNA VI; Holiday Inn Eastgate, 4501 Eastgate Blvd., Cincinnati, OH 45245; Carolyn R. (513) 863-9870; Buck F. 752-8281; send speaker tapes; OCNA VI, P.O. Box 9234, Hamilton, OH 45014

OKLAHOMA: Apr. 1-3, 1988; Oklahoma Regional Convention; Camelot Hotel, 4956 S. Peoria, Tulsa, OK 74105, (800) 331-4428, (918) 747-8811; Leo S. (918) 664-4883; Sarah L. (918) 742-4816; Chuck G. (405) 372-4007; Tonja H. (405) 787-4007; OKRSC, PO Box 52465, Tulsa, OK 74152

PENNSYLVANIA: Feb. 26-28, 1988; Mid-Atlantic Regional Learning Conference IV; George Washington Lodge, Allentown, PA, (215) 433-0131; Bill A. 398-8438; Lou or Mike 432-8719; Dave or Brenda 437-3285; 24 hour helpline 439-8440; MARLCNA4, P.O. Box 4475, Allentown, PA 18105

RHODE ISLAND: Apr 1-3, 1988; NERC III; Marriott Hotel, Providence; Info-Steve (401) 789-2569, Ken N. 728-

2714; NERC III, Attention, Mishell L., P.O. Box 3009, Newport, RI 02840

SOUTH CAROLINA: Jan. 22-24, 1988; 8th Annual Upper South Carolina Convention; Holiday Inn Haywood, I-385 & Roper Mountain Road, Greenville, SC; Mark (803) 244-1621; Bob 271-6542; 1988 NA Convention, 205 E. Hillcrest Drive, Greenville, SC 29609

TEXAS: Mar 25-27, 1988; LSRCNA III; Rodeway Inn, Hwy 360 at Six Flags Drive, Arlington, TX 76011, (817)640-7080, (800)228-7080; Vince 924-0939; Don 738-5329; Rick 573-3201; LSRCNA III, Prog. Committee, PO Box 5540, Fort Worth, TX 76108

VIRGINIA: Jan. 8-10, 1988; 6th AVCNA; The Hyatt Hotel Richmond, Interstate 64 at Broad St. & Glenside Dr., Richmond, VA; Mel 644-9143; 6th AVCNA, PO Box 13087, Richmond, VA 23225

2) Mar. 4-6, 1988; 2nd Annual Chesapeake/Potomac Regional Convention; Stouffer Concourse Hotel, Arlington, (703)979-6800; Loneca C. (703)437-6433; Dave H. 860-2880; Kevin A. 941-7474; Registration Committee, P.O. Box 6821, Arlington, VA 22206-0821

WASHINGTON: Apr. 8-10, 1988; 3rd Annual Washington-Northern Idaho Regional Convention; to submit a tape contact Rhonda A., 6622 W. Yellowstone, Kennewick, WA 99336



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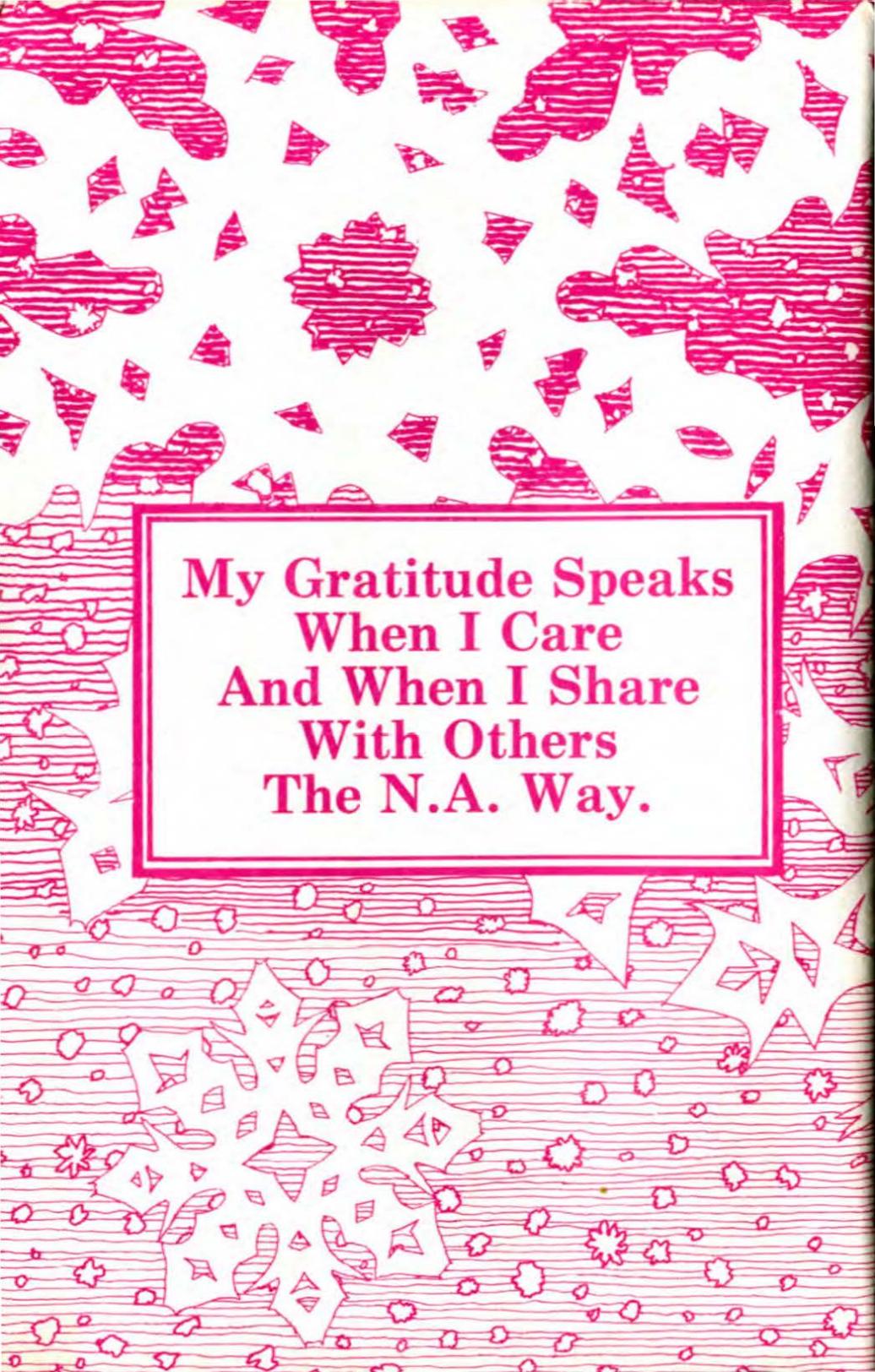
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THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving
2. God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name
6. *to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.*
7. Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than
11. *promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.*
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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