

THE N.A. Way

M A G A Z I N E

July 1988

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World Service
Conference:
a special report

p. 20

You're clean, but
you may be dying

p. 16

No longer a
"dopefiend"

p. 2

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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M A G A Z I N E

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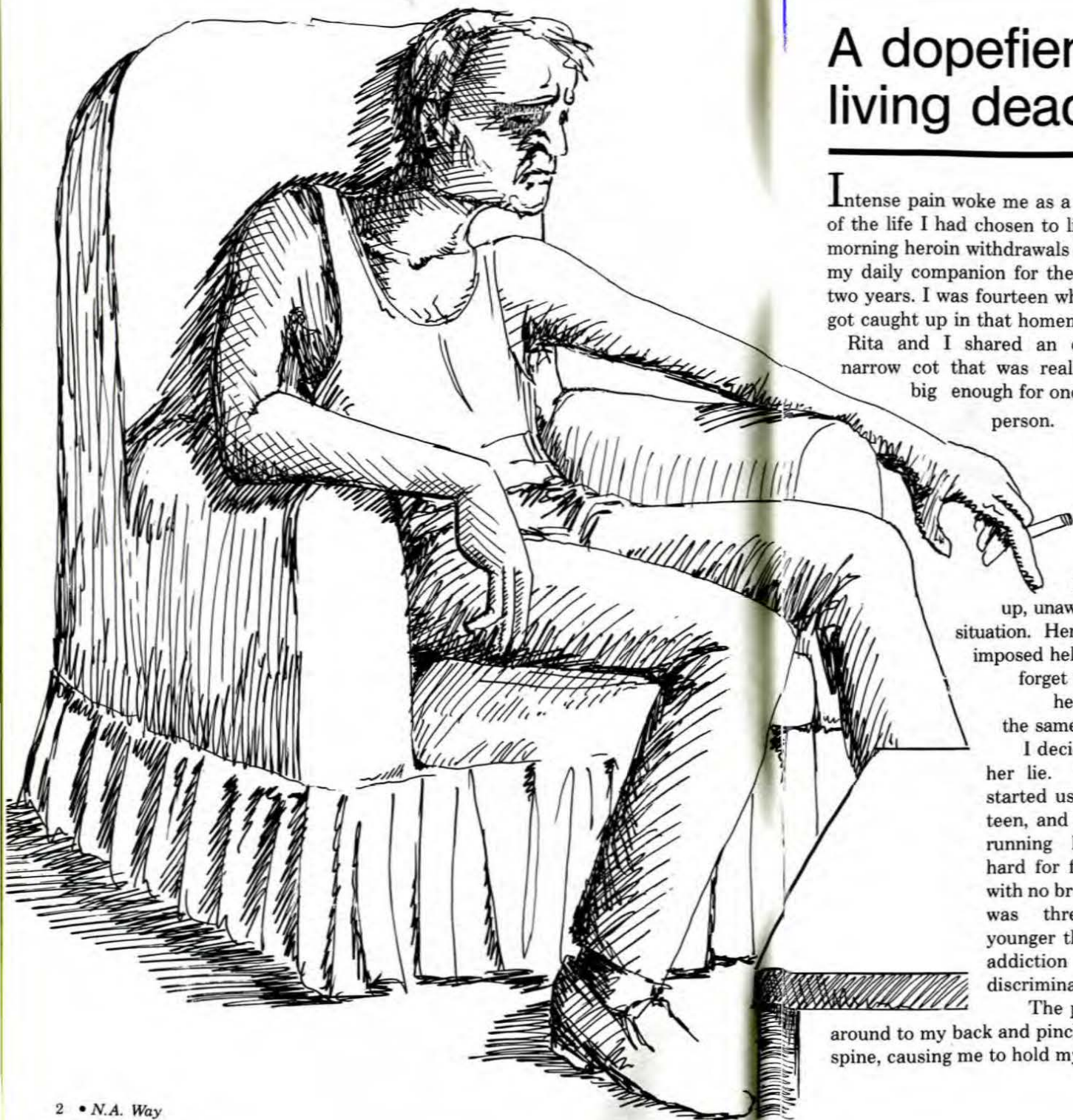
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A dopefiend living dead

Intense pain woke me as a reminder of the life I had chosen to live. Early morning heroin withdrawals had been my daily companion for the previous two years. I was fourteen when I first got caught up in that homemade hell.

Rita and I shared an extremely narrow cot that was really just big enough for one person.

She lay curled up, unaware of my situation. Her own self-imposed hell wouldn't forget to awaken her to suffer the same fate as I.

I decided to let her lie. Rita had started using at fifteen, and had been running long and hard for four years with no breaks. She was three years younger than I, but addiction doesn't discriminate.

The pain crept around to my back and pinched at my spine, causing me to hold my stomach

and groan in agony. My eyes and nose started to run, and I felt the first of hell. I closed my eyes tight, hoping to rid myself of the pain, but Mr. Hell wasn't going for it.

I found myself living from day to day as death awaited my cold-hearted soul. I had one foot and four toes in the graveyard, and knew it was only a matter of time before someone either pushed me over the edge of I took an overdose.

Rita gave out a half cry as her sickness took over, jolting her from sleep

to confront her ordeal. At nineteen Rita still maintained her beauty, but it was going to last much longer if she continued to abuse herself with dope. Although she possessed a sharp intelligence, I felt pity for her. She could have chosen better than the life of a larceny-hearted dopefiend. Rita did what was necessary to support her habit, and had the tracks up and down both arms to show for it.

We were both sweating and shivering with the smell of poison seeping through the pores of our skin. There came a need to reach for each other, searching in one another's embrace for the comfort we so desperately needed. We sought warmth, but found only coldness. Yet Rita and I had a bonding love, one that only other suffering addicts could have understood.

I lay a moment staring up at the ceiling and walls surrounding my fortress. I saw myself as a dopefiend living dead. Fate must have dealt my

fifth card from the bottom of the deck. The cigarette-stained ceiling signified nothing but agony upon agony. The peeling paint on the dull gray walls held a message, like tears flowing from the face of a loved one.

Those who love and care for me need not weep for the likes of a dog such as myself. Allow me the privilege of destroying my mind, body, soul and spirit in solitude. My sickness tormented me toward insanity.

I still held onto that dopefiend mentality while awaiting trial in 1979 on robbery charges. I was tried, convicted, and sentenced to ten to twenty years.

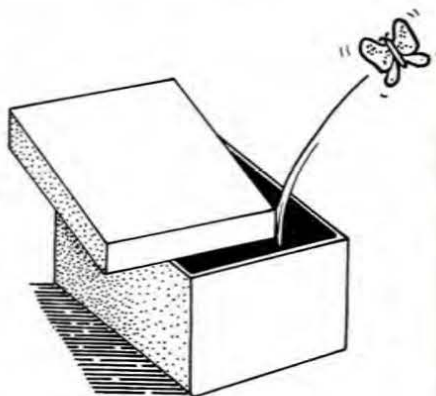
I wasn't new to the prison system. My arrival back was greeted with handshakes, smiles and questions like "What the hell happened?" It was only a short time before I fell back into the groove of things and had the distinct feeling I had never left. I sought out what I'd come to know best. My choice of drug was heroin, but I had trouble getting it on a regular basis. I smoked pot, sniffed anything sniffable, drank pruno, and injected everything I could get my hands on.

I ran crazy for seven years, until the administration decided I needed a change of scenery, so they transferred me to a medium security prison. Again, I fell into the drugs the day I arrived.

One evening in April of 1987, I found myself attending an N.A. meeting with a friend. Outside people were allowed on prison grounds to share their personal experiences as recovering addicts. I sat in the back and half-listened to what was being said. Every so often I heard something I

related to. Still, I wasn't totally convinced that they were as happy and fulfilled as they claimed to be.

One speaker mentioned that he had taken his First Step by admitting he was powerless and his life had become unmanageable. Much was said that first night, but I still had my doubts; I felt nobody could have lived and suffered through life as I had. I left before the break started, but came back within ten minutes for some



unknown reason. Something had been said, or maybe a Power had guided me back into that room.

I found myself listening more attentively this time, turning over in my mind what was being shared. I began to take a serious look at myself, at who I was and what I had become. This meeting gave me a little hope that there was a way out of misery and back into living. I felt a sense of salvation while attending my first N.A. meeting.

I began to attend the meetings on a regular basis. Soon, I wasn't able to get enough of my newfound hope. I listened to the speakers—both from outside and inside the prison—took advice, and followed the suggestions in the Twelve Steps. The energy I had

poured into my pursuit of drugs, I rechanneled into working the N.A. program.

I took my First and Second Steps easily enough, but Step Three proved to be a stumbling block for me. I still wanted to hold onto my "macho" image, to be a man, a convict, a dopefiend. I couldn't bring myself to accept the fact that I needed a higher power in my life that could steer me onto the right track to a much happier life.

I managed to get over that obstacle when I heard an outside speaker share the story of how he had overcome his problem with Step Three. He said the Serenity Prayer had guided him toward the path to his higher power, whom he chose to call God. I thought about it and agreed it wasn't a bad idea at that.

Since I began using the Serenity Prayer, I have gotten closer to my higher power. I soon acquired a taste for love, trust, motivation, and responsibility, not to mention so many other good things I've long been without. I had been lost in a world of darkness, but things became brighter with each passing day.

From the meetings I've learned I have to choose whether I wish to use or not. I have chosen to not poison my mind and body with chemicals, and I feel great knowing I have that choice today. There's growth within me. I'm a person—a human being. That gives me a feeling I wish to hold onto for the rest of my life.

I am learning how to deal with my problems, not bury myself in them, and live one day at a time. If I find myself with something on my mind that troubles me, I can talk with good-

hearted people I've met through the fellowship. I've started to live my life one day at a time and not worry about what tomorrow may bring. My recovery from addiction has become extremely important to me, more important than anything else.

As a person with a disease, I have come to accept the fact that I'm only a relapse away from a life I want to leave far behind. I never knew before how twisted my mind had become with the use of drugs. In the past I had fooled myself into thinking that I had everything under control and didn't have a problem. I take my recovery seriously today, not because I have to, but because I want to.

*The energy I had
poured into my
pursuit of drugs, I
rechanneled into
working the N.A.
program.*

The program suggests that I follow the steps and abstain from drug use one day at a time. It guarantees my life will become more productive and meaningful. I've been drug-free for over seven months, and already the changes in my life are unbelievable. People trust, care, love and respect me today, and I feel the very same toward others in a way that I never thought would be possible. I never would have imagined that today is the beginning of a new life.

L.B., Connecticut

Reach out

The phone rang. I was lying awake; this was not a dream. The phone rang again. I glanced over at the digital display on my trusty \$8.99 clock. It was 3:11 a.m.

There must have been a train of a thousand thoughts passing through my mind. The first thought that entered my mind was that I should answer the phone. I remembered that I had to work the next day, and I remembered the commitment I had made to my recovery. When I give out my phone number to people, I usually tell them to feel free to call after midnight because I'm usually home.

When the phone rings today, I know that it isn't the wrong number.

The thought that a call coming into my house at that time of night would be anything but an addict never really crossed my mind. The phone rang again. This time I answered.

The fog in my sleepy head was lifting as I began to talk to an addict friend of mine. I felt a sense of self-worth knowing that I could be called on anytime my friend was in need. It must have been important, I figured, for him to call so late at night. I told my friend that I was all ears.

My heart said listen, even though my head said go back to sleep and ask him to call back tomorrow. Straining to keep my eyes and my mind open, I heard my friend's dilemma. He wanted to know if he should lend another addict some money.

At first I thought, "Why the heck is

my friend calling me at three in the morning to ask such a silly question?" Then I remembered that the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel. I unblocked my sick head and began to listen further.

He said his sponsor had suggested that he not lend the other guy money; now he wanted my advice. I listened attentively until he was through. The strangest coincidence was that I had just turned down lending money to another addict the very same night. I believe this was a Higher Power bringing our experiences together so that we could strengthen each other. I felt my empty, thoughtless spirit being filled with new hope and strength. The thought of this call being meaningless was quickly washed away.

I began to tell him of my own experience earlier that very night. I

told him that the decision I had made not to lend this addict money was my own decision and that I was happy with it. I didn't go on telling him my reasoning behind this decision. I asked this guy on the phone if he believed in sponsorship. Then I told him I couldn't give advice, only experience, strength and hope.

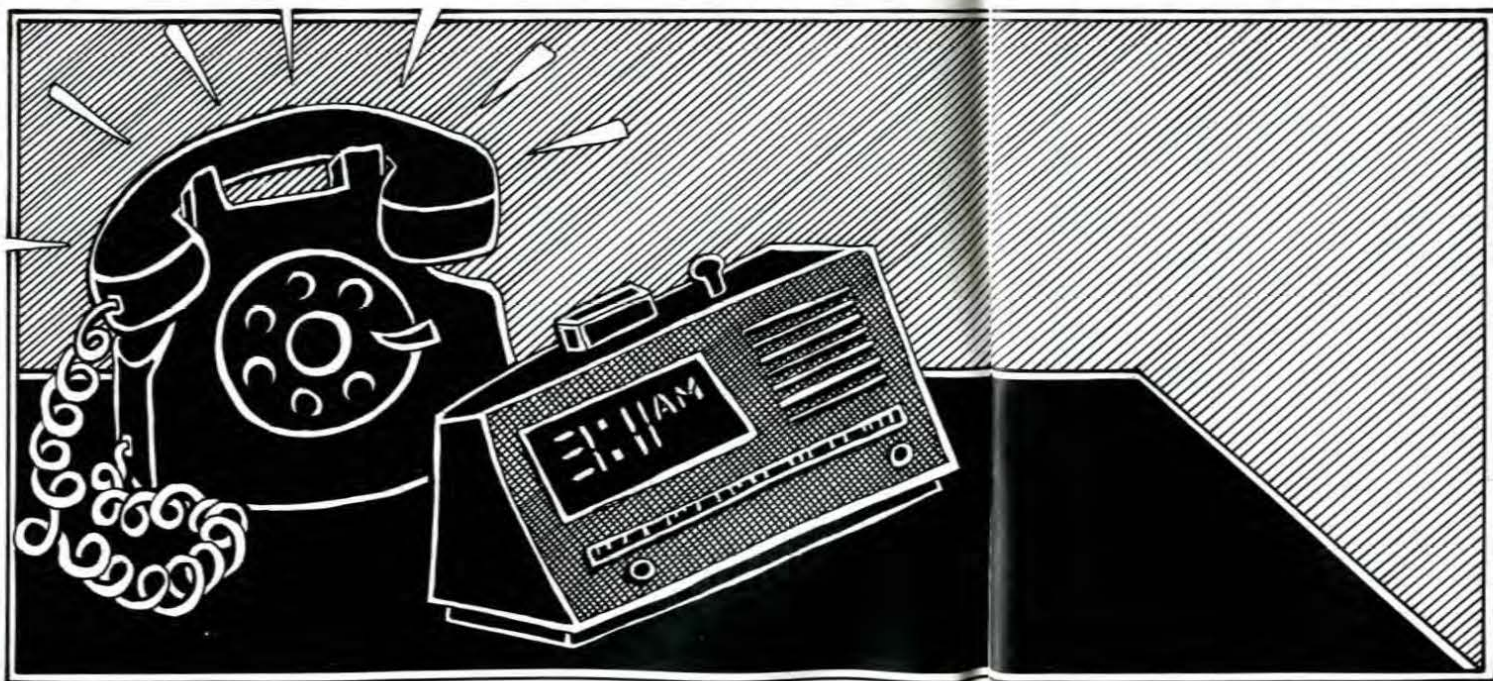
*My heart said to
listen, even though
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back to sleep.*

A long silence followed. I went on to relate to my friend the directions my own sponsor gave me from time to time. I told him that I didn't rationalize those directions away. My rationalizing head wants to figure things my own way. I do the things my sponsor suggests without question. "Just for today, I will have faith in someone in N.A. who believes in me and wants to help me in my recovery."

After talking and listening for about half an hour, my friend was in better spirits. He thanked me for listening. I thanked him for calling, and we hung up.

I rolled over in bed and thought for a few minutes about the way this program works. It's really a simple program for complicated people, and I am a very complicated one. I guess what I expected from the call was to hear about a major catastrophe. I found out that the little things in life are just as important as the big things. I gave thanks to my Higher Power and fell asleep.

Anonymous





Letters in recovery

I have been clean for three years with the support of the "family" I left behind in Michigan. I have recently joined the Navy and have not been able to attend meetings on a regular basis as I did in Michigan (almost every day).

While I was in basic training, I did get a few letters from some of the members of my N.A. family, but eventually they stopped. I continued

to write to them and to others, but to no avail. When I went back to Michigan to celebrate the New Year with my N.A. family, all I heard was, "I started writing to you, but..."; "I have been very busy lately..."; "I forgot to mail off the letter..."; "I was going to send you some N.A. literature, but...."

Then I went from basic training to my school for naval career training. Again, I wrote to several members asking them to write to me, to send me our N.A. newsletter, etc. I still needed them! But I started getting very resentful of them and the fellowship, so I stopped going to meetings entirely. I felt that I could not be part of a fellowship that was filled with a bunch of hypocrites.

After about two weeks of not at-

tending any meetings, an incident happened in our unit. Someone took an overdose of drugs to try to get out of the Navy. Later, when my thoughts turned to the Michigan fellowship and how angry and resentful I felt

All I heard was, "I started writing to you, but..." and "I have been very busy lately..."

toward them, I thought, "Well, maybe if I did the same thing, then everybody in Michigan will see that I really need their support. Then they will write, and keep writing, for fear that I might do it again!"

What thoughts!! What need for control! What fear to let go, go on, grow up!

I went back to an N.A. meeting that Monday night. Even though I arrived about thirty minutes late, I heard what I needed to do: quit trying to control the situation and the people involved; trust God to give you what you really need, not what *you* feel you need for continued recovery; move on to another phase in your life with the steps and the tools that were given to you, and stop letting them go to waste; open up and let people outside the fellowship help you grow in other areas of your life; in turn reach out to them and give help whenever and wherever you can; remember to stay grateful for each day, and not just because you haven't used that day; and get honest!

Yes, I too have to remember to remain open (minded), honest (in

every area), and willing (anytime, anywhere) with myself, with the God of my understanding, and with you.

The last thing I heard at that meeting is that the still-suffering addict is not only the one coming off the street for their first meeting, but also the one who has time in the fellowship. Just because we've been clean awhile, that doesn't mean we are immune to life's turmoil. We need the support of the fellowship just as much, and sometimes more, than the newcomer.

So don't believe for one moment that just because we have been clean awhile that we have it all together, or that, regardless of the length of your clean time, you could not possibly have anything that we need. We still need your unconditional love, care and understanding.

Tonight, take some time and write a letter to someone who can't get to meetings.

Tonight, take some time and write a letter (it doesn't have to be a long one) to someone who can't get to those meetings like you can back home. Some of them are in jails, hospitals, isolated parts of the world. We are part of the N.A. Fellowship, too! Take care of us, and we will take care of you someday. It doesn't hurt to get out of our self-centered selves once in awhile. Go ahead—give it a try—just for today!

D.F., Michigan



People pleasing

Events in my life have recently caused me to open an entire area of myself up to investigation using the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous. These events involve my need to be a "people pleaser." If I share the consequences that this form of behavior has brought about, I may be able to help others before they face what I'm having to face now.

I took one bit of advice in the program after I got burned. That was, "No major changes in the first year." I had to get burnt by getting married—then I knew what they meant. I went out a few times, but when I got back that was one lesson I knew. Like most addicts, I had to feel the pain enough before the motivation would set in.

This marriage involved some people pleasing, but I want to pass this early episode up and relate an event that has happened after that first year. I stayed out of relationships until I had

earned that first hunk of heavy metal, my anniversary medallion. Two days later, I started making up for lost time. I wasn't people pleasing, but I sure was being pleased!

I was so pleased that after four months of this I wanted to marry this very pleasing person. I knew God had sent her because I had been a good boy and stayed out of relationships like I had learned to: the hard way. This meant everything was to be blessed by my H.P.—or so I thought.

A year later I found out this woman was only being the way she was in order to please me. What would she want to please me for?, I wondered. Why me? Well, I'm beginning to understand now. My eyes are opening to the fact that I'm not the great catch I thought she was catching.

When I am people pleasing, I am not working the part of the program that has to do with honesty. This is one thing I think I've learned from all this. If I'm not being me, but acting in some particular way or manner to impress you, then I am not being honest with you or me.

Let's look at it this way. I like

dancing. My female friend says yes, she does too. She doesn't really, but she doesn't want to put me off. She ends up going dancing with me a lot, but really she'd rather not. That same pattern can show up in every area of our lives from the kitchen to the bedroom. That's people pleasing.

When I am people pleasing, I am not working the part of the program that has to do with honesty.

This can go on and on until I decide I have really landed the ideal girl, and we're going to get married and live happily ever after.

As you might have expected, the relationship ended. I'm as much at fault as anyone because I didn't want to look honestly at the relationship back at its inception. Being the romantic I am, I wanted to believe everything she said, and questioned

nothing. I lived in such a state of denial that only the same hindsight I had used in looking back on my drug problem would have shown how sick I still was.

Today I realize I am responsible for my recovery. I am also responsible for my actions and for accepting the consequences for those actions. Today, I have a program which teaches me to honestly accept the responsibility for my actions and to honestly look at my actions; to be willing to do what I have to today; to be open-minded enough to look at my roll in my own life.

Today as I write this, I am married again and we have just had a baby. I feel much more responsible today. I've got my footwork cut out for me.

Knowing that H.P. is with me and helping me through the rough spots is a major comfort to me. I still have a lot of adjusting and changing to go through. During my past two years in the program, I have developed a relationship with a Higher Power who is willing to walk every step of the way with me. He will even carry me if it's necessary.

G.D., Texas

H.O.W.—the science of the Second Step

"We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity"

Our Basic Text starts out explaining this step by saying, "The Second Step is necessary if we expect to achieve any sort of ongoing recovery." I stayed clean for a while purely on the excitement of the fellowship and the sense that all these people *understand*. I received a big shot of gratitude when I did not have to live daily with the physical pain that results from drug abuse. This early, exciting period in recovery is often labeled a "pink cloud."

Life was wonderful in those early days. Every meeting, dance, picnic, campout or convention enabled me to meet new people recovering from this disease, people who understood me. It was all very exhilarating.

At some point, however, the excitement faded. When I tried to use the "courage to change the things I can," I found that life was not easy. Many of my old fears returned. Things did not always go as I had imagined they would. I got started in college and found the going rough; the thought entered my mind that I might fail.

A very fundamental part of the N.A. program is H.O.W.: honesty, open-mindedness and willingness. These are true keys to long-term serenity.

For me, H.O.W. got quite a workout in Step Two. I found I was neither honest nor open-minded, and above all, I was not willing. I hated to be told what to do.

I felt I had been burned by religion and religious people. I vowed over and over to never have anything to do with religion or God ever again.

I had done some thinking about God, and had intellectually negated him from my life. After rigorous study of the origins of life on this planet, I became one of the "enlightened." I came to believe that science alone could explain how life had originated and developed on Earth.

After rigorous study of the origins of life on this planet, I knew that a God was not needed.

I delighted in the "Big Bang theory": the primordial explosion, leaving subatomic particles, atoms, stars, all to develop in accordance



with the laws of physics. Great! A God was not required.

It was all as simple and inevitable as an apple falling from a tree. Oh, yes, and there was so much proof. The whole universe was still expanding, and one could still hear the bang with a radio telescope. I looked arrogantly down at the dumb people who actually believed in a God. My brains almost

brought about my demise.

Fortunately, most of life involves just showing up. If we keep coming back to meetings, we get better. There is a special magic that occurs in the meeting rooms. If we go to meetings often enough, we will witness it.

The magic I have witnessed is the

magic of people getting better. From the beginning, my interest was piqued. These people had done things I had done, they had thought things I had thought, yet they were happy! They were leading interesting, fulfilling lives.

I heard them talk of their past suicide attempts, of long depressions, of lost families, of lost jobs. Over a period of time, addiction had removed everything good from their lives. They had lost their dreams and their will to live. They had hated the world. I really identified with those feelings.

*It was as certain as
the law of gravity:
the people who
worked the program
the hardest had their
lives transformed the
most.*

I realized, however, that they were different now. I wanted what they now had. The people at the meetings gave me hope; they gave me a vision, and a faith that someday I could get what they possessed. So the stories of failure followed by recovery gave me a start in faith. Unconsciously, I understood that these rooms full of addicts had a healing power.

After a few months, I became aware of certain facts. The people who kept attending meetings sooner or later got better. Furthermore, it seemed that the people who worked the program the hardest had their lives transformed the most. It was as certain as

the law of gravity: the program worked for the people who worked it.

When I was at meetings, I was able to make the observations which proved my hypothesis that this program is a Higher Power. This H.P. allowed addicts to recover from illness and go on to live their dreams and to help others along the way.

Step Two probably cannot be done without at least a little honesty, open-mindedness and willingness. Where did we find that H.O.W.? It came to me through pain. The pain forced me to try anything to change. As I attended more and more meetings and saw more and more miracles, I became aware of the benefits of H.O.W.

Still another factor softened me up: my way did not work. As I have heard others say, "My best thinking got me here." I had tried everything else. There was no place left to go. Hearing the gut level honesty of others made it easier for me to be honest.

For me—a scientist by training—the Second Step was proven beyond a shadow of a doubt by the countless people I have seen who had their lives completely turned around. There is a direct correlation between the number of meetings I attend and the amount of happiness in my life. I like to be happy, so I go to a lot of meetings. Ex-criminals, ex-mental patients—we all stay clean if we work the program.

Today, besides seeing "God" in the meetings, I see him in my study of atoms, stars and cells. I see a plan, an organization, a design in the chemistry and physics of the universe. For years, I did not want to be alive. Now I am grateful to be alive to study the cosmos; it is exciting.

J.S., New York



Creating an atmosphere of recovery

On a recent trip to Hawaii, I learned a great lesson. The members there took such great care in creating an atmosphere of recovery. Perhaps I can describe my perception of this atmosphere and share the effect it had on me. Simply stated, it was an atmosphere of unconditional love. I felt loved.

I had arrived in Hawaii full of fear, wearing my "thick New York skin." I don't always love myself. I start to isolate and feel scared and lonely. I think, "Who would want to be around me?" After all, fear and loneliness are not very attractive qualities. I feel trapped and extremely needy. I want you to love me, so I put on my masks. I try to act confident, secure, and (worst of all) cool. When I'm denying my feelings like this, in an attempt to be loved, there's no way for me to practice my program. I'm too busy trying to prove I'm lovable.

But I found that the addicts in Hawaii really loved me, no matter how I felt about myself. They didn't care if I sounded good, or whether I was cool. This took a while to sink in. In fact, I was suspicious of this unconditional love.

Finally I started to relax. I could just be myself without fear of judgement. Then something even greater happened. Because they loved me so much, I started to believe I was lovable and started loving myself.

Today I believe this is how God expresses himself through people. Love without a price tag.

I was so moved to share this with others that I found that love multiplying around me. I felt like I was truly in an atmosphere of recovery.

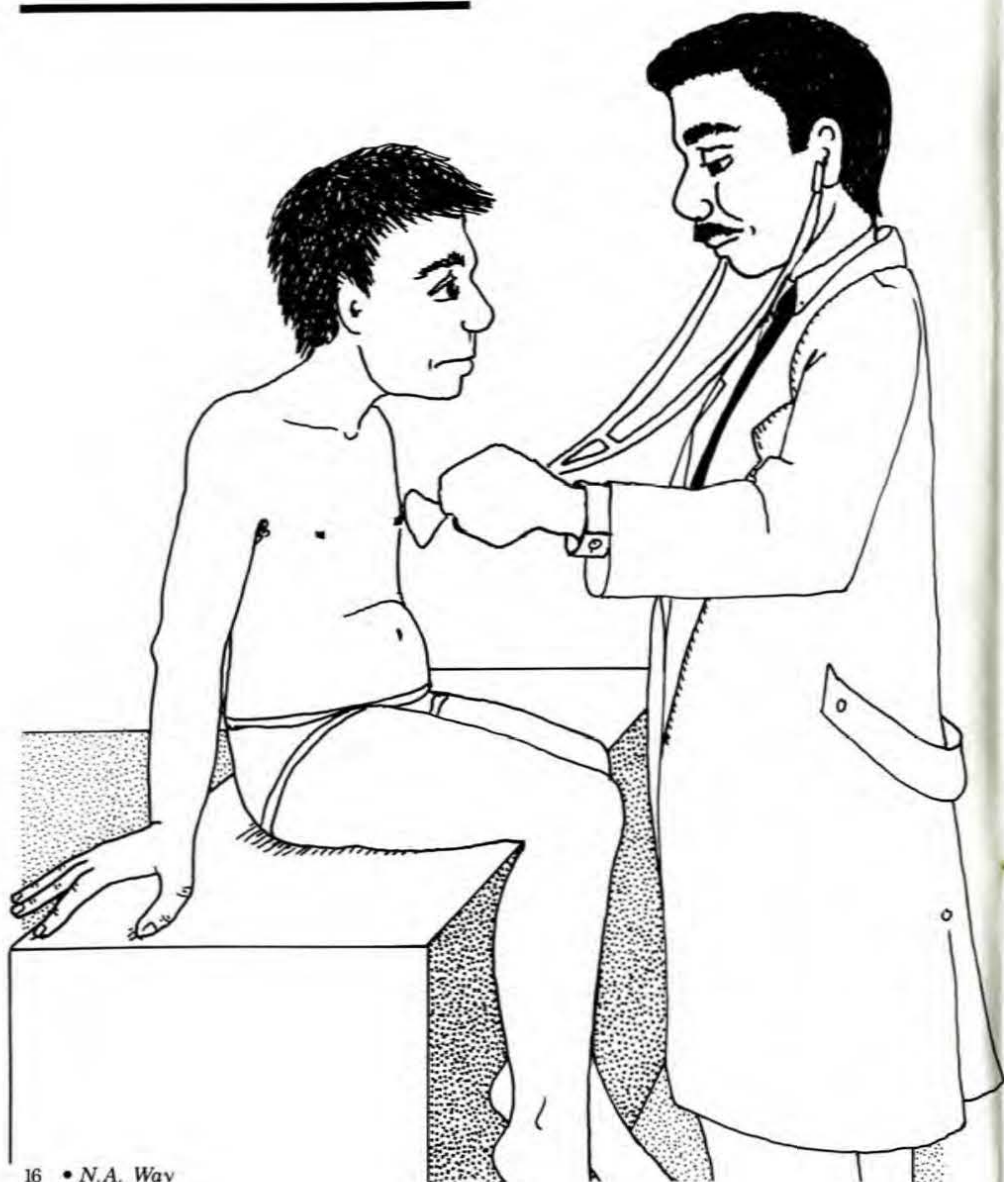
The real gift came not when I felt loved, but when I was able to pass this unconditional love on. I realized that I could help other addicts to relax enough to start seeing how worthy of being loved they were. I was able to help others to recover!

I believe the way to create an atmosphere of recovery is clearly stated in our Twelfth Tradition, which simply reminds us to "place principles before personalities."

Oh, by the way... Thank you for loving me.

G.G., New York

When serious illness strikes



Two N.A. members share about their reaction to the news: 'You're clean, but you may be dying'

An obstacle and a choice

Well, where to begin? I got clean September 2, 1984. I blew it the first time, with only a month and a half clean, by feeding into an obsession. I left the recovery house I was in to enter what I thought would be the perfect relationship. I had four months and he had seven months.

Well, to say the least, we had our problems. He was a controller and I was submissive. He said, "Jump," and I asked sweetly, "How high?" I cooked, cleaned, and waited for the great change to occur in him.

I married him, and it still didn't help. I completely forgot that the only person I could change was myself. Whenever I'd start to grow, he'd immediately remind me that I was his, and that I was a piece of crap. This went on for a little over a year.

I went through a personal crisis over the death of a family member. By the time it was over, my husband and I had gotten divorced. I truly doubt I'd be here today if it weren't for a few people who loved me enough to help me through this.

When the divorce was final, I finally began to grow. I lived with

another recovering woman whom, I must say today, I love dearly; she is a true friend. This woman watched me isolate and cry and think nothing of myself until I started to pull myself out of it.

I held a job for one year. Wow, that's a miracle! I opened my first checking account. I survived suicidal thoughts. I now live on my own, and I have a job. This is the first time in my life I've ever been independent, and I'm beginning to enjoy that.

Now I have more news: I'm HIV-infected. [HIV—human immunodeficiency virus.] I may develop AIDS.

*I asked my God,
"Why me?" I had
been spared the
misery of further
addiction, only to be
stricken by another
disease.*

I'm what they call a carrier. Why am I telling you all this? My reason is simple. I have a choice, thank God. I can give up, or I can carry on with the gift of recovery.

I've used this program to walk through difficult times before. With the continuous help of God and you all in N.A. I will go on, because this is my new way of life—one day at a time.

L.H., Pennsylvania

The road back

I relapsed after twenty months clean. I had just received a medical diagnosis of AIDS Related Complex. My own negligence, ignorance and

fear had become my worst enemies.

By the time I was diagnosed, my immune system was nearly shot; fear and devastation consumed me as never before. I immediately focused on death and the horrors that I feared would eat away at my body. I first succumbed to hysteria, then lapsed into severe depression.

I suffered anguish like never before. A bitter hatred of life rose in me, and I asked my God, "Why me?" I had been spared the misery of further addiction, only to be stricken by another disease. I feared what others would think. I lost all hope of the clean life I had led, and chose to use drugs to kill the immense pain.

This was my downfall. The drugs did not take the pain away, and I knew it. Nothing had been accomplished by my using; in fact it made things worse. I had once again bought into my "committee" and the disease of addiction. I had abused my body and sold myself short.

Guilt consumed me as never before, and I cried for hours on end. I did not practice what I had learned in N.A. I did not call anybody and I did not make it to a meeting. I did not trust my sponsor, my friends in the fellow-

ship or my lover, and I turned my back on God and the program. My familiar companion of mental anguish was back, torturing me.

I then went to a meeting, but I hid. I did not raise my hand as a newcomer because fear and ego still had me. I was ashamed of the loss of my continuous clean time. This hiding continued for a month.

When the pain finally became unbearable, I gave in and shared at a meeting that I had used, and that I had a new disease. At that instant it was as if a burden had been lifted. The fear began to subside. My friends in the fellowship did not abandon me. They welcomed me back with love, open arms and hugs.

I know today that N.A. is my home and my family. I know that my disease of addiction is still alive, and will be around a lot longer than I will. I know that it remains patient. I know once again that I must recommit myself to this program and the steps of recovery. I know in my heart of hearts that nothing is worth relapsing over now, not even the big one—AIDS.

I would like to close this article with some loving news. There are others in the fellowship who also have life-threatening diseases and are living and working the steps around it. There are people who do love me, in and out of the fellowship, no matter what my physical state is.

Life and clean time are accumulated one day at a time. God does not abandon, but continues to give his love and provide strength and hope. Today my life is worth living, and being clean is my life. I am worthy to love myself, my God, and others.

J.R., California



Recovery island

I was like a rat fleeing a sinking ship. (The ship must have been very crowded, for I look around today and see whole rooms full of "rats" like myself!) As the ship sank, we had to either sink or swim.

I swam for a while, but eventually I started to sink. Just as I was going down for the third time I reached out, and my hand found a fin. I was afraid because I thought it might be a shark's, but when I grabbed tight it brought me safely to the surface. I was grateful to see that it was a friendly, playful dolphin pulling me toward a ship called N.A.

The people aboard washed me off and hugged me. They all seemed so happy I did not drown. They fed me, and their food was spiritual, so I grew strong. When I was fit again, I thanked the happy people and dived back into the water, this sea called life.

As I swam on my own toward the shore of recovery, I saw that the ship was going there, too. The wind was with me, and I swam fast. Then clouds came, the wind changed, and the sea got rough. I made no progress.



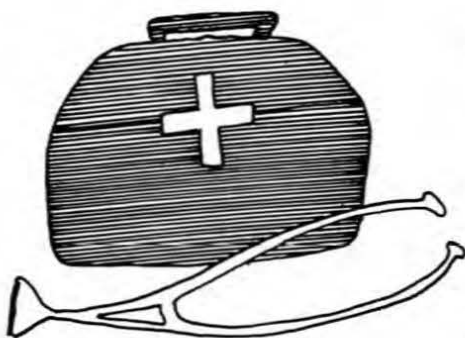
Then I saw another, much bigger ship whose people took me in. They only shook my hand, and they talked funny, but just like the people aboard the first ship, they were happy. They fed me, and though their food was also spiritual, it tasted different. Once again I grew strong. They said they were also going to the land of recovery, but said they were taking a different course. I dived off and swam back in the direction of the other ship.

I started to sink again, and again reached out my hand. But the dolphin was not there! I reached out on the other side and felt nothing. Then I looked beneath me, and there was the dolphin. He told me that he had never left me.

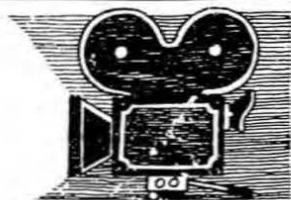
We played and laughed, and he said he would take me to my ship. As we approached, I noticed that there were many dolphins in the front and underneath, each with names of someone on the ship. My dolphin joined the others, and I rejoiced at having my friends again.

I looked ahead of the ship and was surprised to see one big whale pulling the whole ship. I asked about the other ship, and the whale told me that we were headed for the same shore, and would arrive at the same time. At that moment, I knew I was home.

M.G., Nevada



Feature



The N.A. World Service Conference

*Regional reps and
trusted servants
review the state of
world services,
chart future course*

The 1988 annual meeting of N.A.'s World Service Conference was held in Los Angeles the last week of April. Regional Service Representatives (RSR's) met with World Service Conference (WSC) officers and committee chairpersons, World Service Board (WSB) trustees, the World Convention Corporation (WCC) Board of Directors, and World Service Office (WSO) directors and staff in five days of reports and discussions.

Represented at the 1988 conference were the Australasian Region (serving New Zealand and Australia), four regions in Canada, one each in Germany, Ireland, Japan, and the United

Kingdom, and forty-nine regions in the United States (one of which also serves a Canadian province).

The *Conference Agenda Report*, an advance summary of motions scheduled for the conference, had been distributed to the fellowship earlier in the year. That report, reviewed by groups, areas, and regions prior to the conference, laid the foundation for the week's proceedings. The items presented in it—some routine, some quite controversial—affected every area of service to the N.A. world. And so did the conference itself.

World Service Office

Three reports were presented by components of the WSO: one by the office board of directors, one by the general manager, and one by the ad hoc international committee of the WSO board.

The board report included a few observations about the growth of the fellowship and the office: "The growth that has occurred over the last five years can be shown by examining the financial report given by the World Service Office in 1983 and comparing it to the financial report presented by the office this year.

"The 1983 report reflects a gross income during the 1982-83 year of \$87,000 [U.S.]. That represents [only] 3% of the income generated in 1987. At the time of the conference in 1983,

there was one full-time employee, one part-time employee, and a volunteer office manager. The office currently has thirty-five full-time employees to handle the needs of a truly worldwide fellowship."

General manager's report

The general manager of the World Service Office presented his usual detailed report on office operations, running fifty-five pages. "In nearly every category," he said, "this report shows continued growth for N.A. and the office. The number of meetings is up, the volume of correspondence is up, the number of phone calls is up, and the general work load is up.

"Literature sales [grew] to a new high of \$2,668,389, a growth...of \$527,960 over the previous twelve-month period. However, it is clear there are limits imposed by the 'normal' level of growth that will determine future growth of spending.

"Although the office did not substantially expand the number of staff members," the report continued, "everyone was required to work harder to keep up with the increase in

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work. To put things in perspective, there are now over 470 area committees. Ten years ago, there were not even that many groups.

"As a year of learning, it was an unparalleled time. The major issues addressed this year increased in complexity. Translations, international fellowship growth, international literature sales, WSO financial limitations, speaker tape policy, literature production problems, trademark protection and keeping track of meeting information—these are just a few of the issues that gave us the opportunity to learn a lot more this year.

"WSO has...learned there are limitations on what the [office] can do and should be expected to do... Recent experience shows clearly that more effort needs to be directed to improving what WSO does rather than attempting to expand services that are provided."

Worldwide growth

International growth was highlighted in the report from the WSO ad hoc international committee. Attention was focussed on "a cost equalization plan, the purpose of which would be to spread the cost of attendance to the World Service Conference participants among all the regions attending. Next we discussed how translation of N.A. materials was being accomplished by the office, as well as a proposal...to consider the desirability of continental conferences. Also discussed was action being considered by the WSO board to open a branch of the office in Europe.

"Spanish, French, Portuguese, German, and to some degree Italian translations of the [pamphlets] and the White Booklet are all reaching...completion... The plan would be to next translate the Basic Text and various service materials [into these

languages]. Other language translations that are in a very early stage of development include Dutch, Swedish, Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, and Chinese. Japanese translations are on hold; we hope that further work will be accomplished with the Japanese while they are here for the conference."

Immediately following the conference, the Japanese delegation made arrangements to complete the translation of N.A. literature into their language. A Tokyo translation service has been contracted to work with the N.A. group there.

The committee also reported that "the Caribbean area has all of a sudden become a hot spot for growth, especially in Puerto Rico, the West Indies, the Virgin Islands, and Jamaica. Groups in India continue to grow and establish themselves, and WSO was recently notified of a new [area committee] in Bombay that serves seven groups. Other inquiries have also been received from Pakistan and Bangladesh.

"Growth in South America is steady, and includes new groups forming in Uruguay and Brazil. WSO is now receiving more communication and information from Central American countries and Mexico. Most of these concern tradition questions [like how to] pay the rent, involvement with drug prevention groups, and how to inform the public of their existence."

New literature

Five pieces of literature were approved at this year's World Service Conference: two new pamphlets, and three revised versions of earlier items.

The Group is an updated, expanded



edition of an existing pamphlet by that name which was an excerpt from the 1976 N.A. *Tree*, our fellowship's first guide to service. The new nine page leaflet discusses the purpose of the N.A. group, the "home group" concept, the formation of a new group, and the roles played by the group's various trusted servants.

Am I an Addict?, revised from an earlier version, offers twenty-nine questions designed to help people unsure of whether they are addicts or not determine for themselves whether they need help.

Working Step Four in Narcotics Anonymous "is a model of what a thorough Fourth Step inventory might be," the introduction says. The sixteen page booklet provides a detailed outline to help members work their Fourth Step. It replaces an earlier N.A. Fourth Step guide.

The conference approved two completely new pamphlets. *Staying Clean on the Outside* is written to assist N.A. members in hospitals and insti-

tutions in the transition to life "on the outside."

"Hey! What's the Basket For?"—*The N.A. Principle of Self-Support* discusses our Seventh Tradition and the significance of member contributions at group meetings.

Basic Text

The Fourth Edition of N.A.'s Basic Text was the focus of much attention, both before and during the WSC annual meeting. Shortly after its release last fall, some members commented on what they believed to be significant changes in the way the book read to them. Part of that was due to the fact that it had been edited for grammar (in accordance with a 1985 WSC motion).

Part, however, was due to a series of clerical errors made in preparing the manuscript used by the editor. In a number of places, the typist transcribing the editor's copy had accidentally dropped whole lines from the text. These gaps went undetected by the WSO and the WSC Literature Committee. In fact, they were discovered only days before the annual meeting began.

The WSO general manager described the problem in his report: "The WSO staff [prepared] a detailed item-for-item list of changes between the Third Edition Revised and the Fourth Edition... The staff discovered that there were twenty-five separate places where language in the Third Edition was not present in the manuscript used in the editing [which produced the Fourth Edition]... The consequence of this omission was that the final manuscript did not include

those parts, as though they were intentional deletions. The Fourth Edition is therefore missing this language by default, rather than by editor or committee choice."

The conference addressed the problem by approving a proposal to restore the twenty-five gaps, the corrected version to be called the Fifth Edition of the Basic Text. While the restoration is underway, the WSO was authorized to continue selling the Fourth Edition. In addition, the conference approved a moratorium on changes in the Basic Text, insuring that the Fifth Edition would not be modified for at least five years.

Step, tradition book

It Works: How and Why, the N.A. step and tradition book under development, was further reviewed in nine workshops on three continents.

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"Over a thousand members contributed written material, with at least 400 to 500 members attending our world workshops," reported the committee that organized the workshops. "Every single piece of input we received from the fellowship was reviewed and processed by our step

groups at the workshops... And what I hold before you is the end product: a single master list of changes [in the earlier review drafts] that the fellowship is basically in agreement on."

The next step will be for the WSC Literature Committee to use the workshop material to produce another review manuscript, which they hope to make available at the next WSC annual meeting.

Public Information

The WSC Public Information Committee had an extraordinarily productive year. Primary among their projects was development of a plan designed to facilitate more direct service to local public information committees. Each member of the committee was assigned a particular service district—a number of regions to which they would be responsible to provide assistance in local public information efforts.

Mock learning days, held by WSC P.I. members for groups of local P.I. committee members, helped those local members better understand how to put on learning days for their own N.A. communities. Regional and multi-regional learning days also helped make the resources of the world P.I. committee more accessible.

A variety of new written resources was developed for local use. One such tool was the *P.I. News*, a newsletter containing reports from both WSC P.I. and local public information mem-

bers on phonelines, billboards, radio and TV spots, the media, and everything else involved in P.I. for Narcotics Anonymous.

The committee was also active in sharing the N.A. message with the world community. Booths, speakers, or membership participation were provided to a wide range of government and professional conferences on three continents. (See the November 1987 and April 1988 issues of the *N.A. Way* for reports on two such events.) These contacts helped increase public recognition of the value of the N.A. program in addressing the problems associated with drug addiction.

The committee established an equally ambitious program for itself in the upcoming year. They plan to develop two brochures. One would explain Narcotics Anonymous to non-addicts. Another would seek to spell out the ABC's of P.I. for the individual member of Narcotics Anonymous.

Hospitals and Institutions

The conference Hospitals and Institutions Committee continued to provide service to local H&I committees, helping them carry the N.A. recovery message into prisons and treatment facilities. They finished drafting a new guidebook for local H&I service, which has been distributed for review.

The committee worked on yet another new pamphlet, *For Those in Treatment*. The project was passed on to the WSC Literature Committee

for further development.

The WSC H&I Committee has assigned work on a booklet, tentatively titled *From the Inside Out*, to the Colorado Regional H&I Committee. This pamphlet is expected to further address the problems associated with the transition from correctional facilities into mainstream society.

One of the projects highlighted for the coming year is the reformatting of the H&I newsletter, *Reaching Out*. The committee also hopes to have the new booklet and its updated handbook completed by next year.

Board of Trustees

One of the primary forms of trustee service over the past year was their work with various world service committees. Individual trustees also took part in conventions and workshops in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, and the U.S., in addition to their assistance in eight *It Works* workshops.

Much of the board's time this past year was spent re-examining their role in world service. "Our role as a service board is becoming more clear," the trustee chairperson's report said. "It has become evident that resolving disputes and mediating controversies is not the business of the board of trustees. Members and groups no longer have the need to ask the World Service Board to function as the 'supreme court' of N.A. The fellowship has service committees, trusted servants, and experienced members

who can provide a base of knowledge and experience to our N.A. groups...

"Worldwide awareness of recovery from addiction," the report continued, "is giving rise to evolving N.A. communities on other continents besides North America. This calls for increased involvement by all of world services in the worldwide growth and development of Narcotics Anonymous. The role of the board of trustees has become one of looking ahead and providing guidance for N.A. as a whole."

A number of questions were referred to the World Service Board by the conference for further study: N.A. and AIDS, the definition of "addiction," special interest (gay, women, mens) meetings at WCNA, and whether use of nicotine and caffeine is consistent with N.A.'s principle of total abstinence from drugs.

From Disneyland to Disneyworld

That's the world convention story! Planning for this year's convention is in full swing. The 1988 convention will be held September 1-4 in Anaheim, California, home of Disneyland. The conference selected the site for the 1989 world convention at—you guessed it—Orlando, Florida, home of Disneyworld.

The World Convention Corporation brought a few "housekeeping" motions to the conference, all of which passed. The corporation changed it's

Over a thousand members contributed written material for the step book. 400 to 500 members attended workshops.

Members and groups no longer have the need to ask the World Service Board to function as N.A.'s Supreme Court.

name from WCCNA to WCC. The process of site selection was further modified, allowing the corporation to select locations further in advance. The convention will rotate among world zones, the WCC board choosing the exact site within the zones each year. The *Convention Guidelines* were cleaned up in places and modified to reflect the above changes.

Additional Needs

Last year, a special committee was created to examine how well Narcotics Anonymous was carrying the message to addicts with additional needs, particularly those with mobility, hearing, or vision impairments. "The World Service Office," their report said, "had already begun to make materials available to the fellowship before this

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committee was established. Literature in braille, recovery material on cassette tapes, and materials in large print have been available for some time."

To find out what else was being done (or not done), a questionnaire was developed. According to the committee's report, 28% of the responding groups had the potential for becoming more accessible to those with impaired mobility.

On the basis of the responses they

received, the committee made a number of recommendations. They suggested the development of a guide for groups on how to obtain services such as sign language interpreters. They also encouraged regions and areas to make existing materials designed for addicts with additional needs more readily available at the local level.

The conference asked this committee to continue its work for one more year.

Conference voting

"For many years now," the WSC Policy Committee wrote in the 1988 *Conference Agenda Report*, "there has existed a conflict as to who should be the voting participants of the World Service Conference. Debates over this issue in the past have been heated and emotional..."

Since the World Service Conference's inception in 1976, voting participants have included RSR's, conference officers, committee chairpersons, and trustees. A motion from last year's annual meeting regarding the voting status of these different types of conference participants was referred to the Policy Committee to be studied and placed on the 1988 agenda. If passed, it would have restricted voting rights to RSR's only. Non-voting participants would still have had the right to address the conference and make motions.

The motion was highly controversial and the debate extraordinarily emotional, a dramatic departure from the otherwise even tone of the 1988 conference meeting. This question had been considered at several previous annual meetings, each time generating heated debate and each time failing.

Some of this year's participants objected even to consideration of the motion. As one RSR put it, "I don't like to deal in [fellowship] business with quite this much energy," referring to the highly charged atmosphere of the debate. "If this were a simple

The conference selected Orlando, Florida for the 1989 world convention.

housekeeping motion to set right our voting procedures, [the question] wouldn't generate this kind of division. I feel a lot of pain, a lot of fear, a lot of things that have nothing to do with recovery. Something's very, very wrong."

On one side of the question were those who believed that conference officers and trustees should continue to vote on conference business. "I do a lot of fishing," a regional representative shared. "I wouldn't be real smart if I went on a trip and blinded or handcuffed my guide. But that's what we're doing here."

Other participants felt that only the RSR's represented the conscience of

the fellowship. "My region has clearly and specifically instructed me on how to vote," one such participant said. "I've had my say in my home group. Here, I'm carrying the conscience of all the groups in my region, and nothing else."

Yet others put forth the position that debate at the World Service Conference among all participants—RSR's, conference officers, and trustees—formed a fellowshipwide conscience in itself.

Some RSR's found themselves being persuaded that the vote their region had instructed them to cast on the question would not be in the best interests of N.A. as a whole.

"I'm a scared RSR," said one. "I'm in a position where I cannot in good conscience do what I was elected to do here. This motion does not adequately deal with the questions it pretends to address: trust, what group conscience is, or how we make decisions here. It's only a quick fix, and quick fixes do not serve the fellowship."

Finally, the vote was taken. The motion, which required a 2/3's majority, failed. Twenty-seven voted in favor of it, forty against, and nine participants abstained.



Editorial



From the editor

Is the N.A. Way 'conference-approved'?

The short answer to that question is "no." There has been a lot of confusion about that, though. If it is not conference-approved, can we use it in meetings? Can we sell it or give it away at meetings or other N.A. functions? Is it appropriate for use by H&I committees? P.I. committees? Let's give some clear answers to those questions and get that confusion behind us.

The magazine is a World Service Conference sanctioned publication. In other words, it is a publication created by the WSC, which developed a process by which it could be edited. That process involves one associate editor elected by the conference, a second associate editor who is a trustee appointed by that board's chairperson, and a managing editor employed by the World Service Office.

Before this Editorial Board works on the magazine, all the material submitted for publication is reviewed by a panel of seven members nominated by the World Service Conference who provide editorial guidance. Much care is taken to ensure the appropriateness and clarity of everything published in the N.A. Way.

So how does that differ from the conference's literature approval process? Conference-approved literature is developed over a period of years rather than months. This is because conference-approved books and pamphlets are more or less permanent presentations of N.A. as a whole. The N.A. Way, on the other hand, is a monthly magazine. Individual views and opinions are presented that do not necessarily represent those of the fellowship as a whole.

The WSC has decided that the N.A. Way should not be read aloud during meetings. That's reserved for conference-approved literature only. That single restriction, however, is the only one that applies.

The magazine may be mentioned during meetings; it may be described during announcements and displayed on the literature tables; it may be distributed freely in jails and hospitals; it may be displayed or distributed with other literature by P.I. committees.

The N.A. Way offers a unique presentation of our recovery and a discussion of our fellowship not found in that form in any other part of our written presentation of the N.A. message. The fellowship is encouraged to use it to the fullest.

Subscription drive: a success...

Response to the subscription drive

we conducted during March and April was phenomenal. At the outset of the drive the magazine had lost a little ground, and was holding at about 4,500 subscriptions. As a result of the drive, nearly 13,000 copies of the June issue were mailed. At the cutoff for June we were still receiving more, so the subscription list is still swelling.

We wish to thank all the areas and groups for your cooperation in passing our materials along and making announcements, and all of you who took us up on the offer.

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...So far

As a communications experiment, the drive was a great success. We successfully used the service structure by doing a direct mailing to areas who passed our materials along to groups. It was, as you know, a "try now, pay later" kind of offer, though, so we have yet to see how much real growth it will generate. For those of you who tried it, if you like it and want to subscribe, please do it as soon as possible. We are sending out about 8,000 billing notices for the next two months, so you can save the fellowship a lot of money by not waiting. If half of those who expressed an interest subscribed after receiving only the first notice, we

would save at least \$1500 in mailing costs that could then be used for the other services the WSO provides.

Did you make the April 30 deadline?

We stated clearly on all materials describing the special offer that it was good if received in our office by April 30. We in fact accepted all subscriptions *postmarked* by April 30. That allowed for a few days flexibility, but we had to draw the line somewhere. We drew it there.

The special offer did not differ very significantly from our normal billing policy. We always accept orders on a "bill me later" basis, and we send two notices. If the bill is not paid, the subscription is discontinued. The special offer included two extra magazines on the total subscription—fourteen issues for the price of twelve. Those who did not make the cut will still receive their two magazines and be billed as normal, but will not receive the extra two months.

If you know for sure that your order was mailed after April 30, you did not make the cut. We made no exceptions. If you're not sure, here's how you can use the code on your mailing label to see if you will receive the extra two magazines:

NIHABC

The first letter, "N" identifies the code for office purposes as an N.A. Way subscription. The second letter, the "I" in the example above, signifies the last digit of the year this subscription will expire. "I" is the ninth letter of the alphabet, so this code indicates 1989. The third letter, "H" in this case, indicates the month of expiration. "H" is the eighth letter,

August is the eighth month. Any code beginning with "NIH" would indicate a subscription that is scheduled to expire in August of 1989.

Using that method, figure out when your paid subscription would expire. Figuring from the month of the first copy you received, are you scheduled for twelve months or fourteen? If it's fourteen months, you were in time for the special offer.

Canadian rates

Beginning with the June issue, the pricing structure for the magazine has been changed to offer more ways for the fellowship to use it. And no, that's not a long way of saying we've raised the price. We haven't. It's still \$15 a year. Here's a rundown of what we have done.

We've computed a full Canadian price structure based upon the current exchange rate, and we've opened a bank account in Canada. All our price lists will now include both the U.S. and Canadian figures, and subscribers in Canada can now send checks in Canadian funds. We expect to recompute the Canadian price figures once each year.

Bulk orders

Bulk order discounts are now available for single issues (20 or more), not just for multiple subscriptions.

A special bulk discount is now offered for purchases of 100 or more copies of a single issue. Anyone may choose this option, of course, but it is designed especially for use by committees or offices that serve as the central literature distribution outlet for an area or region, for conventions,

and for H&I and P.I. committees who may wish to make large purchases but do not have the money to pay for a large number of subscriptions.

New prices

Discounts are now offered for two and three year subscriptions—\$28 for a two-year subscription (a dollar off each year), or \$39 for three years (two dollars a year off).

The cover price is now \$1.75 U.S., \$2.25 Canadian. This was done in consultation with selected regional offices in an effort to make the previous option work best for them.

At the outset of the drive, subscriptions were holding at 4500. Nearly 13,000 copies of the June issue were mailed as a result of the drive.

Cover price has never been an issue before, since virtually all our orders were for subscriptions. With the advent of large bulk discounts, however, this figure has taken on some new importance.

Thanks again to all who participated in the drive. We hope you enjoy getting the magazine as much as we enjoy putting it together, and that you decide to subscribe. The more who do, the more effective a tool the magazine becomes in the overall written presentation of N.A.'s message.

R.H., Editor

When the hugs are gone

I just returned from the 1988 World Service Conference. It was my first, and I left filled with renewed faith in the whole process and in our dedication to fulfilling our primary purpose. It was an honor to be a part of something so healing and unifying. Thank you for the recharge!

At the conference, I heard of the stigma attached to the disease of AIDS within the fellowship, and that many addicts with AIDS feel they cannot openly share in meetings. Those who do share feel they are then ostracized. Suddenly the hugs are gone. The love and support is withdrawn and they are placed at arm's length.

I heard that some feel it is the addict's own responsibility to overcome their fears about sharing. I question this, as I feel it is my responsibility as a recovering addict to add to that non-judgmental atmosphere of recovery in the meetings. I need to continuously check out my attitudes and feelings when I hear things shared that make me uncomfortable in meetings.

When confronted with serious illness in my own experience, I had to pick up the tools of recovery and ask myself, "What are you really afraid of here?" I discovered that I was terrified

of death. I then began a deep search within myself to begin to accept a part of life that is inevitable.

I began to educate myself about AIDS and all it entails. I also shared that experience with the women I sponsor, and encouraged and supported them in their search. I realize this only opens a few minds and hearts; but I also believe it is an important start.

I support and applaud the efforts of those regions attempting to bring our fears into the light. If ever there was a time to let go of the judgment and fear and embrace the freedom of open-

Many addicts with AIDS feel they cannot openly share in meetings. Those who do share are sometimes ostracized.

mindedness that love, knowledge and acceptance can bring, this is that time!

Offering love and support to one who is faced with death has been one of the most rewarding and spiritual experiences of my recovery. I am forever grateful that you taught me how to become willing to pray for the faith to walk along with them through their journey. As with every surrender, once this one was shared in the light of recovery, my fear evaporated.

Thank you for welcoming me with open arms. I pray we can all offer the same to every addict who walks through the doors of Narcotics Anonymous.

Anonymous

Two-thirds of a structure

The A.A. Fellowship describes itself as having "three legacies": recovery, unity, and service. The Twelve Steps guide recovery, the Twelve Traditions guide unity, and the Twelve Concepts guide service. Without maintenance of all three, the others suffer and eventually perish.

A structure resting on three supports is the simplest and most stable. Compare the relative ease of building a stable three legged stool with the more precise measurements and balancing required for a four legged or two legged one. Four requires equal length for nondiagonal pairs of legs—a lot of measuring and precision. Two legs means precarious balance, complex measurement, instability and weakness.

In the early days of our fellowship we had no service structure. All we needed was to adapt the steps for our recovery and the traditions for our unity. Today we need more. If we desire simplicity, strength, stability and spirituality throughout our fellow-

ship, for today and for the future, we need to adapt the Twelve Concepts for our services.

The lack of understanding of these principles results in ongoing controversy, disunity, misunderstanding of the traditions, distrust and resentment. Just as our personal recovery depends on our unity, so too might future N.A. unity very possibly depend on adaptation of the Twelve Concepts.

If we only work eight steps and stop, we jeopardize our recovery, our sanity, and our lives. What four traditions could we ignore without destroying our unity? Struggling to operate without adaptation of the "third legacy," the Twelve Concepts, means trying to survive with one third of the vital organs missing—not totally impossible, but unlikely. Ineffective service, continued disunity and possible future dissolution are more probable.

*If we desire strength
and stability in our
fellowship, we need
to adapt the Twelve
Concepts for our
services.*

Please, let's make a decision now, carefully considering the long range implications of continued inaction. If we begin now, it will be easier to get the ideas across to the fellowship than if we wait another year, or two, or five. The stakes here are our recovery, our unity, and our future.

S.L., Pennsylvania

Editorial replies

The following is in reply to the editorial, "What Does 'Narcotics Anonymous' Mean?," published in May 1988.

From Hawaii:

Three years ago, the WSC International Committee suggested that we change the name of our fellowship, and gave many of the same reasons as the writer of "What Does 'Narcotics Anonymous' Mean?" The committee's main objection had to do with how our name translates into other languages.

Of particular concern was a report from Colombia that related a problem they were having with the translation of our name. "Narcotics Anonymous" translates as "Sleepers Anonymous."

There were similar problems in other languages. Some members of the International Committee at that time thought that now might possibly be the best time to make a change in our name. A report was prepared and distributed at a meeting of the WSC Joint Administrative Committee. The discussion was short, and can be repeated in three words: "How about NO." It was quite obvious that the name Narcotics Anonymous is near and dear to many members.

The May editorial implied that the issue was not resolved but merely tabled, and that a fellowshipwide discussion should be initiated to settle

this once and for all. Perhaps. I for one approached this issue with an open mind, taking into account the best interests of the addict who is still suffering. But I am not convinced that such a change is necessary.

Since that discussion of three years ago, much more has been revealed to us. Although we were concerned about how our name translates into other languages, we have since discovered that "Narcotics Anonymous" is commonly interpreted to include all drugs. As a matter of fact, it appears that professionals in other countries seem to have a clearer understanding of this than their counterparts in the USA.

Our growth rate indicates that our name is in no way slowing down our ability to carry our message. After all, we as recovering addicts do that, and the Higher Power delivers it.

Narcotics Anonymous is rapidly becoming a household word. In my opinion, our degree of name recognition with a fellowship of 15,000 groups is way ahead of what any other fellowship had at that size, especially since we have done so with very little media exposure.

In some ways, our name forces each one of us to work harder to carry the message. In some countries like Japan, where they use the name Narcotics Anonymous without any translation, this has certainly proved to be the case.

I believe the confusion a name-change would create would cause us to lose ground in the progress we have made over the years. It could mean a loss of credibility and confidence. It would cause considerable difficulties in those countries where the name has achieved national recognition. It

would be like Xerox changing its name to The Copy Company, just because the name Xerox doesn't describe in English what they are really about. The world knows what they are about.

And the world, as already stated, is quickly learning what Narcotics Anonymous is about, too. In time, every addict in the world will know where help can be found. We just have to "keep on keeping on" doing what we are doing.

T.M.

The following article is printed not as a reply to a specific article, but as part of an ongoing discussion that has been taking place among our readers for the last year or so.

From Florida:

When I got clean in Narcotics Anonymous eight years ago, I was in total despair as a result of my addiction. I was willing to do whatever was suggested in meetings because my way hadn't worked and I was tired of hurting. I was not religious, so I didn't know the Lord's Prayer. I learned it though, because I wanted what the people in the rooms had, and I was willing to go to any lengths to get it.

I have heard many reasons to keep using the Lord's Prayer. Some people argue, "If it works, don't fix it." Well, it's not working. As I look around the rooms as the Lord's Prayer is being said, I see many addicts not participating and therefore being separated from the group.

Others say that an addict who wants recovery bad enough will stay in N.A., no matter what prayer we close with.

This may be true, but no excuse is good enough to violate our traditions. The Basic Text tells me that the traditions are not negotiable.

Still others say, "But I like the Lord's Prayer." I happen to think that there are some good ideas in that prayer, and nobody's stopping me from using it in my personal program. But that doesn't give me the right to force someone to believe in God as I understand him.

Some people think that if we stop using the Lord's Prayer, then we're trying to get God out of the meetings. Actually, everybody should have the right to believe in God in whatever manner they choose.

Through my involvement in service, I began to study the Twelve Traditions of N.A. Our Sixth Tradition states, in part, that we should not endorse any outside enterprises. The N.A. Basic Text says that endorsements can be implied or direct. It also specifically lists religion as an outside enterprise. The Lord's Prayer is a religious prayer from the Christian "basic text," the New Testament. When we close a meeting with the Lord's Prayer, we are going against our Sixth Tradition by implying an endorsement of a specific religion.

What it boils down to is that no matter what reasons we have for wanting to keep the Lord's Prayer, we cannot afford to go against our traditions. The traditions are there to ensure the survival of N.A. I hope that the fellowship as a whole can address this issue and, through the application of spiritual principles, resolve the controversy.

Anonymous

From our readers



Two important questions

I enjoyed reading the N.A. Way last year, and I find the recent changes to be even more positive. I look forward to receiving it each month.

Now, a question: I've been told that the N.A. Way magazine and order forms can not be displayed on the same table with conference-approved literature. Is this so? And if so, can anything be done to change it?

R.B., Connecticut

As chairman of my area's H&I subcommittee, I would like to know if it is possible to provide N.A. Way subscriptions to facilities in which we have an H&I meeting. It would be a nice way to spread the message.

H.C., Colorado

Editor's note: These questions bring up important issues for the N.A. Way. See this month's "From the editor" for a detailed response.

Carrying the message one step further

When I first came into the fellowship, I thought I was different and unique. I thought that addicts didn't recover and that my recovery was a freak of nature. Well, I got over that a few years ago. In N.A., to my amazement and pleasure, I saw lots of other addicts recovering.

Addicts already suffer from "terminal uniqueness," but what if you

were operating without one of your senses? How about trying to recover if you were in a wheelchair? Could these factors stop an already isolated and spiritually dying addict from coming in the doors of N.A. and staying?

I'm writing this today to tell you that hasn't happened, in at least one case. My home group was honored by being the group which a hearing impaired addict picked as his home group. As we do with all newcomers, we cheered and encouraged him to keep coming back and stay clean. With his signer by his side, he came back week after week, bringing along with him other addicts with hearing impairments.

Recovery is progressive, and he was able to share more as time went on. I believe that tears are God's way of touching us. Our whole group was touched by God one night when our hearing impaired friend chaired our meeting. He brought us not only tears but good recovery, as he turned around to pass on the message that we do recover.

D.M., Florida

Keep coming back...it does get easier!

I have been hearing a few people share in N.A. meetings, "Keep coming back—it doesn't get easier, but it does get better."

What the (blank) does this mean? It gets better, but not easier? Not

easier??

You should see the looks on the newcomers' faces when they hear this. If I had been told this four years ago I would have said, "(blank) it! If it doesn't get easier, who needs it?! I have to make all this effort to stop using—go to N.A. meetings, work all those steps, tell someone all my secrets—and my life will not get easier? Why stop using if it doesn't get easier? I might as well stay high till I die." And I would not be alive and clean today.

I am so very grateful God had recovering N.A. addicts tell me, "Keep coming back, it gets better, it gets easier, and we love and care about you."

I am a little confused by this "not easier" thing. Some of the people who say this have been clean even longer than I have.

For me, it has gotten *better*, and it has gotten *easier*. It's easier to go to N.A. meetings and share about my recovery from addiction. It's easier for me to understand and work the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions. It's easier to work with my sponsor. It's easier to stay clean. It's easier to keep coming back to N.A. meetings.

I keep coming back because it has gotten better and it has gotten easier! The more I work the N.A. program, each day, one day at a time (and sometimes less), the easier it is to live my life clean and the better my life gets.

K.Y., Louisiana

Love and relationships

I have always wondered what love was. When I was using, and even in the first year of my recovery, I equated

love with sex. Through this program I have learned that love has very little to do with sex.

I know now that I, as a recovering addict, can have unconditional love and true healthy relationships as long as I work and live the steps and use the tools of this program and God, as I understand him.

I am willing today to have and express unconditional love for my husband, friends, newcomers, my employer, and even people whose personalities I do not like. I can accept people because I finally love myself since I have been working and living my program. I have to work the steps and be able to "walk my talk" in order to do this. "The lie is dead—we do recover."

I used to run from relationships when things went wrong or I got angry. N.A. has taught me that I don't have to run. I can stay in that relationship and work the steps. I can be wrong, and you can be right. N.A. has taught me not to give up, but to change the things I can with your help and God's.

I am very grateful to you and God for teaching me that I can give true unconditional love in relationships that are filled with warmth, caring and growth.

H.H., Tennessee

Do the footwork

I want to share with you about a defect of mine that drives me insane: my lust. I was taught in this program to write—on the steps, in a journal, and in my daily inventory—and I have found that to be a valuable tool in my recovery. Through writing a Fourth Step I have come to see how, once on paper, things become a little clearer. I call it the airing out of feelings.

I'm sick with an addictive nature that can cause me to act on my defects. I was told that if I have a problem with lust, I should pray about it. I do that, and it really works. The problem comes back, though, and I know I have to try even harder.

Thank God I'm able to apply spiritual principles to my problem and not make myself too sick. At least I do not "Thirteenth Step" newcomers. The fact that I can put that on my gratitude list helps a lot. I do not want to lose this wonderful way of life I've been given.

I have many problems in the area of sexuality. My nature wants me to recover with solutions outside myself now that drugs are out of my life. Sex is just one of those means my addiction would like me to use.

I know I can have a healthy, loving relationship with a member of the opposite sex—but perhaps not right now. Maybe H.P. wants me to work harder on myself.

My sponsor tells me God only gives us a glimpse of his will for us. Maybe H.P. is saying, "In my time, not yours—and meanwhile, do the footwork."

I've got to attend meetings to stay in touch with the fellowship. But there they are, those beautiful women. I go insane just a little more. To get through it I have to surrender all the time. If I don't, well, I get real sick, and I'm not into pain today.

This may sound funny, but it is really a very dangerous defect of mine that can kill me if I act out on it.

This disease causes me to dwell on any area that takes me out of myself. But I have the greatest tools that any addict can hope for: the steps, the traditions, the fellowship, a good

sponsor—one who understands me—and a loving Higher Power who is very good to me.

So what am I complaining about? Not a thing. I just wanted to share this with other recovering addicts who might go through the same pain.

I'm going to stay in touch with H.P., my sponsor, the fellowship and the steps. Together we will find our way home to a healthy environment of recovery.

R.M., Pennsylvania

Getting better, the N.A. way

I pushed your subscription drive at our business meeting today, and all the members were very interested. I was surprised at how many members of our home group had never seen, much less heard, of the *N.A. Way* magazine. Everyone wanted to see my copy for April. I almost didn't get it back!

You guys are doing a terrific job. I just love all the articles, especially the ones on personal experience with the steps. I need all the help I can get! I still don't think I know what I'm doing, but I've been clean and free of drugs for almost eleven months, so I must be doing something right. I'm still amazed.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you!

S.J., Texas



Comin' up



ALABAMA: Sep. 8-11, 1988; Alabama-Northwest Florida Convention; Gulf Shore Park Resort; Regional Convention, P.O. Box 115, Decatur, AL 35601

AUSTRALIA: Sep. 30-Oct. 3, 1988; Australasian Regional Convention; Petersham Town Hall, Sydney, New South Wales; phone contacts (Sydney) Melinda 698-2563, Brett 309-2135; Australasian Convention, P.O. Box B88, Boronia Park, Sydney, NSW AUSTRALIA

BRITISH COLUMBIA: Jul. 22-24, 1988; British Columbia N.A. Rally; Henry B., (604) 434-8314; BCNAR #9, 4650 Fernglen Place, Barnaby, BC V5G 3W1

2) Aug. 12-14, 1988; Third Annual Northern Lights Outdoor Campout Roundup; Bidnisti Lake Resort, 35 mi. west of Prince George; contact Phil H. (604) 562-2931; Warren, Chris 563-5719; ROUNDUP, c/o Warren & Chris M., 2510 Upland Street #113, Prince George, BC CANADA

CALIFORNIA: July 8-10, 1988; San Diego Regional Convention; Holiday Inn at the Embarcadero, San Diego, (619) 232-3861; Elisa L. (619) 294-7240, Lea B. 560-5918, Ron G. 282-6777; San Diego Convention, P.O. Box 155, San Diego, CA 92118

2) Jul. 8-10, 1988; Central California Regional Campout; South Lake San Antonio, northwest of Paso Robles; Don A. (805) 528-7439, Howard 995-1429; Central California RSC, P.O. Box 267, Morro Bay, CA 93442

3) Sep. 1-4, 1988; World Convention of N.A.; Anaheim Hilton and Towers, 777 W. Convention Way, Anaheim; convention info (818) 780-3951; addl. info. Anaheim Convention Bureau, (714) 999-8939; World Convention of N.A., P.O. Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999

COLORADO: Jul. 29-31, 1988; "Standing on Higher Ground" camping weekend; Telluride, CO; Charlie S. (303) 728-6351, Jim L. 728-6837

2) Aug. 5-7, 1988; Colorado Regional Convention; Clarion Hotel, 1345 28th St., Boulder, (303) 443-3805; Jon F. (303) 642-3273

CONNECTICUT: Jul. 8-10, 1988; 4th An-

nual N.A. Campathon; Seaport Campgrounds, Rte. 184, Old Mystic, (203) 536-4044; Donna (203) 951-6067, Sonny 233-0936, Suzy 242-5951; N.A. Campathon, P.O. Box 9525, Forestville, CT 06010

FRANCE: Jul. 22-24, 1988; 5th European Service Conference; C.A.A.P. 20, 46 Rue Louis Lumiere, 75020 Paris, 43-61-24-51; Jean-Pierre (1) 42-77-14-25; Narcotiques Anonymes, B.P. 630 04, 75160 Paris Cedex 04, France

HAWAII: 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: Aug. 5-7, 1988; Fourth Midcoast Convention; Continental Regency Hotel, Peoria; Susie & Steve H. (309) 274-5675; Linda E. 382-3742

IOWA: Jul. 1-3, 1988; Fifth Iowa Regional Convention; Hotel Fort Des Moines, 10th & Walnut, Des Moines, (800) 247-8057; Kelli O. (319) 354-7625; Dannie G. (515) 628-4677; Iowa Regional Convention, P.O. Box 1960, Des Moines, IA 50306

IRELAND: Oct. 28-30, 1988; 3rd Annual Irish Convention; N.A. Ireland, P.O. Box 1368, Sheriff Street, Dublin 1, Ireland

KANSAS: Jul. 1-4, 1988; MARC '88 Free Campout; Harvey County Lake, Newton; Anita or Warren (316) 687-3916, Pamela 524-3771

2) Aug. 12-14, 1988; Fellowship Campout; Thunderbird Marina, Junction City, (913) 238-5864; Marte D. (913) 762-3596; Steve T. 776-5123; Mike 537-7682

3) Feb. 17-19, 1989; Second Mid-America Regional Convention; Holiday Inn Holiday Convention Center, Salina, (913) 823-1739; Jim M. (913) 825-9510; Mid-America Convention, P.O. Box 383, Salina, KS 67401

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

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

MISSOURI: Jul. 29-31, 1988; 9th Annual High on Life Picnic; Orleans Trail Resort, Stockton Lake (417) 276-3566; info (417) 782-1467; Picnic, 119 Connor, Joplin, MO 64801

NEVADA: Jul. 15-17, 1988; Sixth Annual Stampede for Serenity Campout; Stampede Reservoir, Truckee, Nevada; information call hotline (702) 322-4811; Sierra Sage RSC, P.O. Box 11913, Reno, NV 89510

NEW YORK: July 29-31, 1988; Third Northern New York Regional Convention; Wells College Campus, Aurora; Dave L. (315) 331-1361, Kim N. (716) 663-1386; N. New York Convention, P.O. Box 1014, Geneva, NY 14456

2) Aug. 5-7, 1988; Second Annual Recovery in the Woods; Yorkshire, NY; Lynne B. (716) 895-4916; Dan Z. 825-5334; Recovery in the Woods, Buffalo ASC, P.O. Box 64, Buffalo, NY 14207

NORTH CAROLINA: 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; Carolina Regional Conv., 6518 Dusty Road, Liberty, NC 27298

OHIO: Jul. 15-17, 1988; Columbiana County Campout; Paradise Lake Park, 6940 Rochester Rd., E. Rochester; Bill H. (216) 424-7681, Steve S. 823-4390x223

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

PENNSYLVANIA: Oct. 28-30, 1988; 6th Annual Tri-State Regional Convention; Vista International Hotel, Pittsburgh, (412) 281-3700 (specify N.A. convention); Roz (412) 361-6250, Bob 661-5799, Gloria 521-1086; Tri-State RSO, P.O. Box 110217, Pittsburgh, PA 15232

SASKATCHEWAN: Aug. 19-21, 1988; 4th Regina Area Convention; Glencairn Neighbourhood Recreation Centre, 2626 Dewdney E., Regina; Dave G. (306) 525-2686, Gina M. 586-1065, Shannon L. 775-1645; Regina ASC, P.O. Box 3563, Regina, Saskatchewan, S4P 3L7

SOUTH CAROLINA: Nov. 11-13, 1988; Serenity Festival; Landmark Best Western, Myrtle Beach; Bedford M. (919) 392-4412, Ron H. 867-5006; Serenity Festival, P.O. Box 1198,

Myrtle Beach, SC 29578

TENNESSEE: Nov. 23-27, 1988; 6th Volunteer Regional Convention; Garden Plaza Hotel, 211 Mockingbird Ln., Johnson City, (615) 929-2000; registration (615) 638-4385; VRC-6, P.O. Box 353, Greeneville, TN 37744

TEXAS: Jul. 8-10, 1988; Texas Unity Convention, Whitney; David (713) 332-8236; Texas Unity (Whitneys), 1612 Second Street, League City, TX 77573

2) Nov. 4-6, 1988; Best Little Region 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

UTAH: Aug. 19-21, 1988; Utah Campout; Granite Flats Campgrounds, American Fork Canyon (outside Provo); Steve S. (801) 359-6607, Lou B. 467-8776

VIRGINIA: Jul. 16, 1988; Bull Run Area 1st Anniversary, N.A. 35th Anniversary; 9 a.m. 'til dark; Old Mill Park, Fredericksburg; Mike F. (703) 373-2769, Leslie C. 335-2603, Laura J. 335-5434; Bull Run ASC, P.O. Box 505, Triangle, VA 22172-0505

2) Aug. 12-14, 1988; Almost Heaven Area Convention; Northern Virginia 4-H Educational Center, Front Royal, Virginia, (703) 635-7171; Jeff L. (301) 791-0830, Vicki G. (304) 263-5827, Kevin M. (703) 667-1814; Almost Heaven Convention, P.O. Box 1595, Martinsburg, WV 25401

3) Jan. 6-8, 1989; 7th Annual Virginia Convention; Williamsburg Hilton and National Conference Center; Virginia Convention, P.O. Box 1373, Hampton, VA 23661

WASHINGTON: Oct. 8-10, 1988; Eleventh Pacific Northwest Convention; Red Lion Inn at the Quay, Vancouver, (800) 547-8010 (ask for PNWCNA rates); Helpline (206) 573-3066; Pacific-Northwest Conv., P.O. Box 5158, Vancouver, WA 98668

WEST VIRGINIA: Aug. 12-14, 1988; Almost Heaven Area Convention; see VIRGINIA

WISCONSIN: Jul. 8-10, 1988; Christmas in July Campout; ALSO Multi-Regional P.I. Learning Day, Jul. 9; Horicon Ledge County Park, Horicon; Russell, days (608) 767-2385, eves 795-4567; Badgerland ASC, P.O. Box 649, Madison, WI 53701

2) Oct. 28-30, 1988; 5th Wisconsin State Convention; Ramada Airport Inn, Milwaukee, (800) 272-6232; Ned H. (414) 289-9997, Bob K. 258-5961, Michael D. 546-3688; WSNAC-5, P.O. Box 1637, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1637

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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.

*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.