

THE **N.A. Way**  
M A G A Z I N E

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**N.A. Way Classics!**

**Simple, Quiet Service**

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**How Do You Say  
"Clean" in Japanese?**

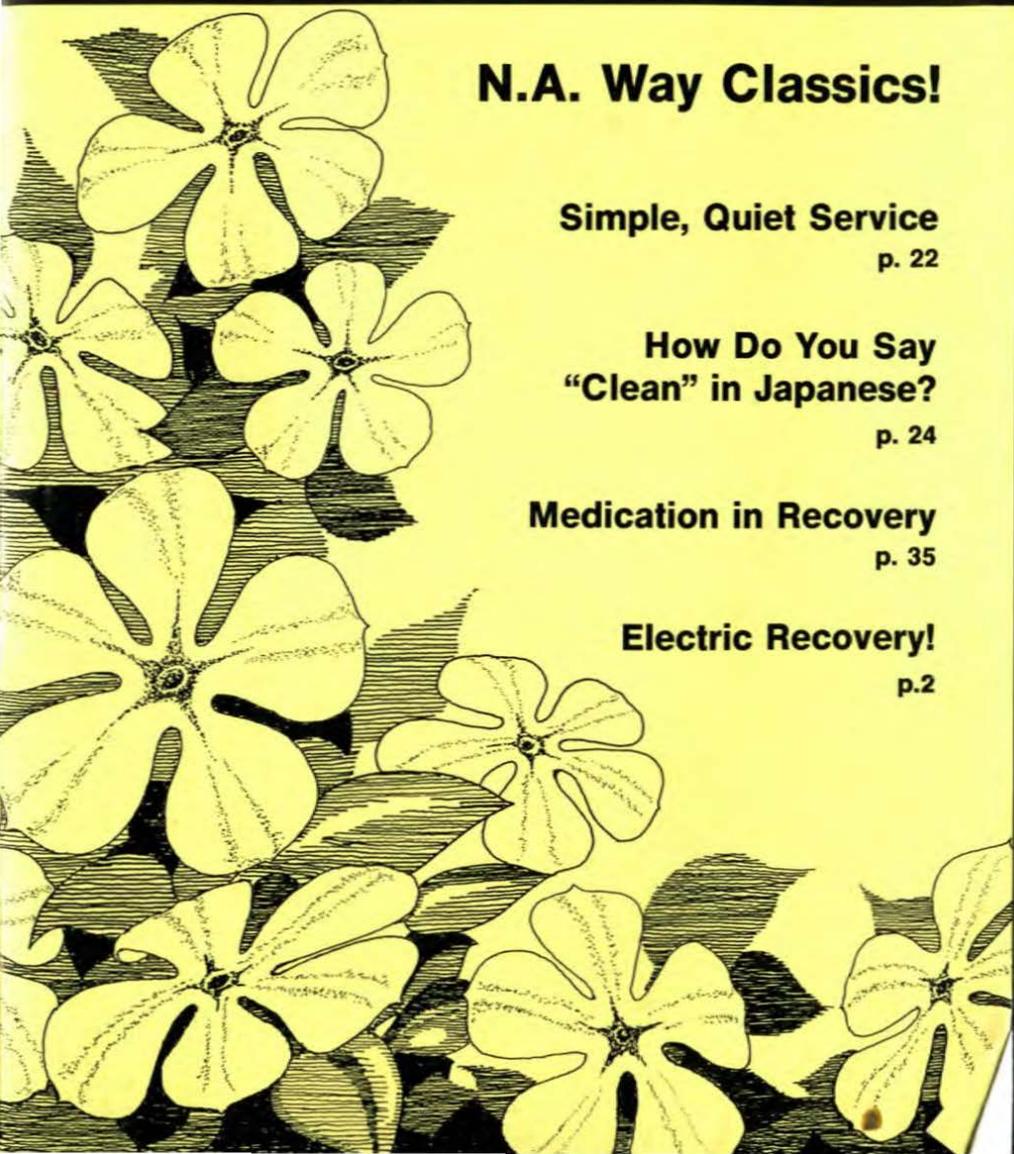
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**Medication in Recovery**

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**Electric Recovery!**

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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.
11. 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.
12. 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 N.A. Way MAGAZINE

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*The International Journal of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous*

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The N.A. Way magazine welcomes the participation of its readers. You are invited to share with the entire N.A. Fellowship in our monthly international journal. Send us your experience in recovery, your views on N.A. matters, and feature items. The N.A. Way presents the experiences and opinions of individual members of Narcotics Anonymous. The opinions expressed 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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# The Glamorous Life

I'm not sure I was born an addict. I do know that as a child I felt and acted in ways which were beyond my control, and which eventually made getting high seem like an answer to prayer. I was deathly afraid. My brothers (one now clean many years in N.A.) could torment me just by telling me they were *thinking* about hitting me. I felt alone and unwanted, so I shoplifted pockets full of gum from drugstores and tried to buy myself some friends. I felt undistinguished, so when the teacher put a board on the wall with stars for each book we'd read, I lied: eighty stars for me. Number one or nothing. The irony of all this, looking back, is that I was plenty smart and had lots of friends. What I felt had nothing to do with reality.

Most of us in N.A. didn't want to grow up to be junkies. I did. I'd read a few stories about the strange, sleazy, romantic dream of addiction, and I was intrigued. No more worrying about who liked me—there was camaraderie

among dope fiends. No more concern about whether I was a special person—who's more special than the stoned-out addict laughing at the "squares"? No more fear—only euphoria, when-

ever I chose. That was for me.

I had the distinction of being the only kid in the eighth grade to overdose on a monthly basis. I came as close as a thirteen year old boy could

come to death, over and over. I was busted twice that first year of using, and that humiliated my middle-class family. But I didn't care. I was willing to pay the price, whatever it was, to live the glamorous life.

After high school it was a pretty standard war story. Married, divorced.

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*"Nasty wine,  
ditchweed, and  
flophouses. Ah, yes,  
the glamorous life..."*

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Caught embezzling thousands from a friend who'd hired me as a bookkeeper. Three weeks in the army—they decided they could get along without a soldier who OD'd and passed out on parade grounds. But the parade continued. Minimum wage jobs held just long enough to pay a month's rent and score. Nasty wine and ditchweed by the railroad tracks. Flophouses and mooched-away friendships. Ah, yes, the glamorous life...

Somewhere in there I stopped making believe I believed in God or anything else. That's when the suicide attempts started. Life was getting too painful to make going on worth the bother. Everything I tried to fix things up with—work, school, affairs, causes—got all messed up. Getting high when I could was no longer compensation enough. The only hope I knew was a girl by that name who died of hepatitis.

I bought myself a bunch of extension cords. I mapped the electric lines in my apartment and tied a line from each fuse into a cord. I filled the

bathub, grabbed the four lines, and stepped in. Nothing happened—just a tingle and a buzzing noise. Ten seconds later I let go the cords, got out of the tub, and looked up toward the ceiling. “You’re not going to let me go, are you?” I screamed. There were two possibilities:

a) that addicts do not conduct electricity; or,

b) that I had been saved from a certain death at my own hand by the miraculous intervention of a powerful, loving spiritual being.

Through a long series of coincidences, I found myself a couple of weeks later, detoxed, in an N.A. meeting. My brother, his wife (also an N.A. member), and a few others cared for me when I couldn’t care for myself. The first few months were real rough. I was so afraid it wasn’t going to catch, and so certain I would die if it didn’t, that “just for today” seemed distant. But the black episodes were interspersed with some strong, direct assurances that it would work if I’d just trust.

You people told me to get a sponsor to help me work the Steps. I was too afraid to ask a stranger to spend time with someone as messed up as me, so I used my brother’s wife as a “secret sponsor.” When I couldn’t talk, but had to, she knew it, and would ask me to tell her what was going on. When I felt cut out of the friendly circles talking after meetings, she would bring me over to meet someone. When I felt like I didn’t belong in N.A. because I’d never shot heroin, she carefully explained that addiction was far more powerful psychologically than physically anyway, so what did it matter? But my insides resisted. Could I stop

using dope on my own? Lord knows I had every reason in the world to stop, but how could I learn to want to stop?

She shared her experience with the Steps—not her theory, but her ex-

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*“There were two possibilities: (a) that addicts do not conduct electricity; or, (b) that I had been saved from certain death by a loving spiritual being.”*

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perience. According to everything I’ve ever heard about who should sponsor whom, she was all wrong. But, as she says, “God works in ridiculous ways, Her wonders to perform.” And by the way, I now have a man sponsoring me who’s not a relative, with whom I share on a regular basis, who knows me better than any other human on earth, and who has saved my sanity and my life on more occasions than one. For the long run, what’s suggested usually works best—but for those first few months, it took what it took.

My own involvement in my recovery was intense in that period. Every morning over coffee I read a chapter from the basic text of another Twelve Step fellowship (ours had not yet been printed). My attention span was pretty short, so I took notes during meetings to help me concentrate. I felt like I had to do everything in my power to grasp what was being offered or I’d die. I grabbed people after meetings sometimes and tried to articulate the ques-

tions I had about what they had said. Sometimes I succeeded, but sometimes I was only able to smile and hug them and say, “Thank you.” I prayed every morning and every night. Sometimes I took long walks through the desert and hills surrounding Vegas, just being quiet and trying to feel some comfortable contact with a Power greater than me.

Once, frustrated with a seeming lack of progress, I asked a fellow member for help. He suggested that I was no more able to manage my program than I’d been able to manage my life. My life had been given back to me, a day at a time. And my program was coming just the same way, given to me, everything I needed, right on schedule.

When I was able to work a little, I was given a little work. It was a half-time minimum wage clerk’s job at a chain store, but it was just as much as I could handle and it just met my financial needs. Sometimes it was too much, and I would hide out for a little in the storeroom and pray, “Please, God, keep me clean, and keep me from losing my mind, because I can’t hold it together right now.” I’d notice a couple hours later that things were going smoothly without my having been aware of any transition. It was hard adjusting to work (at the time I was hired, I hadn’t held a job in almost two years), but I did. And as soon as the adjustment was complete, a better job came along.

Facing myself, admitting who I was to another person, seeking aid from a Higher Power in dealing with my defects and taking responsibility for them led me into service. I’d had a spiritual awakening, a growing awareness that I was alive again as a result of

working the Steps of N.A. I wanted to make sure that what had been available for me would be available for others. A year ago I started a new meeting. That meeting became a group with a regular secretary and GSR. Now it meets three times a week, and is one

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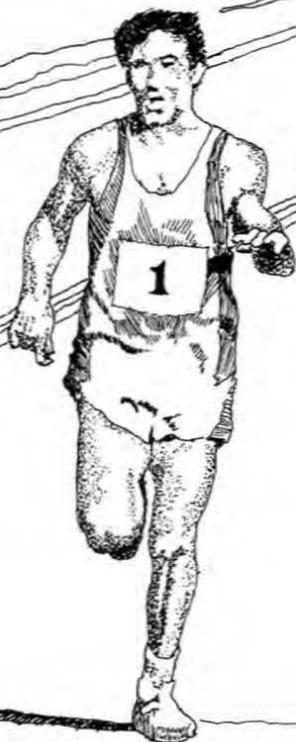
of the most solid groups (I think!) in our area.

I’ve worked the N.A. Twelfth Step directly, sharing where I’ve come from and what I’ve found with newcomers. My life has expanded. I’m not just L.M.—I share in the recovery of those I sponsor. I’m living their first few months with them and seeing my own recovery in a whole new way to boot. I’m not just L.M.—I’m part of a worldwide fellowship of people just like me, growing together as one addict helps another. I earn my own living, I’ve not ripped anyone off in a long time, I’m vitally useful to others, I have folk I love dearly who love me back. I’m alive, awake, and free.

N.A. members have a dream: “to assure that no addict seeking recovery need die without having had a chance to find a better way of life, from this day forward may we better provide the necessary services.” Those services were there for me: the group, the sponsor, the fellowship, the literature. They saved my life. They gave me a home. Today I try to give what I have to continue to make that dream come true. Now, that’s the glamorous life!

L.M., Nevada

# Leadership in N.A.



from February 1985

I've always been a rebel. If authority figures believed one way, I would try to help them see the flaws in their thinking (and I wondered why I had feelings of rejection around them). As

my addiction progressed, that rebellious nature was often carried to the extremes of belligerence. At my worst, I was a competitive, self-centered person.

some people looked to me for advice or support. As my disease progressed, and my rebellious nature worsened, I loved playing the rebel-leader role. I was willing to confront the teacher for a laugh from my peers, or to be a spokesman in class for the drug users. I learned to equate leadership with the

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*"If nobody who was settling into stability and maturity stuck around, was it any wonder that N.A. wasn't stable and mature?"*

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power rush that came with commanding center stage.

Eventually, whatever leadership role I used to play among peers was lost to my addiction. People lost respect for me as it became more obvious that addiction had control of me. Any influence I exerted over people (which was minimal) was reduced to manipulation or intimidation. I was in a state of self-hate over that, and I was using heavily on top of all those feelings, when I found N.A.

The first order of business was to clean up. I went to meetings, got a sponsor, and gave my best shot to the Twelve Steps. That gross over-simplification pretty well sums up my first couple of years in N.A. Throughout that time, I regularly heard such things as, "To keep it, you have to give it away," and "Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers." I knew that my continued

I was told at various times growing up that I had "leadership qualities." I could see there was some truth to that. Among friends, I often made the decisions; I served on student council;

growth depended upon getting involved in sponsorship and service.

By that time, some life was pumped back into me, and those "leadership qualities," whatever they are, were beginning to re-emerge. People were beginning to ask me to be their sponsor, and I was taking a look at group level service. About then, I noticed a curious thing about Narcotics Anonymous. Members at about that same stage of personal development in recovery were leaving. They were either viewing N.A. as immature and non-conformist, so they were switching over to another fellowship that had a lot of stable "old-timers" around, or they were "graduating" from N.A., often to come back later after a relapse. That didn't sit too well with me.

**I**ronically, there was some truth to what they were saying, but that truth stemmed from the fact that people like them wouldn't stick around and change things! If nobody in N.A. who was settling into a lifestyle of stability and maturity stuck around to provide those things to the N.A. community, was it any wonder that the local N.A. atmosphere wasn't stable and mature?

A couple of things were obvious to me. One, I didn't really have the age, maturity or depth in recovery to do much about all of that, and two, I was damn well going to roll up my sleeves and try. First I made a firm commitment not to leave N.A. I was going to stick it out, which was really no sweat because I love N.A. Secondly, I had to muster some support.

I began to discuss this issue with others who had been around a while. Soon we had a core group of people who were committed to the idea of

going to work on the basic atmosphere of the group. We decided that the best approach would be to start a new group from scratch that would be meticulously Traditions-oriented, that would focus squarely on solutions via the Twelve Steps, and that would actively present service as an attractive opportunity for growth.

We knew we didn't have all the answers to the problems that would arise, so before we ever even held a meeting of our new group, we began reading every scrap of literature on the Traditions that we could find. That meant looking at some of the literature of the other fellowship, since we had none of our own, and the Traditions originated there. We met as a steering committee weekly to discuss our reading, and to design our group in a way that best highlighted the Steps, the Traditions and service. We settled on a speaker meeting format, and began to have regular meetings.

**H**appily, this is an N.A. success story. The group took off like a rocket, and though there have been some ups and downs as we learned about trusted servant rotation, it remains today, almost five years later, a thriving, recovery-oriented N.A. group. Several other groups have since sprung up in our relatively small city; we formed an area, and then a region. Today there is an abundance of recovering addicts around who go to only N.A., who have a deep commitment to the fellowship and are becoming productive members of society.

Together, we learned a great deal about leadership through all this. First of all, the phrase, "we have no leaders," is simply incorrect. An older member once challenged that state-

ment in this way: "Who," he asked, "are but trusted servants, according to Tradition Two?" Leadership in N.A. is a living, vital need. Tradition Two simply speaks to leadership style. Our leaders serve, they don't govern.

Another lesson we learned, sometimes the hard way, is that to be a good leader in N.A., one must be an equally good follower. That is, the group will welcome the leadership of a member who is well informed and open to the opinions of others. A leader needs to be well-read in all conference-approved literature, and to keep channels of communication open with available "elder statesmen" in the fellowship. We found, when we had no local N.A. elder statesmen, that those old A.A. fossils often had some pearls of wisdom for us too. Today the N.A. experience is abundant around the country, so the phone has also been a valuable tool.

A good leader, as a good follower, will respect group conscience. In our town, some have tried to dominate service committee meetings with passionate, power-driven speeches, and usually only succeeded in intimidating and dividing the group. Others have tried to speak from a well-reasoned, well-informed, dispassionate vantage point, and then accepted the democratic decision of group conscience on the matter. The tone of those meetings feels a lot healthier to me.

**A** leader in N.A. is also a role model. Whether we face it or not, after some clean time, we become an influence on newer members. One challenge of responsible leadership is to become aware of that influence, and learn to "practice these principles in all our affairs," and carry ourselves as "ac-

ceptable, responsible and productive members of society."

Finally, a good leader knows when to step back a pace and let someone else don the mantle of leadership. "Trusted servants" who jealously guard their turf, and won't yield the reins to the

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believed one way, I  
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thinking."*

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next generation of members, usually end up in some real trouble with this disease. I have felt those growing pains, and I wish them on no one. The true leader, on the other hand, will trust group conscience (even when it needs to learn from its own mistakes) and will recede into the background as a resource for the new people on the "front lines."

Narcotics Anonymous has given me an arena in which to work out some of those old character defects, and learn how to cooperate with people. Many times I have sat in a staff meeting at work, or a committee meeting for some volunteer organization, and thanked my Higher Power for using N.A. to give me a chance at a new personality. I can be a member of society today without secretly feeling like an infiltrator. I have learned some basic principles of cooperating with others in this world from a rag-tag band of rebels learning from each other at the same time. How we did that is beyond me. Beyond us all...

*R.H., North Dakota*

## New Attitudes

Our fellowship contains some people who spent their lives before N.A. as rebels, radicals, fanatics, outcasts—fighting society, resenting authority, scorning acceptance while hiding a deep-seated belief that they could never be worthy of acceptance in any group but one whose norms suited their lack of sound principle. I know; I am one of them.

I found settings I thought suited me—the beatnik scene, the radical political movement, free speech, free love, free penicillin at the free clinic, motorcycle clubs, drug dealing groups, the travelling rock and roll life—any place I could hide from, and rage at, society, the establishment, authority, anyone who didn't accept my current beliefs. I was obsessed with freedom; I hoped "free" meant without responsibility, without discipline, without anything to interfere with my self-indulgence. Being acceptable to me meant agreeing with my ideas.

Attitudes like these helped damage my mind and spirit, and weakened me to the point where I was ready, however skeptically, to try some new ideas when I arrived at the doors of N.A.

The concept of addiction as a disease seemed to fit my idea that there was something basically wrong with



me besides all the sickness that came with obtaining and using my drugs. Of course the possibility of distorting any of our principles always exists—"Hey, what do you expect? I'm an addict! Powerless..." But something paradox-

ical was being offered me.

On one hand, I was told I had a disease for which I was not responsible; that acted as a guilt reducer. On the other, it was suggested I take a moral inventory, admit the exact nat-

ure of my wrongs, and make amends to those I had harmed, which sounded an awful lot like I was responsible. Sorting this out took some time, as did letting go of the fear that this was some sort of religious thing in disguise.

To my perception, there were many religious trappings here—ritual, prescribed prayers, repetitive formulas, narrow- or closed-mindedness, a fierce loyalty that seemed to express itself in fear and hostility towards "outside" and "out there"; "our way is the only way." Careful examination of the tradi-

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*"I found settings I thought suited me—the beatnik scene, the radical political movement, free speech, free love, free penicillin at the free clinic..."*

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tions showed that these attitudes were not N.A. attitudes.

A few years' experience with our principles can remove most of the doubts, fears, denial and closed-mindedness. We are no longer threatened by ideas other than our own, we have no need to preach the N.A. way as gospel; experience and confidence in our principles replace speculation and desperate hope. We have no need to impose our views on anyone, in or out of the fellowship. Our recovery speaks for itself, and that fact forms the core of our public relations policy of attraction, not promotion.

Our traditions free us from most

disputes with the rest of the world. We have no need to engage in scientific or philosophical debates about the nature of addiction, or anything else. To do so might invite controversy from those who disagree, and in the long run the loser of such debate would be the suffering addict not referred to us by those who disagree. Our greatest strength is our combined subjective experience of addiction and recovery, not any imagined objective expertise on medical, legal, religious or scientific issues. Our concepts work for us, and we demonstrate this by our recovery. To the public and particularly the professional community, maintaining abstinence and becoming a responsible, productive member of society are probably the most impressive aspects of our recovery. As individuals and as a fellowship, we need to avoid smug, 'know it all,' 'my way or no way' attitudes that win no friends for N.A.

Trying to educate the professional community or the general public on the nature of addiction seems to be outside the spirit of our traditions. Even within the fellowship, disagreement and long-winded discussions about addiction may divert us from carrying the message of recovery. Better this time were spent discussing our principles than the too-numerous symptoms of our disease. Let's leave science to scientists, law to lawyers, theology to theologians. To do otherwise does not enhance the welfare of N.A., and may promote disrespect or even antagonism toward us.

We keep what we have only with vigilance. What we have is a great deal of personal freedom, unencumbered by dogmatic rules, without fear of diverse opinions outside or inside the

fellowship. N.A. has a great many friends among the public, even among those who do not agree with all our ideas. Who could argue with the results of our program? More addicts are recovering today than at any time in

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*"We are no longer threatened by ideas other than our own; experience and confidence in our principles replace speculation and desperate hope."*

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history; we are no longer the burden to society that many of us once were; hope is now reaching places where there was none. Whether the rest of the world shares our ideas doesn't really matter. What matters is that N.A. remains attractive—that the world knows by our example that addicts do recover. Our friends have been won not by argument, prestige-seeking, or education, but through adherence to our principles, guided by our loving Ultimate Authority.

The experience of our predecessors can be helpful here: "Let's be friendly with our friends." We no longer have an adversary relationship with anyone. New attitudes, based on the spiritual values of our steps and traditions, free us as individuals and as a fellowship to live and grow and enjoy life—and carry our message to those suffering as we once did.

*S.L., Pennsylvania*

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## Finding a Sponsor

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*from June 1985*

When I entered N.A. eight years ago, the messages that came through to me the strongest were: don't use, go to meetings every day, and get a sponsor!

How does one get a sponsor? Early on I heard something that made sense: "Listen up at meetings, and you may hear the person you need."

My first sponsor would finish his sharing at meetings with the following

statement: "If no one today has told you that they love you, let me be the first, because you people gave me that love when I walked through these doors."

Sponsors, in my opinion, are just as diverse as are human personalities. Some are into "tough love," some may be on a quiet spiritual path, others

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*"If no one today has told you that they love you, let me be the first."*

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may be funny and carefree. Ideally, we might like to have a sponsor who's a little of each. One important aspect of sponsorship is finding that certain someone we can be totally honest with—someone we can let our defenses down with, who practices the Twelve Steps of N.A. in his or her daily life.

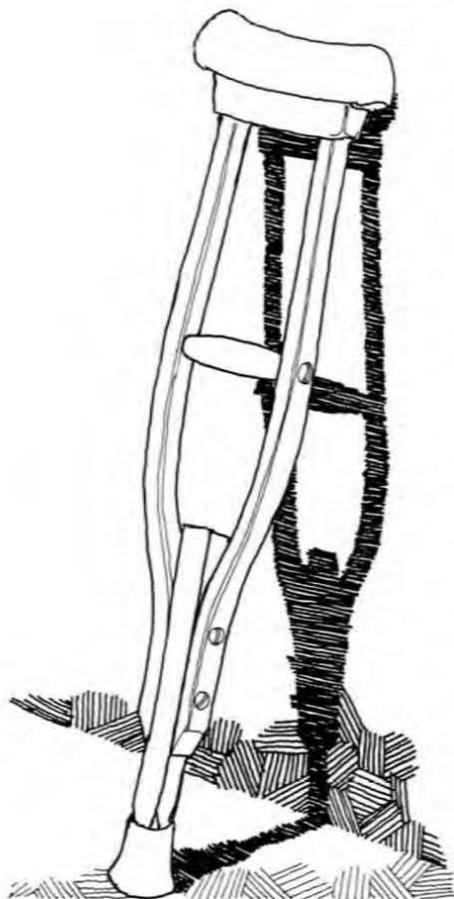
Our rapid and continuous growth has enriched N.A. with an abundance of newcomers and relative newcomers (about six months to one year). When these men and women have practiced, say, the first five steps, they must be encouraged to reach out to the newest of newcomers to share their experience, strength and hope.

For me personally, I thank God for the newcomer, because time and time again the newcomer has saved my hide; by helping him, I am relieved from the bondage of self.

For me, sponsorship is a two-fold experience. First I am able to share freely my experience with the Twelve Steps. Secondly, I gain a new friend.

*J.C., California*

# Coming Home



“What was going through your mind?” someone asked me after I picked up the “first one” again. I had been clean for a year and a half as an active member of our N.A. Fellowship. I then became complacent. Oh, I still went through the motions: going to meetings (but starting to be critical of others), carrying the message (more

out of a sense of duty than love), staying in contact with my sponsor (but neglecting to share those things that were *really* bothering me). After all, I was drug-free, wasn't I? I mean, isn't that what N.A. is about—staying off drugs? Wow, I had really missed the whole thing. “Powerless over drugs.” I had made a *selective surrender*—to the drugs, not to the addiction. I had made considerable progress in dealing with my drug problem, but *very* little in treating my problem of addiction: the emotions, the insecurities, the ego imbalance, the fears and all the rest that are best summed up by the phrase, “the inability to live comfortably.” *That's my addiction.* Drugs were the treatment for this illness until they too began to fail.

But most of all I stopped *caring*—about me, about others, about N.A. I had stopped caring because I had stopped growing, and I had stopped growing because I was not treating my addiction with the Twelve Steps of recovery. I didn't really understand why you needed the steps to stay clean. Oh, I used steps one, two, three and twelve, but take an inventory? Not me. The result was predictable: lack of growth = lack of change = apathy = discomfort = relapse = return to the old way of life = extreme loneliness, fear and self-hatred = bitter ends (jails, institutions and death).

Well, I still haven't answered the question that I started this with: “What was going through my mind?” Even with the problems, misunderstandings about my illness, indifference, etc., that I was suffering from, I didn't really use any of those things as a reason for getting loaded. I knew there is no reason for getting loaded. I

didn't think that I could handle “just one,” and I knew I was powerless. I also realized that I would shortly return to my old life of “ripping and running.” And I had the feeling that I was giving up the best thing I had ever found for the thing that had been killing me. But I went ahead anyway, even when my Higher Power gave me one last chance to back up, say no, and turn certain disaster into something positive.

When I dropped a fellow N.A. member off at the doctor's office, I drove away and there on the old corner was an old friend. I parked my car and walked up to him. But before I said a word, he spoke up: “Man, I been hearing about you and those meetings you've been going to. I wanna check those out.” (He sold dope, but he was also an addict himself.) Now here was my Higher Power giving me one last chance to save myself. But I had already given up. I replied, “F— that, where's the stuff?” A few minutes later, my only relapse began. Two years, two more institutions, and untold amounts of misery later, it ended.

Finally, I'm ready to confess what was going through my mind: this crazy notion that when I'm ready to give this up I'll just go back to N.A. and start my recovery again. If drug addiction was only that simple... All along I wanted to come back, but my pride, my ego, my *addiction* wouldn't permit it. (I'd forgotten all about the grace of God.) I tried to get straight on my birthday, the Fourth of July, Christmas, my sponsor's birthday, on weekends, at treatment centers, for someone else, and for my job. The results were predictable.

Only when all my crutches were gone (some detached with love, some

simply detached, most left hurriedly) and the drugs stopped working completely (an hour after my last shot I was crying my eyes out), did I both “want what we have to offer” and become “willing to make the effort to get it.”

Today, with two months' clean time, I am clear about what I have to do to

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*“What was going through my mind? This crazy notion that when I'm ready to give this up I'll just go back to N.A. and start my recovery again.”*

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recover. It's simple. All I have to do is change my whole way of life. And the most important message I have for every member of this fellowship is also simple. Before you decide to go out there again, take a long look. If you're eating, you should always see exactly what's at the end of your fork. So take your time and think it through. *It ain't easy to come back to N.A.*

And really, folks, I didn't learn a thing I didn't already know. But the drug learned that it had me tighter than ever, controlled me more totally, and had even added some new choreography to the “junkie jig” it made me dance. So a word to the wise guys: there's nothing new out there. And for myself, I'm very grateful to be back home where I feel safe. I love you very much for being here and loving me as I am.

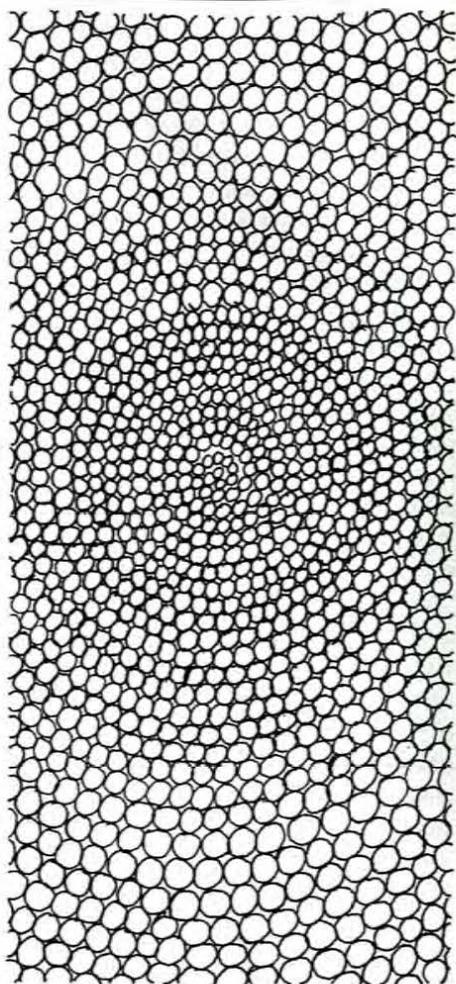
*Anonymous, Tennessee*

# One is Too Many, a Thousand Never Enough

Last November I received a letter from my first sponsor who had moved to another state. She shared a lot with me that I didn't fully comprehend until recently. I told myself, "She's right; I'd better do something about staying away from men in the program and start going to meetings for what they're for, to help the addict who still suffers, including myself." I guess the bottom line was I hadn't inflicted enough pain on myself to surrender this area of my addiction. I was abstinent, but I wasn't changing. I wasn't willing to work the Sixth and Seventh Steps.

Here are some excerpts from the letter she wrote me. Please read it and use what you can:

The first thing I need to share with you is what I've learned about our hometown fellowship since I've moved away from it and can look more honestly at it. This has been hard for me to accept, because of the great love for my friends there. The truth, as I've been able to see it, is that we are so



small a fellowship there that we hang on to our old self-centered ways. We put too much into fellowship and not enough into personal programs. Addicts are self-centered people. It is only through recovery from addiction—living the Steps—that we are freed from this aspect of our addiction. Step One brings abstinence. Steps Two through Five bring a little peace into our personal lives. It is Steps Six through Twelve, though, that let us become caring, sharing people, parts of the world, not just takers. Finding

meaning in each of the Steps in my own life came from a lot of pain, after trying not to have to really change. Maybe sharing what happened to me will help you see just what I'm saying. I saw the pain in your eyes. From what I saw in your words and actions, maybe you are ready to surrender. This is what it took for me to finally actively surrender.

When I first got clean, I found that just the First Step would keep me clean. I didn't share very much, because I thought my personal issues were "our secret." I found out that all I had to do was just stop using, admit I couldn't use just for today, and make new friends in the fellowship. If I filled all my time in being with these people and going to a lot of meetings, I wouldn't use! At first this was more than enough; not for long, though.

I could be around others, talk a good talk, and convince them that I was recovering, but inside I knew I was just as sick as before; only now I didn't have the drugs to hide from myself in. This pain motivated me to do a Fourth and Fifth Step. A little help came from this, yet I was still acting self-centered and self-destructive, and I needed more attention than before. Just like when I was using, I could only think of myself; others were there only when I needed them. I really thought of myself as this nice sharing person, yet I was the only one receiving. I knew I was doing all these things, yet I couldn't stop myself. Then I became so demanding that even the people who loved me started to pull away. The more they pulled away, the more I demanded. Round and round it went.

I knew I had to change fast or I would lose the respect of all my friends. My first Sixth Step was moti-

vated out of this self-centeredness. I knew I couldn't keep doing the obvious cruel things like "Thirteenth Stepping" any more. I had found that abstinence was easy in a little item, so I simply applied that to sex. It only

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*"Inside I knew I was just as sick as before; only now I didn't have the drugs to hide from myself in."*

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required giving it up, not a lot of active change. It also looked good to other people; they would think I was better. But once again I found that simple abstinence was just not enough for me if I wanted to get better.

I had heard people talk about "walking my prayers," and I told myself I was doing that by not having sex. Yet in truth I had expected God to do it all. I would take the little effort to abstain, but was unwilling to really actively change. I ran around to every person and place I could find so they could make me happy. It didn't work. I relapsed on sex once more.

Boy, did that ever open my eyes! There had been no real change deep inside, only superficial change to gain acceptance. I took a Sixth and Seventh Step—the real ones. I had to look at the defects in my life that *affect others*. I actively worked at not being the only person in my world. I actively stopped using people. I actively stopped using the fellowship to carry me through life. I stopped running to meetings every day—that is, I stopped believing that they were the only part

of the program that could help me. I learned to use meetings as they were intended to be used. I discovered some great things! I found that when I put the work into changing that if I ran out of steam I could pray and God would give me the energy to keep trying.

I finally understood why we tell new

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*"I had heard people talk about 'walking my prayers,' and I told myself I was doing that by not having sex. Yet in truth I had expected God to do it all."*

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people to go to ninety meetings in ninety days. It's because they have no personal program to work between meetings yet! By this time I did, and I came to understand that meetings are not my whole recovery. They are there to share what this program and my God have to offer. Meetings add to my recovery, but they can't make up for it. I found that once I learned to base my recovery in the principles of the Twelve Steps, three or four meetings a week were plenty. I also found that I must guard against using those meetings as an escape, instead of facing life on its own terms and living it. My God gave me this insight when I needed it most. An important part of my recovery is my effort to become a more responsible, productive adult—to grow up and finally take care of the business of my own life.

I pray that you have really read this letter, and accept the love and pain it has taken to share it with you. This

may be the only thing of real value I can ever give you. "Work the Steps or die." This has been the only thing of real value that my sponsor has given me. This is what a sponsor is for—not to fix us, enable us, judge or preach to us, but to explain how they live the Steps in their daily lives, and share this with us. What we do with it in the end is up to us.

Sent with all my love...

*At the time I received this letter, I had just broken abstinence in the area of sex. I was pretty upset with myself. It was with a newcomer, and he relapsed. I knew he had a choice about picking up the first one, but I didn't give him a chance to find anything else in N.A., like a program to fall back on. I used that new person, like I used other members, for my own instant gratification, not thinking about how my actions affect other people.*

*Until recently, I didn't accept how fatal this disease really is. Another man I took advantage of early in my recovery died of his addiction. It really hurts that he didn't get a chance to take advantage of this program and recover.*

*I guess it's time to do more than just talk about changing in this area. The pain of not changing has become greater than the pain of changing. I've been forced to look at the hideous side of the disease: it kills. So next time you see a newcomer of the opposite sex you're attracted to, why don't you give that person (and yourself) a break. Send men to men and women to women. Give that addict a chance at this program, and at life.*

*L.B., Michigan*

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# Recipe for Serenity

from July 1986



Gather these condiments of your character before you begin to take the First Step:

1 large helping of gratitude (avoid half measures)

1 full cup of acceptance sauce  
Several thick slices of thoughtfulness  
and generosity

1 pound of everyday cheer and  
courtesy

Half gallon of greater power punch,  
laced with lots of patience and  
tolerance

1 peace of mind

1 teaspoonful of trust and tenderness

A few dashes of calm, consistency and  
cooperation

A pinch of punctuality

A sprinkling of "Easy Does It"

And lots of love!

Start with a large mixing bowl of human kindness, add one large helping of gratitude (and don't forget about those half measures).

At this turning point we're ready to mix in a full cup of acceptance sauce, and bring to a slow simmer of understanding and compassion. Lay on several thick slices of thoughtfulness and generosity and one pound of everyday joy, cheer and courteousness. Stir smoothly and gently to reach desired consistency. Add slowly one half gallon of greater power punch laced with generous portions of patience and tolerance. Serve with a total peace of mind and several teaspoons of trust and tenderness. Dust lightly with a pinch of punctuality and a few dashes each of calm, consistency and cooperation. Then, with a sprinkling of "Easy Does It" and lots of tender love and care—turn it all over, let go, and let God. To be served with good wishes, an appetizer of optimism, tossed merriment and a casserole of sweet thoughts.

Yield: enough for the whole N.A. family!

*R.C., Florida*

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from December 1985

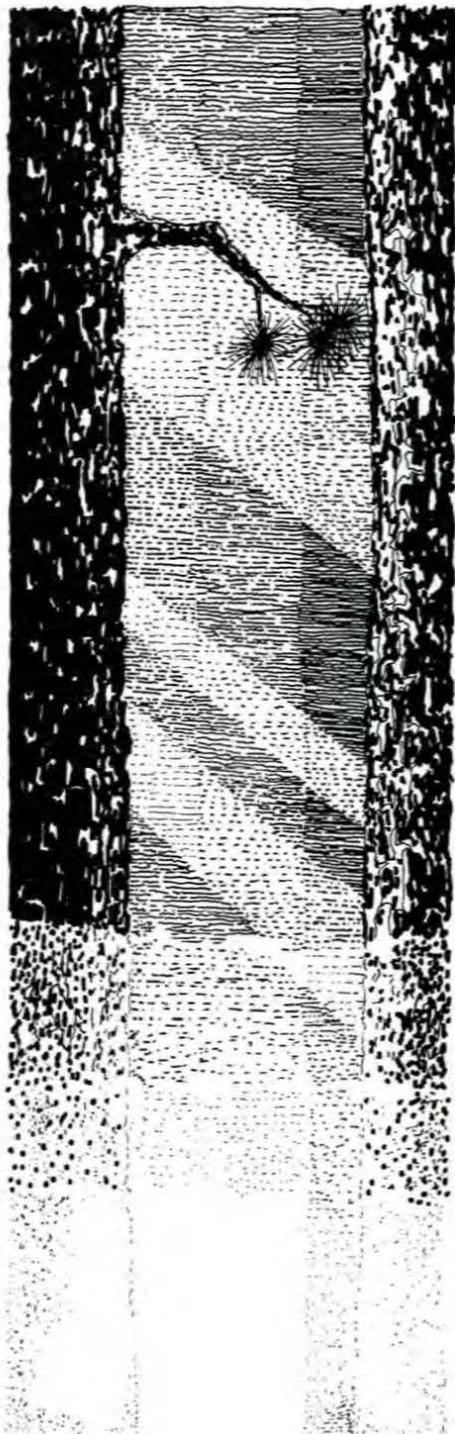
# The Trip Has Just Begun

One day last winter I got a notion that I would like to jump in my car and see the USA. I sent off to the WSO for a directory of N.A. meetings, and proceeded to put away all the money that I was able to save for the next few months. This gave me time to really get excited about a trip that was definitely going to happen.

I left Atlanta at 11:00 p.m. with a wide grin and a spirit of adventure that was to lead me to the coolest experience of my life. Only H.P. and the roads would guide my path. I just had a direction: west, via N.A. meetings.

The dawn seemed to come quickly as my mind raced through the night with an uncertain reality and the anticipation of the journey that lay ahead. The sun was high by the time I passed through the Ozarks. The excitement, the music from my tape deck, and of course the coffee, would stave off the impending snooze.

The mountains around Santa Fe were beautiful. The first night in the wilderness was special, as a clean



addict laid eyes upon city lights thousands of feet below and stars light-years above. The next night I would feel the warmth and love of other addicts around a candlelit room among those lights below.

The drive up the California coast was awesome. How special a treat it was for an eastern addict to experience the likes of western N.A. recovery in places like L.A. and San Francisco. The motorists driving by must have wondered about me riding across the span of the Golden Gate Bridge with a constant smile from ear to ear that I could not wipe off of my face.

I found myself alone in a redwood forest one morning, as the grey misty fog blanketed the lower half of the grove. Turning around, I noticed distinct angel rays suddenly unfold across the forest from the incoming sunlight. For what must have been about five minutes, a tingle went across my head and down my back. My whole body became numb. The small figure in these woods began to cry as the magnificent spirit of the moment overwhelmed him. He was not alone.

Driving down the road I thought about what had happened. I was clean, and had just experienced one of the neatest feelings and most beautiful sights of my life. This is one of the greatest things about recovery. I can feel and see. Before, I could pretty much predict how I was going to feel, depending on which chemicals I was into that day. I am glad that they brought me to a point where, through N.A., I can see that being clean can yield experiences far greater than I ever could have imagined.

Miracles do happen. I found myself in Pendleton, Oregon on a Sunday

night at 7:00 p.m. The directory pointed me to a meeting that I just happened to find in the nick of time. About twenty-five addicts showed up in this tiny town for a weekly meeting that was simply dynamite.

Addicts were not the only ones I met. Montana introduced me to deer,

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*"The first night in the wilderness was special, as a clean addict laid eyes upon city lights thousands of feet below and stars light-years above."*

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antelope, coyote, moose, wild turkey, a bald eagle, mountain goats, and two bears. The mountain goats had their meeting on a ledge in Glacier National Park. As I understand it, they are powerless over bears.

It would be hard to express all the many instances of joy, fun and serenity that this trip unfolded. It is only because I am clean that I could enjoy such a trip, and it is because of the Fellowship of N.A. that I am clean today. I am very thankful for that.

On a Sunday morning six weeks and twelve thousand miles later I arrived back on the expressway which circles Atlanta. Tears filled my eyes because this "trip of my life" was over. This was a time to call my sponsor. At that moment his experience, strength and hope helped me to understand something. The trip has just begun—welcome to N.A.!

*E.O., Georgia*

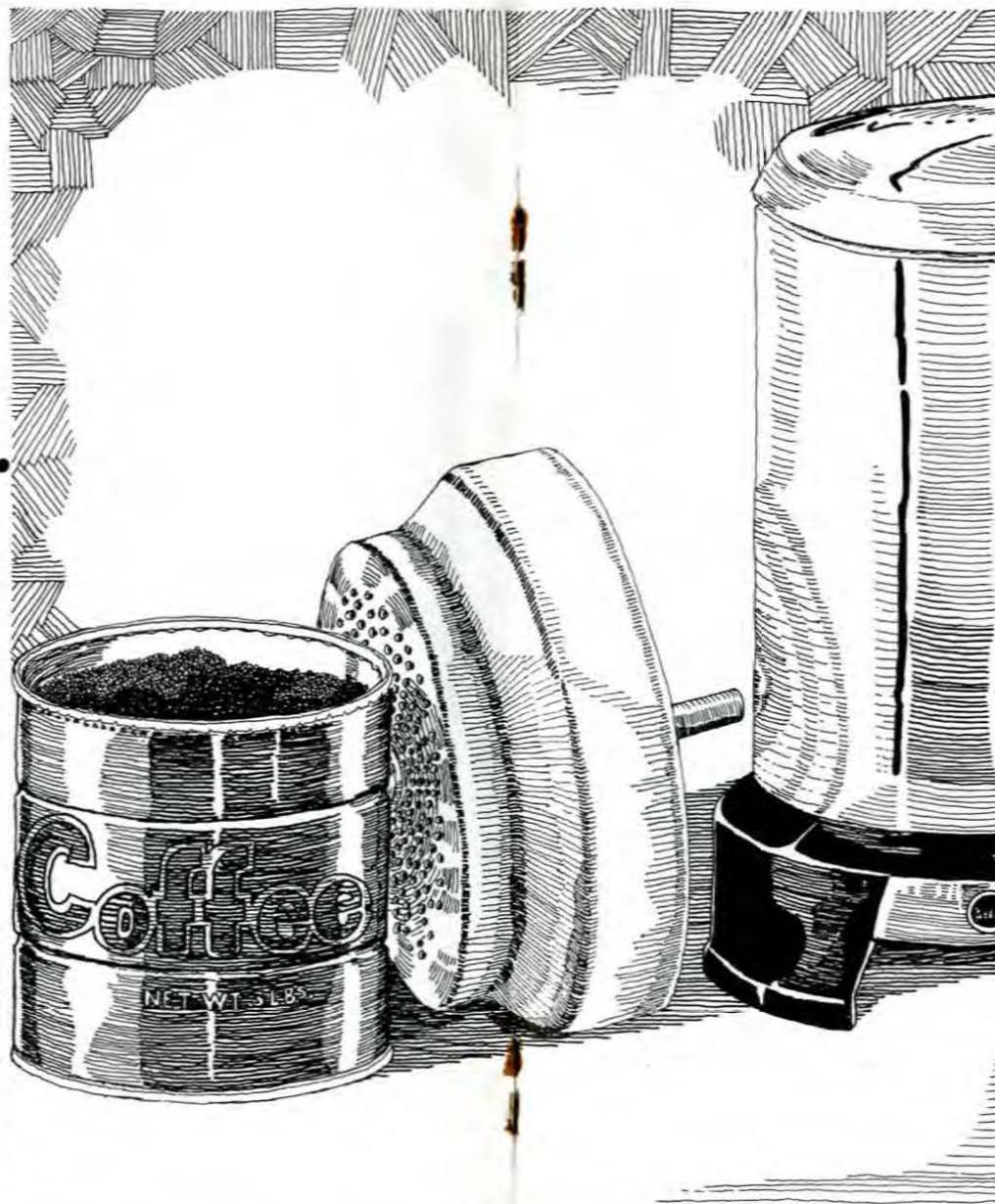
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# On Being a Coffeemaker

One of my sponsors always said that there were two things that would get a person into the Steps faster than anything else: relationships and service. For me, it was service.

Being of service in Narcotics Anonymous has been an experience of joy and growth for me. To feel the joy, there sometimes has been sadness; to grow, there sometimes has been pain. But it's all part of the process of recovery. The pain has generally come from the battering my ego and pride have sometimes suffered, yet this has been the source of the greatest change that has taken place in me. My ego was so big to begin with, it had to be smashed; and the clash of personalities and principles that are so much a part of service and of the Fellowship are just what I needed to learn how to live, work and socialize with other human beings.

One of the things I'm doing in service now is something I am enjoying more than anything I've done in a long time. I'm making coffee again! And it's



wonderful. It gets me to the meeting regularly, and forces me to do what was suggested to me in the beginning: come early and stay late. I have felt a strong need for the intimacy which can come from close involvement in a

home group. I've had a lot of trouble with my disease isolating me from other addicts and from myself—trouble with knowing a lot of people but being close to few. So, for me, it's back to basics.

What I want to share about being a coffeemaker is that I think it's the highest and most prestigious position of service which exists in Narcotics Anonymous. Most people think that service at the group, area, regional and world level is an uphill progression to

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*"There are two things that will get a person into the Steps faster than anything else: relationships and service."*

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greater glory, power, prestige and recognition. But, believe me, nothing could be further from the truth. If anything, it's a downhill path of greater anonymity, self-sacrifice, hard work and responsibility. I know most people think it's the other way around. If you're looking for applause and recognition, however, make coffee. Speakers, treasurers, group service representatives and secretaries all take a back seat to *coffeemakers* in the applause department.

So, after five and a half years clean, I am basking in the glory of making coffee these days, allowing the love and respect of the Fellowship to be heaped upon me. What a thrill!! Being a trusted servant has enhanced my membership and my recovery in Narcotics Anonymous forever. Today, my gratitude must be expressed in action. I must give freely and gratefully that which was freely and gratefully given to me. I want what I have and am willing to do anything to keep it.

*Anonymous, California*



## Features



from April 1986

# N.A. in Japan

Just over a year ago, we received a meeting list in the mail here at the World Service Office. That's not too unusual. But this one was somewhat different. For one thing, it was a kind

of map showing where the meetings were rather than simply a list. But still, that wasn't too strange. What was really different, and caused us to pass it around among ourselves with great interest and excitement was that we couldn't understand a word of it. It was written in Japanese.

We have since learned that N.A. had begun in Japan in earnest about five years ago. We have had little contact with them, because—guess what—they speak Japanese and we speak English. That is not an insurmountable barrier, but perhaps just a big enough one to have kept us from

really reaching out to one another. Well, that has changed.

At the Philadelphia World Service Conference workshop in October 1985, one of those strange N.A. "coincidences" happened. A member of the Japanese fellowship—the only one fluent in English—"happened" to be visiting Philadelphia that weekend. He had visited Hawaii on the way over and "happened" to run into an N.A. Trustee who told him of the WSC workshop going on during the time he was to be in Philly.

He showed up for the workshop, and a link between N.A. World Serv-

ices and Japanese N.A. was forged. Japanese members had been in contact with members in Hawaii previous to that, and had attended their annual round-up. As so often happens when a high-yah pow-ah gets His fingers in the pie, one thing led to another...

What follows are two articles written for us by Japanese N.A. members, and some excerpts from a recent letter. The first article was written in Japanese and translated by their English-speaking member; the second was written by that English-speaking member, the one we met in Philadel-



that I wouldn't be allowed to attend. I also had the fear that illicit drug dealers hung around meeting places.

With these doubts eating away at me, I sat down and wrote a letter in my broken English to the A.A. Central Office in Hawaii. I asked them to introduce me to an N.A. member. I immediately received a letter from an N.A. member. It was the beginning of Hawaiian N.A. love reaching out to me and to the Orient.

I was taken to my first N.A. meeting in Hawaii the day that I arrived. I was filled with wonder to see with my own eyes that many drug addicts were recovering in N.A. I couldn't understand very much of the words, but I knew that, for the first time, I was really *among my own*. The happy and open atmosphere of that and other meetings was like a spiritual awakening for me.

After the meeting, one N.A. member invited me to his home where he shared his experience with me. He gave me ideas on how I might begin an N.A. group in Tokyo. This encounter with Hawaiian N.A. gave me the determination and courage to do what my Higher Power seemed to be leading me to do. My fears passed. Even now, recalling the initial impact of this great fellowship on me brings tears to my eyes.

Two months later N.A. was born in Japan. But the first two years were rough going. Very few A.A.'s regarded us as a different fellowship. And even for some N.A.'s, it was difficult to distinguish between the two. I suppose a lot of people just saw N.A. as another specialized A.A. group. There were also people who strongly suggested that N.A. would not be helpful to

"cross-addicted" A.A. members or other drug addicts.

I suffered very much during this time. I wanted N.A. to succeed, but the difficulties seemed insurmountable sometimes. However, during the New Year holidays of 1984, thanks to my inner struggle with these conflicts, I was blessed with a second spiritual awakening.

It was true that we addicts were being discriminated against and being treated with suspicion. But that was "their" problem, not ours. A personal inventory was in order. I discovered that my own pride and laziness were getting in the way of my own growth and of N.A.'s growth.

Instead of blaming others for our problems, as we tended to do while we were using, we had to find solutions ourselves. I knew that I could not live without N.A. So I did my best, because I wanted to live.

I no longer stayed home on Sundays as I used to. Instead, I spent the day for N.A. and the still-suffering addicts. That took care of the laziness once and for all, for in the past four years I have missed hardly any N.A. meetings, nor have I ever refused a Twelfth Step call.

I spent almost all my free time with newcomers who had just been discharged from hospitals. I went to A.A. meetings on the days when there were no N.A. meetings. The number of newcomers who came to join us increased slowly.

I also realized that I had been acting like the "boss" of N.A., rather than just an N.A. member. I have tried to change that, as best as me and my Higher Power could do.

As time went on, one recovering drug addict joined us from the northernmost Japanese island of Hokkaido.

He had been recovering from addiction for three years through the A.A. program in the city of Sapporo, which is about 1000 kilometers (625 miles) from Tokyo.

He came to Tokyo to work in a rehabilitation facility for alcoholics.

*"I came to the sudden realization one day (like satori, or spiritual awakening Oriental-style) that the problem wasn't just the language. I had a listening problem."*

Through his influence, they began admitting drug addicts into their program. Last year, he himself set up a halfway house for drug addicts, the first of its kind in Japan. From that time the number of newcomers joining N.A. has increased rapidly. We have enough steady members now even to have our own N.A. softball team.

This past year has been a very important and wonderful year for N.A. Many A.A. members have begun to understand that N.A. is a separate fellowship, and we are now trusted. And this year in February we had our second annual N.A. workshop, and six Tokyo Japanese-speaking N.A. members were able to attend Hawaii's N.A. round-up.

Since my first visit to Hawaii four years ago, my way has never been an easy one. But I am grateful for the

support and love of many people. The staff of the Japanese A.A. Service Office gave me a lot of help and much understanding.

One addict who was an A.A. member began to accompany me to a hospital for Twelfth Step work. Then others who had previously thought that N.A. would not be useful for them began wending their way to our meetings. These new people gave us the strength and motivation to keep up our N.A. way of life.

An N.A. member from Hawaii once told me something that was a big encouragement for me: "When N.A. first started in Hawaii, A.A.'s here also looked on us with suspicion. But after three years it was all okay." Many American N.A.'s have encouraged us and have given us the stamina to continue. And I have come to believe that if I do what I'm supposed to do and continue to use the steps and traditions, tools that N.A. has given me, my (and our) Higher Power will see to it that everything will turn out okay.

I am really grateful to the members of Hawaii N.A., who shared their experience, hope and unity with me. I am thankful to be a member of N.A., for I can now feel the healing love of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, not only within Japan but as an international fellowship.

*K.O., Japan*

### **Say That Again (Moo Ichido itte Kudusai)**

I am an American, but I am a "made in Japan" drug addict and N.A. member. And, although English is my first

language, everything I've learned about recovery has been in Japanese.

I have lived in Japan for the past twenty years. During that time I have come to see that whenever the Japanese do anything that is worth doing, they really go all out. So in 1981, when one, then two, then a few more Japanese drug addicts began accepting the life-giving challenge of N.A., they didn't stop at half-measures.

The oriental interpretation of, approach to, and practice of the spiritual program of N.A. is a marvel to behold. With a copy of the Twelve Steps grasped in one hand and the Twelve Traditions in the other, they (we) have come up with a clean way of life that is holding a lot of us addicts together with a lot more than a smattering of spit and glue.

Our "slanty-eyed" Higher Power (pronounced *High-yah Pow-ah* in Japanese, since we can't pronounce the English "er" sound over here) has done a fine job of getting this fellowship going on a steady basis. The foundation has been established on solid rock.

If I sound over-enthusiastic in my praise of Japanese N.A., I shan't apologize. When the Japanese took me on as an N.A. newcomer, they were taking on a sad specimen of addiction. Addiction—to anything—was my way of life. The only thing I was never addicted to, even as a child, was sucking my thumb. (I squinted instead!)

Recently someone asked me, "Was the Japanese language a barrier in your N.A. recovery from drug addiction?" "Yes," I answered without hesitation, "at least in the very beginning. I didn't know what was going on." But in

retrospect I would say that my not understanding the Japanese language perfectly was, and continues to be, a definite plus. Yes, another N.A. paradox!

Let me explain. This apparent handicap turned out to be a threefold plus.

When I found there was so much I was missing at meetings, I thought it was a "language problem." I blamed the difficult Japanese language. I didn't realize that I was part of the problem. Thanks to a thorough Fourth Step inventory, I came to the sudden realization one day (like *satori*, or spiritual awakening Oriental-style) that the problem wasn't just the language. I had a listening problem. I discovered that I don't listen in English either! I have always been so taken up with my own ego, I was more interested in what I had to say than in what other people had to offer.

The second plus is this: The very fact that I have difficulty understanding what is said at meetings means that I have to try harder than others. Any handicap that makes me try harder has really been a big help in my recovery and growth in the program. "My weakness is my strength."

The third plus proved to be a lifesaver from the beginning. If I had understood everything at the start, after about three months I would have said, "Well, now I know all the details. I'm all set!" And so I would have stopped listening. I would have set out on the dangerous path of trying to become the teacher of the "less intelligent" (as it were). I'd be all mouth; I would not be doing the steps. I'd be too busy analyzing the program. I'd have had my own version of the Twelve Steps rewritten to suit my own sick fantasy world. I would know

exactly how *other* people should be working the steps. Thank God for the language problem! I have enough trouble trying to change myself, let alone attempting to change other people.

I am grateful to be clean. I feel great. And I'm thankful for my language handicap, for it has become a source of strength to me. It's great for my Seventh Step humility, too.

My language handicap has taught me: (1) how to listen; (2) how to try harder; and (3) that leaving my analytical brain at home and bringing by bod to meetings was, and continues to be, my N.A. salvation.

*R.A., Japan*

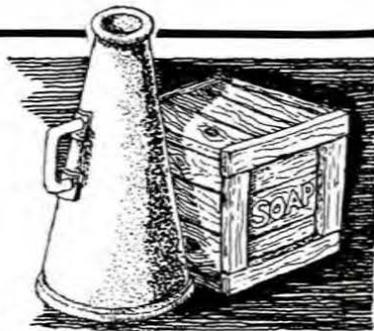
### **A Final Note**

*As we were preparing this special feature, a letter from R.A. arrived at the WSO. Here is an excerpt:*

After a moving week in Hawaii with Oahu N.A. and the February 1986 N.A. Round-Up, with up to 250 clean N.A. members (it was a spiritual awakening for me!), I am renewed in more ways than one.

While in Hawaii I was strongly advised by several members to bring my bod to the World Service Conference, not only for the sake of Japanese N.A. but for the benefit of the fellowship worldwide.

While at it, I talked to K.O., Japanese N.A.'s founder, and we agreed that he ought to go too, despite the great expense and the time needed off from work. He has ten years clean this past month, so to celebrate his gratitude he thought that Van Nuys was the place for him.



# Editorial

## From the Editor

There are three major moves afoot regarding the N.A. Way. Let's get right to the discussion of all three:

### SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE

We're offering new subscribers the opportunity to try out the N.A. Way magazine for two months. The subscription form on the last page of this magazine gives more details. If you subscribe between now and April 30, you will receive fourteen months of the N.A. Way for our normal twelve month subscription price. If you are already a subscriber and want to take advantage of this offer, cut the label off your envelope and send it to us with your check or money order. (Please be sure to include payment if you're renewing early.)

### BACK ISSUES — A SURVEY

After numerous requests from our readers, we're ready to resurrect the discussion of reprinting back issues of

the N.A. Way. In 1984 we sent out a form asking readers to indicate their interest in back issues. We received a couple hundred responses, and explored the expense of such a project. Because of the short run-length and the number of separate magazines involved, we were either going to have to charge an outrageous price or take a big loss on the project. The project has been on hold ever since.

This year we took a slightly different approach to the project. We went to printers for estimates on five separately bound soft-cover books, each one containing an entire volume (one year) of N.A. Way magazines. We could print 500 sets of these—2500 books—and sell each book for \$15, the same price as a current subscription.

As you might imagine, this is a very expensive project. If enough of you indicate to us that you are interested in buying previous volumes of the magazine in paperback book form, however, and we feel confident that we could recoup that investment, we will go with it. We need to hear from you on this. If for some reason you feel this is not a good idea, tell us now. If you would buy these books, let us know.

A survey form for this was published in the February Newline. You may either fill that out or just send us

a note answering these questions: 1) Would you buy an entire year of previous N.A. Ways bound together in a paperback book for \$15? Which year(s)? 2) Would you buy a set of five volumes (September 1982 through December 1987) for \$60 (the price of four)? Send your response to The N.A. Way Magazine, Attn.: Reprint Volumes. Our decision about this project will be based upon your response.

### FORMAT CHANGES

With this year's "N.A. Way Classics" issue, we again are presenting some modifications to our format. We have been keeping you posted in this column about our thoughts and experiences as our format has evolved. We've now put in place most of the conceptual changes we've been hinting at for awhile.

For one, this section is now called "Editorials" rather than "Opinion." With that title, the editor's column fits well here, and all original editorials and editorial replies can be printed in this section as well. We think it's a more appropriate way to refer to and present this type of material.

Secondly, the section we were calling "N.A. News" is now called "Features." That's in keeping with our decision mentioned in last month's "From the Editor" column to focus on "soft news" or news features rather than "hard news" or reports.

The section previously entitled "Experience, Strength and Hope" is now called "Meeting in Print." This more clearly distinguishes the personal sharing—the "meeting" portion of the magazine—from the two sections described above. The copyright release form has been removed from

the magazine, and will be sent separately to everyone who submits articles. The subscription form has been modified to take up only half a page, and a separate subscription card has been inserted in each magazine.

In addition to these changes in our format, we have continued to develop our graphic design. In doing all this we hope we have enhanced the look and feel of the magazine, and presented the various kinds of articles in a bit clearer format. Our readers' input in this process of change and growth is always welcomed.

### THIS MONTH'S EDITORIALS

The first editorial presented in this section, in keeping with our "classics" theme, was taken from a previous "From Our Readers" section. It seemed to fit in nicely with a couple of other editorials that we have printed immediately following it. One of the two was titled "A Plea for Sanity" and the other was untitled. We have put them together under the heading "Two Pleas for Sanity."

Following that is a group of articles we received in response to our recent editorial section on medication in recovery. As far as we're concerned, this is an example of how our editorial section is supposed to work. We can have a real airing of views on a variety of N.A.-related subjects without the need to present the "Correct N.A. Answer" on these very difficult issues. It works if you get involved in the discussion.

Please be keenly aware as you read this entire section that these are the views of individual N.A. members, and do not necessarily represent

those of the N.A. Way magazine, the World Service Office, or Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.  
R.H., Editor

From November 1984

## Growing Up

I've decided to write you this letter in spite of my hesitations. I want to share what my hesitations were about, and what writing this letter means in my recovery.

During my clean time I have always deeply loved the fellowship called Narcotics Anonymous. I am immensely grateful for the life I have received through this program. Yet, I have kept a certain distance from N.A. beyond my own home group.

My feelings about a magazine for N.A. typify this stance. In the past, I've felt that a magazine would be a terrific idea if only the fellowship had the resources and maturity to publish a consistent, quality magazine that I could enjoy, expect regularly, and confidently share with others as a vehicle for carrying the message of recovery.

However, I just didn't think we could do it. I had seen too many things in N.A. started and not finished, done poorly, or bogged down in meaningless politics, personalities and hassles. I don't say this to complain, only to observe what I have seen. So I wouldn't have touched a magazine with a ten foot pole. I didn't want to be disappointed, frustrated and unable to follow through with others, again.

When I first entered N.A. out of

desperation, I found a comfortable environment in which to begin staying clean. I was thrilled to discover that a group of addicts were staying clean together. During my early days of clean time, I went through several jobs, relationships, philosophies, etc., and lived very erratically. I was too wrapped up in myself to pay much attention to what was happening in N.A.

After a while, I began to recover. I began to take better care of myself. I began to gain self-respect. My life began to improve and stabilize. I began to be restored to sanity. About this time, I started to want to put a little bit of what I had received back into the program.

Gradually, though, I adopted the attitude of keeping my distance from N.A. outside my home group due to what I felt was going on. I decided that I would do my part by putting a contribution in the can at meeting collections, chairing meetings when asked, cleaning up the meeting's ashtrays, etc., but that otherwise I would avoid getting involved in N.A. matters going on outside my group. I felt that N.A.'s service structure was too complicated by egos, personality conflicts, inconsistency and the like for the fellowship to grow beyond squabbles and wild goose chases. I did not wish to waste time in those activities.

I thought seriously of quitting N.A. entirely, but I kept going to meetings because I felt that as an addict this was the program for me. Sadly, I didn't feel anymore that I was in an environment conducive to my recovery, as I had felt when I was new to recovery.

My feelings toward N.A. are still pretty much the same as what I have

said in this letter. But I am slowly, cautiously beginning to allow some hope to emerge within me. One sign of that hope is that I have subscribed to the N.A. Way. I believe the feelings I have talked about are common in N.A. I know several of my friends feel the

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*"I had seen too many things in N.A. started and not finished, done poorly, or bogged down in meaningless politics, personalities and hassles."*

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same way as I do. I believe the N.A. Way can become the fellowship magazine I have dreamed of.

If the fellowship pitches in and unifies around the N.A. Way, we could establish an important new stage of growth. I don't want to exaggerate the potential; the magazine can't do magic. With or without the N.A. Way, we've got a very, very long way to go toward becoming a mature fellowship. But if we make it work, the magazine could be a tremendous step forward.

So I'm encouraging N.A. members to take hold of this magazine. *Write in to it.* Subscribe. Give it to people. Drop it off around your town wherever you think it might do some good. Sneak it to people like me. Send in articles, and let the voice of honesty speak. This is *our* magazine. Let's use it and make it thrive.

I hope this magazine will be a place for frank, vibrant, ongoing sharing. I dream that in the future, N.A. will become a stable, mature environment

in which long-term, healthy recovery is abundant. I dream of a day when the growing pains and problems our fellowship has been going through will diminish. Then we can get on with the business of being a society of men and women addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean.

Anonymous

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## Two Pleas for Sanity

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From California:

I have searched my soul for over a year about whether to write this letter or not.

These are and have been turbulent times in our fellowship. The often-heated debate of old language vs. new language has left us in confusion and disarray in some of our areas and regions.

Our Fifth Tradition states clearly that our primary purpose is "to carry the message to the addict who still suffers." We are spending an inordinate amount of time and energy arguing amongst ourselves about who is right and who is wrong.

After dragging my shattered soul back through the open doors of Narcotics Anonymous, my first sponsor happened to be a part of the movement to encourage the use of language that was consistent with our Basic Text. Out of respect for him and a desire to follow direction, I began using the new language of "clean time," "recovery," and "addiction." But in the process I got caught up in

the politics and personalities of the "wise oldtimers," men and women from both sides of the issue. Because of my association with the "N.A. language" people, I was shunned, treated with indifference or, worst of all, I was treated like an enemy. The

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*"We are spending an inordinate amount of time and energy arguing amongst ourselves."*

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disease of addiction is our common foe—not each other!

At one point in my early recovery, I entertained thoughts of going to another fellowship to escape the "personalities." I am not well-versed in the Twelve Traditions, yet lines from several of our traditions continue to spring into my consciousness. "As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that would tear us apart, all will be well." "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity."

My appeal is to all members, from that shaken, confused newcomer going to his or her first meeting, to the "wise oldtimers" we trust to clear the pathway for us. Show us newcomers how to practice the principles of recovery. Show us by action, not words, how to practice "principles before personalities." I resent having to attend meetings that are "doing it right" and avoiding meetings that are branded as anarchist because they are "doing it wrong."

Wise up, oldtimers! The newcomers

will suffer, and we've suffered enough already.

*Anonymous*

#### From Anytown, USA:

I am an addict who loves our fellowship. I feel words will not adequately convey my feelings. Only God knows what will suffice.

During my time in recovery, I have always been disturbed about one thing: trusted servants, including RSR's and members of the WSC, pointing fingers at each other, blaming each other and instigating internal

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*"I am learning that the more emotional I am over an issue, the more I have Eased God Out and have become closed-minded, believing 'my way is better.'"*

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strife. I have watched and listened to insanity repeating itself, almost to the point of a guaranteed constant.

There is something I do not understand, a nagging, gnawing feeling within me: what happened to our common welfare, unity, working together?

I do not like many decisions rendered by group conscience—I just accept. I am learning to be a part of the solution—working *with*, together. I do not believe any service is to be given if I point my finger and blame others, e.g.

"look at what so and so did." Someone becomes a victim; therefore, there is also a victimizer. For me, that is "old behavior."

I am learning that the more emotional I am over an issue, the more I have Eased God Out and have become closed-minded, believing "my way is better." That is not in keeping with our three indispensable spiritual principles: honesty, open-mindedness and willingness.

The area of greatest concern for me is that our primary purpose is becoming lost—it's becoming secondary. I believe no addict seeking recovery need ever die from our disease. While internal squabbles go on, our primary purpose is lost. I heard an argument recently at a service meeting: "Well, if two addicts make it to our meetings and one dies, we're still doing good." In my opinion, we've failed miserably. We say that *no* addict need die, so what good have we done—an addict has needlessly died.

We all believe we are fortunate to have been given the gift of life. Are we as trusted servants so into selfish ego that one human life is expendable, justifying ourselves by saying that one lived? I hope not! There are many times I wonder as I sit around listening and watching.

My hope: that one trusted servant saw him or herself in this letter.

For today, I will pray:

- that one day we will learn how to work with each other; and,
- for the one addict who needlessly died as we were learning how.

*Anonymous*

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## Editorial Replies

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*The following are in reply to the editorial, "Complete Abstinence is Self-Explanatory," published in the November 1987 issue of the N.A. Way magazine.*

#### From Illinois:

Perhaps the most beautiful of all our sayings tells us "that no addict seeking recovery need ever die." It would be both frightening and sad to think that a waiver needed to be added to the spirit of that promise. That waiver would read something like this:

No addict seeking recovery need ever die—except, of course, if you were born with another disease besides addiction. First get *really* clean, stop taking your insulin, your anti-psychotics, and the immune system inhibitors that are keeping you alive. Then you can comment in our meetings. Then you can share. And don't worry—at least you'll die clean. And to you who choose to sustain your lives by remaining on the drug of your physician's choice: know that the love of this fellowship isn't yours. Don't comment in meetings, don't ask us for help—you aren't clean enough for us. We don't care that God gave medical science a way to save you from diabetes, mental illness or immune system dysfunctions—we'll let you die, instead, of addiction. You wouldn't do it our way. You won't die clean.

Since when did clean time etch the initials "M.D." after our names? We've been playing doctor for too long. It's time to stop. Let's eradicate the dangerous "private practices" of self-willed medical licenses before even one more addict dies. The responsibility for what we put into our bodies

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*"The next time you sit in a meeting and pronounce judgment on the addict across from you, stop and think. Did you get clean by harsh words and cold rejection? Not if you were sitting in an N.A. meeting, I hope."*

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is ultimately up to us, but perhaps our physicians have *some* knowledge of the use of medication.

As a recovering addict and member of Narcotics Anonymous, I beg of you, please: *think*. The disturbing issue I bring to you affects the lives of thousands of addicts still suffering. Addiction does not have a monopoly on pain. Other diseases in active form cause an anguish that we, as men and women in recovery, can easily imagine. We need to remember that not all of us recover at the same time. Our hand must reach out to all of the human beings who are dying of the disease we share. They suffer still.

The next time you sit in a meeting and pronounce judgment on the addict

across from you, stop and think. Did you get clean by harsh words and cold rejection? Not if you were sitting in an N.A. meeting, I hope. I hope someone hugged you and said, "Keep coming back." And if you needed medication to stay alive, I hope you weren't judged for it. The Twelfth Step doesn't qualify which addicts are eligible for the love we share. We *must* remember that our message is one of sharing and caring. Our lives depend on it.

L.F.

#### From North Carolina:

The editorial writer stated that he was "really frightened" of N.A. members delivering "mixed messages" while sharing or serving as long as these members are taking psychiatric medication. Well, it "really frightens" me to witness the trend in our fellowship to "play doctor" and pass judgement.

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*"We have absolutely no business handing out medical advice or opinions."*

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I have worked in the field of psychology/psychiatry for several years. Naturally, I've seen cases of abuse on the part of patients, as well as ignorance on the part of doctors. However, after being clean and actively involved in Narcotics Anonymous for over four years, I have met several addicts who have entered our fellowship with problems *other* than addiction. There are medical dysfunctions such as manic depression that are clinical problems

and need to be treated medically.

I've seen confused and frightened addicts come to our meetings and be told they are "using" if taking an antidepressant. I've seen these same people attempt suicide, have hallucinations, and come near death upon putting down the medication on the advice of well-meaning but uninformed N.A. members.

We have absolutely no business handing out medical advice or opinions. All we are qualified to share is our own personal experience, strength and hope. The addict in question needs to get a good sponsor and a doctor who understands addiction. An addict who truly wants to recover will take on this responsibility. The rest of us should stay out of it. People are going to use or get clean in spite of us, so maybe we can turn them over to our Higher Power and concentrate on our *own* recovery for a change.

R.T.

#### From New York:

I'm crazy and have the papers to prove it. However, with the help of the Twelve Steps and the fellowship, I have both stayed out of mental institutions and off of antipsychotic medication for over ten years—one day at a time. Today, I do not have to take anti-anxiety pills, anti-depression pills, or sleeping pills. I do not take muscle-relaxing drugs, nor do I take "natural salts" to manage chemical imbalances which could affect my mood.

Today, I remember where I came from: the stint in the mental ward, the psychiatrists, the psychologists, the social workers, the years of prescription drugs (with liberal amounts of

alcohol on the side). Most of all, I can easily recall the months of wanting to die.

As I type this article, I am dead set against mood-altering chemicals. I believe in getting high by being around program people, by doing things like running marathons. Of course, I do not know about tomorrow; it's twenty-four hours at a time for this ex-demented soul.

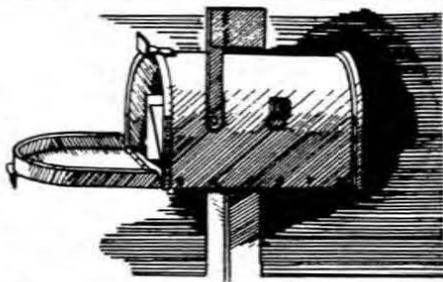
I have a lot of years in the fellowship, but I have a lot of *years*. I can see the time when as an average old person I will have to take heart medication, high blood pressure medication, or some other prescription in order to stay alive. Just because I'm durg-free today does not mean that I will never, ever develop a medical condition that requires treatment with a drug that has a mood-altering side-effect. I happen to know that many medications for physical problems are very definitely mood-altering. What do we do in such a case? The opinion article makes me feel that I will not be welcome to share, serve, or chair. I would resent having to back off from N.A. participation.

Nevertheless, even with such a background and time in the program, I'm disturbed about an opinion article concerning medication in recovery.

I think the new editorial section in the *N.A. Way* is a great thing. We—I mean I—need to learn both to listen to other opinions and to learn tolerance of others. I also may have to change my old ideas and realize that I do not always have to be right.

J.S.

# From Our Readers



Dear N.A. Way

Of all the N.A. Ways I have received, nothing has touched me the way the story, "Changes and the Golden Rule," did [July 1987]. All the stories were special, but this one hit home. Another addict shared my secret inner feelings and I knew I was not alone. R.C., whoever she is, helped me so much.

It was as if I wrote the article myself. Every word was like my own. The courage she had to write about that pain was far greater than I could attempt. Her feelings were my own. My sponsor, who did the same as hers, led me through my own rage, anger and resentment until I found acceptance as R.C. did. I am now not as likely to sit in judgement of others. I am sensitive to the feelings and needs of others in a way I have never been before.

I look at my pain and it's okay today. I have stayed clean and have the greatest husband any woman can ask for. We have been married sixteen months and it has been the most beautiful sixteen months in my life. He is also an N.A. member.

Thank you, R.C., for writing. I need your experiences in my life. Write again.

Thank you, N.A. Way, for publishing that article. I look forward to

seeing others' experience, strength and hope shared in the magazine.

M.K., New Mexico

Dear N.A. Way,

I was approached by a local public information committee and asked to be of service in relation to "additional needs." I made it to a committee meeting and suggested that the meeting place be changed because it was not wheelchair accessible. Because of my disability, I felt this request was not out of line. Well, after the next meeting came, and still I received no response, I had to disassociate myself from the additional needs committee.

I feel that the bottom line is this: it is ludicrous to have an additional needs committee and then have the meeting place where someone with additional needs cannot even attend. I am confined to a wheelchair. Even one step or curb is an obstacle to me, and the flight of steps barring my presence certainly is not a welcome sign for me!

*A person with additional needs*

## WHEN FRIENDS MOVE ON

During the time I have been a member of the N.A. Fellowship, many people have come into my life and gone. These people are not forgotten. We grow at different speeds and get

what we need from different people at different times.

I want to thank all the people who have sponsored me and all those I have sponsored. Many have come and gone, but I haven't forgotten a single one.

Let me tell you what happened to me recently. I sponsored someone for about eighteen months. During this time, she went in and out of the program just as I had done. Each time she came back, she let me into her life a little more and we eventually became very close. She even lived with me for a few months so she could get it together. I was able to watch her grow. This was the first person I had ever sponsored and had been able to watch grow. It was truly a beautiful experience. She is still clean and has been for well over a year now.

I have often heard people share about losing a sponsor to the disease or because of relocation, but I've never heard anyone share much on losing a sponsee. We let circumstances come between us and are no longer friends. However, it is important for me to say here that I have tried everything to communicate with her again. Although we lost something somewhere, I feel friendship is a two way street. The loss of someone I loved was very difficult for me to handle. My ego and pride did not want to accept it. Eventually I set fault and ego aside and approached her. But nothing changed, and now I must accept that people change and sometimes their plans do not include me.

I have learned a lot about friendship. It was always easy for me to walk out of people's lives when things got a little difficult to handle, and I never took the other person's feelings into consideration. Now the tables are turned and

I have been left behind, and it hurts. I still don't feel any different about the time we spent together. She is now where I have been; everything about her is very similar. So now I watch from a distance and it is okay because she is okay.

Friendship and fellowship have taken on new meaning. Friendship is very special and I don't take it lightly. My friends and my lover, just as the program, are God-given and I don't take them for granted today. Without them, my life would not be as rich as it is. I am not wealthy, but I have and can give away what money can't buy.

*Anonymous, New Jersey*

## GONE, BUT CERTAINLY NOT FORGOTTEN

I only met him once, but he left a deep impression. At that time I had only been back in the program a few days. Like me he was a veteran, so I felt an instant camaraderie; but it was his simply stated truths that impressed me most that evening. I noticed the hospital wristband he wore, but he didn't mention his illness nor did anyone else.

I was soon to learn that my new friend was very ill; in fact, he was dying of cancer. I would hear about him at every meeting I attended. Some of what I heard was about the current state of his health, but far more often it was someone sharing as part of their story how he had been there for them.

When his illness progressed to the point where he was once again admitted to the hospital, he insisted on attending the hospital N.A. meetings, and spent his days twelfth-stepping other patients and staff members.

Members from our local groups

drove the fifty-plus miles to the hospital on a regular basis to see him and always found that, sick as he was, he was still "talking the talk and walking the walk" of our program. Until the last, he was there for his friends with something to share about staying clean and serene one day at a time.

He didn't have any blood relatives, but the funeral parlor was filled to capacity with members of his *real* family, as he always called us. His memorial service was like an open meeting, with all of us sharing how he had touched us. Several shared how he had literally saved their lives. Of course, he knew better; that it was the program, the meetings, the steps, the traditions that did it. But as a message carrier, he was among the very best.

It has been a couple of months now since he left us, but seldom does a meeting close without a mention of him and how he had helped one of us in our program.

You may be gone from us now, my friend, but it will be a very, very long time before you will be forgotten.

*D.B., Florida*

## IS HONESTY NEGOTIABLE?

Because of the honest sharing of other addicts I have been able to admit my powerlessness over the disease of addiction and not remain focused on my drug use. Facing the reality of my disease is not easy; but no one ever said it was supposed to be. Today I concentrate on the freedom that honesty brings.

From time to time I hear it said that the newcomer is incapable of taking the focus off the symptom—drug use—and that therefore we should revise our

language to get them in the doors. Once they're here, according to that line of thinking, and once they're ready for it, we should hit them with the rest of the information.

I remember where my head was at as a newcomer, and on some level I can see the point. However, I cannot justify being dishonest with newcomers for any reason. Deep down I always knew the truth, even while using. The truth is that addiction is a disease which involves so much more than just drug use. I could never surrender to this truth, though, *until I trusted Narcotics Anonymous.*

I deeply believe that the gift of the First Step as we understand it in Narcotics Anonymous has saved not only the quality of my recovery but my life as well. I am very lucky I did not die with my head in a toilet bowl deliberately vomiting a meal my disease told me I did not deserve to eat (all this completely clean from drugs). Up to that point, no one had shared with me the meaning of the First Step. I could not understand what was happening to me. Today I know that I am not unique—I grieve over the tragedy of those who have died, drug-free, from this disease. And I change the things I can by not mincing words with the newcomer.

*Anonymous, Indiana*

## RELATIONSHIPS

I need to let all of you know that there are some successful relationships in recovery. Contrary to what I often hear at meetings, we don't always have horrible relationships.

When I came into the Fellowship of N.A., I was a mess. I was in a

relationship left over from my past. Since I was told not to make any major changes for a year, I stayed in the relationship for another year!

Anyway, when I finally realized how sick the relationship was (he was a practicing addict), I got out. Although I stayed *clean* for quite some time in N.A., I was *insane!* I went to meetings seven days a week, talked to my sponsor every day, made lots of phone calls, kept service commitments, and prayed all the time.

I had people suggesting that I get out of the relationship, but I knew all the answers—I was different! One thing I knew through constantly reading the Basic Text was that if I use, I lose. In the chapter "Recovery and Relapse" I learned that what I was doing was wrong. I had "guilty" written all over my face!

Now I am in a very loving and caring relationship. This person is in recovery, striving for the same things I am. We work very hard in this relationship. When things go wrong and we have difficult moments, we never run away from each other. We try *communicating*, that foreign word. We try listening to each other. We take constructive criticism without taking it personally.

We have learned to tell each other how we are feeling, and we don't assume the other should know. We also try to do different things. I am willing to try what he likes. I could never do that before. I've been able to accept him for who he is. I don't mind his business—especially where his program is concerned. That took lots of practice, and it still does!

I love this man today because I finally started to love me. Relationships come—but if I don't know how to

stay clean first I'm in trouble. The steps and God gave me this relationship and you people to help me. I love you.

*Anonymous, New Jersey*

## GRATITUDE, THE N.A. WAY

I experienced something while reading the article about the Hawaii Regional P.I. Committee presentation to the International Conference on Drug Abuse in the November '87 issue of the *N.A. Way*. I would like to share it with you.

Reading the *N.A. Way* is another tool in my program toolbox that I can take with me to read, which helps me to deal with some of my character defects such as impatience, anger and fear.

Today I was reading the *N.A. Way* while waiting for a subway that never came, so I patiently took a different train that put me a mile from work.

While walking and reading that article, I became so choked up that tears came to my eyes. It just hit me that for the first time in my life, I am a part of something. Something greater than myself. Something I have made a commitment to.

I wasn't sad, nor was I dwelling in self-pity. I was actually feeling—feeling joy! It was real. I am doing something good for myself. I am a part of Narcotics Anonymous.

Thank you for putting the effort into the *N.A. Way*, which helps bring me closer to N.A. as a whole. And thank you for helping me get in touch with gratitude.

*S.C., New York*

# Comin' Up



**ALASKA:** Mar. 11-13, 1988; ARSCC IV; Lake Lucille Lodge, 1300 Lake Lucille Drive, Wasilla, AK 99687, (907) 373-1776; Michelle (907) 745-1052; ARSCC IV, PO Box 874935, Wasilla, AK 99687

**ARIZONA:** May 27-29, 1988; ARCNA-2; Sheraton Phoenix Hotel (800) 325-3535; Richard R. 247-2076, Rosemary H. 293-3706, Ann R. 285-0869; AZ Convention Committee, P.O. Box 11422, Phoenix, AZ 85061

**AUSTRALIA:** Apr. 1-4, 1988; 4th Australasian RCNA; Fremantle, Western Australia; 4th Australasian RCNA, Box 668, Subiaco 6008, WA, AUSTRALIA

**BRITISH COLUMBIA:** Jul. 1-3, 1988; British Columbia N.A. Rally; send speaker tapes; Henry B., (604) 434-8314; BCNAR, 4650 Fernglan Place, Barnaby, BC V5G 3W1

**CALIFORNIA:** Mar. 4-6, 1988; NCCNA; Oakland Hyatt Regency Hotel & Convention Center, 12th & Broadway, Oakland, CA; Steve (408) 446-4445; NCCNA 10, PO Box 5914, San Jose, CA 95159

**2)** May 25-29, 1988; World Service Conference Annual Meeting; AirTel Plaza Motel, Van Nuys, CA, corner of Valjean and Sherman Oaks; for information and reservations contact Trinkka, (818) 780-3951; World Service Conference, P.O. Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999

**3)** July 8-10, 1988; San Diego Regional Convention; speakers with 5 yrs. clean, strong N.A.-oriented message send tapes w/return address and phone number; Harold D. (619) 283-7220; San Diego Convention, 3768 El Cajon Blvd., San Diego, CA 92105

**COLORADO:** Apr. 9, 1988; 6th Annual Regional Service Workshop; Masonic Lodge, Boulder, CO; dance follows; Gary O. (303) 744-8482; Pat R. 443-4083; Colorado RSC, 1290 Williams, Box 9, Denver, CO 80218

**FLORIDA:** Mar. 18-20, 1988; P.I./Helpline Multi-Regional Learning Conference; Sheraton

Twin Towers, 5780 Major Blvd., Orlando, FL 32818, in-state (305) 351-2311, out-of-state (800) 327-2110; info Bob G. (305) 896-4349, Glenn S. (813) 978-8847; P.I. Learning Day, P.O. Box 350181, Tampa, FL 33695-3501

**2)** June 30 - July 4, 1988; FRCNA-7; Stouffer Hotel, 6677 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando FL 32821, (305) 351-5555; contact Charlie M. (305) 588-6273, Lovell H. 291-6138, Richard C. 891-1867; Florida RSO, 2727 E. Oakland Pk. Blvd., #203, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33306

**HAWAII:** May 27-29, 1988; "Ride the Miracle," Second Annual Gathering of the Fellowship; Black Sands Beach, Kalapana; Big Island Gathering, P.O. Box 10842, Hilo, HI 96721

**2)** Jul. 1-3, 1988; Fifth Western States Unity Convention, Beachcomber's Hotel, Honolulu; Tom C. (808) 262-4631, Steve S. 254-1647, RSO 533-4900; WSUC-5, 1305 Aalapapa, Kailua, HI 96734

**ILLINOIS:** Mar. 11-12, 1988; 1st Annual Fellowship Agenda Conference; Ramada Inn, Danville, Illinois (217) 446-2400, flat room rate \$38; activities begin Friday noon; review of 1988 WSC Agenda Report, open forum; registration \$10, banquet \$12, no meal tickets sold at the event; Vince N. (815) 965-9033, Jeff B. 964-5467, Dean (217) 431-3163; GIRSCNA, P.O. Box 3271, Rockford, IL 61106

**2)** June 24-26, 1988; 4th Annual Flight to Freedom; Coy & Wilma's Campground, Rend Lake, Sesser, IL; Earl (618) 735-2409; Jim (217) 347-0305; Lawrence (618) 829-5387; Campout, 107 E. Lawrence, Effingham, IL 62401

**INDIANA:** Apr. 1-3, 1988; KRCNA II; Executive Inn, 6th & Walnut St., Evansville, IN, (800) 457-3841; Mike W. (812) 424-1673; Donnie A. 422-5815; Bernie T. 426-0357; KRCNA II, PO Box 3184, Evansville, IN 47730

**KENTUCKY:** Apr. 1-3, 1988, KRCNA II, Evansville, IN--see under INDIANA

**LOUISIANA:** Mar 4-6, 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) 772-4558; Stan & Jane (207) 784-5863; Bill (617) 563-5885; ASC of Maine, Convention Committee, P.O. Box 5309, Portland, ME 04101

**MASSACHUSETTS:** May 7-8, 1988; Martha's Vineyard Area 1st Annivention; Martha's Vineyard Island; Tony L. (617) 693-5976, Jessica S. 693-3002, Don C. 693-5850, Steve G. 693-3384; Martha's Vineyard ASC, P.O. Box 2754, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568

**MICHIGAN:** Jul. 1-4, 1988; Freedom IV; Hope College, Holland, MI; Bob W. (616) 857-2583, Carl D. 344-7530; tickets, John F. (313) 987-8620; 4th Michigan Convention, 523 Butternut #106, Holland, MI 49424

**NEW HAMPSHIRE:** June 24-26, 1988; "Vision of Hope," 9th ECCNA; University of NH in Durham; Jay N. (603) 437-5501; Brian (617) 452-7875; Shirley (617) 458-4808; 9th ECCNA, PO Box 388, Pelham, NH 03076

**NEW MEXICO:** May 28-30, 1988; High Hopes ASC Campout and Retreat; Bandiler National Park; for fliers and info call (505) 662-0669; Hal, 2130 A 37th, Los Alamos, NM 87544

**NORTH CAROLINA:** Mar. 11-13, 1988; 1st Capital Area Family Reunion; Sheraton Imperial, Exit 282 off I-40 between Raleigh and Durham, NC, (800) 222-6503; info Dayne W. (919) 839-1219, David C. 553-3439, John H. 479-2040;; Capital Area Convention, 316 Kings Parkway, Raleigh, NC 27610

**2)** Apr. 15-17, 1988; Grtr. Charlotte Area Convention; Marriott Hotel, Charlotte, NC (704) 527-9650, (800) 228-9290; Andy 892-3286; Debbie 892-7206; James 527-2091; GCACNA, P.O. Box 32262, Charlotte, NC 28232

**3)** July 1-3, 1988; 9th Carolina Regional Convention; Sheraton Greensboro Hotel, 3 Southern Life Center, Greensboro, NC; contact Marc (919) 855-3294, Ed 565-4913; C.I. Chair, 9th Carolina, Regional Convention, 6518 Dusty Road, Liberty, NC 27298

**OHIO:** 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

**ONTARIO:** May 13-15, 1988; 1st Ontario Regional Convention; Toronto, Ontario; Rachel (416) 789-0264; Susan 821-7562; ORCNA 1, 5468 Dundas St.W. Box 620, Toronto, Ontario, M9B 6E3

**OREGON:** Aug. 6-8, 1988; 3rd Oregon-Southern Idaho Regional Convention; Eugene Hilton Hotel; send speaker tapes; Laurie P. (503) 726-2449; OSIRCNA-3, 3255 Gateway #68, Springfield, OR 97477

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Mar. 25-27, 1988; 6th Grt Phila RCNA; Adams Mark Hotel, City Line and Monument Rd., Philadelphia PA 19131, rsvns (215) 581-5000; conv. contacts Dennis D. (215) 423-1761, Dennis N. 879-1172, J.R. 482-6186, Margie 534-8782; Grtr. Phila. RSC, P.O. Box 42628, Philadelphia, PA 19101-2628

**QUEBEC:** March 4-6, 1988; Congres C.S.L. Mauricien Narcotiques Anonymes--4th French N.A. Convention; Community Center, 253 3rd St., Shewinagan, Quebec; INFORMATION--Marc (English) (819) 537-5219; Helene (Francaise) 537-8902; L'envol 4, P.O. Box 841, Shewinagan, Quebec, G9N 1G8

**RHODE ISLAND:** Apr 1-3, 1988; NERC III; Marriott Hotel, Providence; Info-Sandy (401) 849-5602, Ken N. 728-2714; NERC III, Attention, Mishell L., P.O. Box 3009, Newport, RI 02840

**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

**2)** Apr. 15-17, 1988; Texas Unity Convention, Whitney, TX; David (713) 332-8236; Texas Unity (Whitneys), 1612 Second Street, League City, TX 77573

**3)** Nov. 4-6, 1988; First Best Little Region in Texas Convention; Koko Palace, 5101 Avenue Q, Lubbock TX 79412; info Kerry W. (806) 745-4309, N.A. Helpline 799-3950; BLRCNA-1, P.O. Box 3013, Lubbock, TX 79452-3013

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

**WASHINGTON:** Mar. 11-13, 1988; 5th Annual Retreat, "Clean and Free by the Sea;" Galilean Retreat Center, 823 Ocean Shores Blvd., Ocean Shores, WA; Judi P. (206) 532-3509; Judy L. 533-0525; Joe K. 532-6654; GHANA, P.O. Box 374, Hoquiam, WA 98550

2) Apr. 8-10, 1988; 3rd Annual Washington-Northern Idaho Regional Convention; Holiday Inn, 1515 George Washington Way, Richland WA 99352, (509) 946-4121; to submit a tape contact Rhonda A., 6622 W. Yellowstone, Kennewick,

WA 99336; gen.info. Crystal (509) 735-3952, Rhonda A. 783-4060; WNIR Convention Committee, 7403 W. Canal Drive #400, Kennewick, WA 99336

**WEST VIRGINIA:** May 6-8, 1988; Mountaineer Regional Convention, "Back to Basics;" Cedar Lakes Conference Center, Ripley, W.Va. (304) 372-7000; pre-registration by April 1; Jim D. (304) 525-8411, Danny W. 925-7088; Mountaineer RSC, P.O. Box 2381, Morgantown, WV 26502-2381

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### The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving 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.
6. 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.
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.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than 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*

## 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 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 belong to N.A.—there are no fees or dues. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using drugs. 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 N.A., see your local phone directory, or write us at the address inside.

