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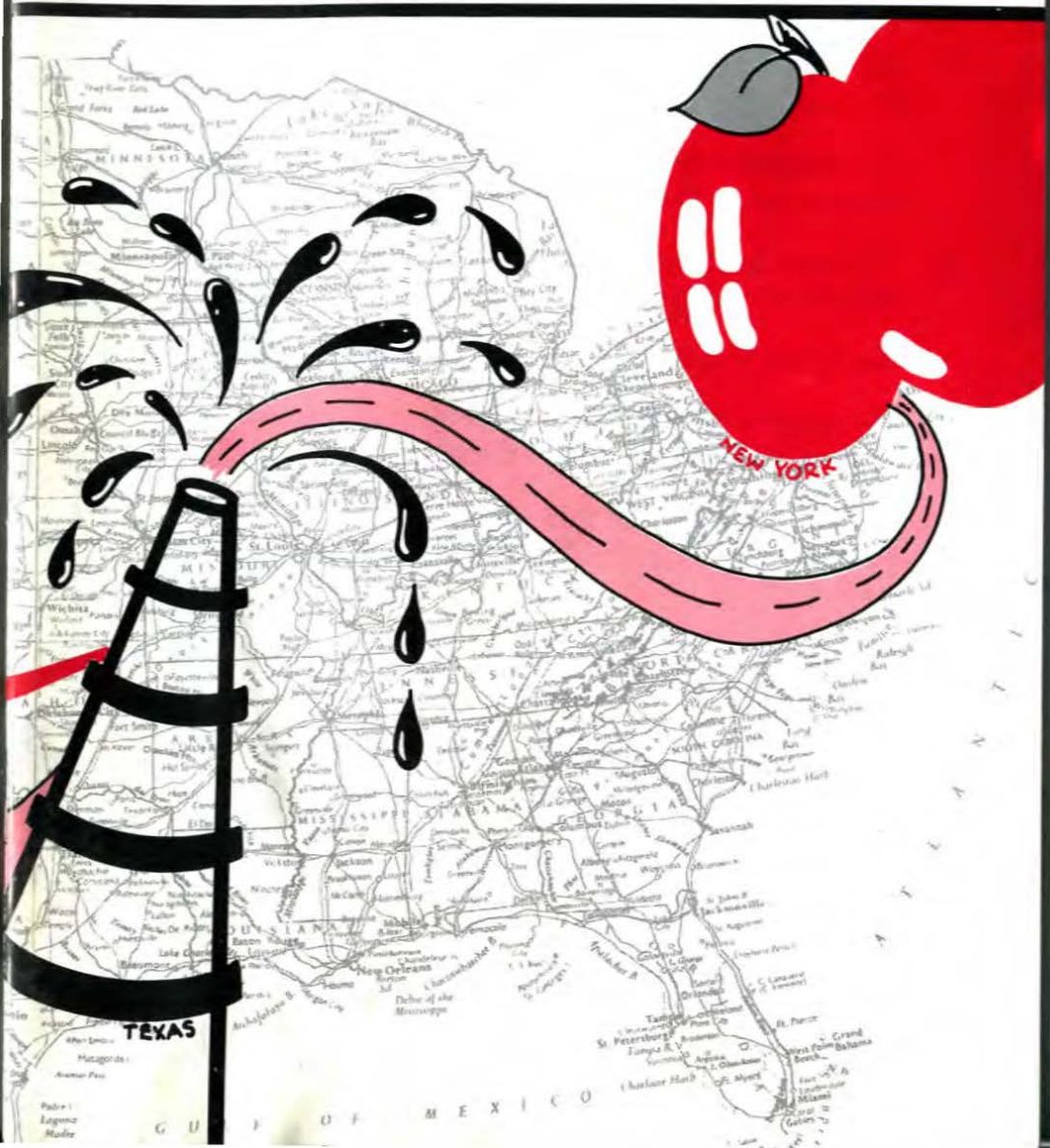

The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous

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

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A week in recovery, a day at a time

Sunday. It's 5:30 in the morning. I hit my knees for a few moments to ask God to guide me, and then go into a day of hard work that has to be finished. Total exhaustion at the end of the work day; some fear that I may be losing my ass, as the job may take much longer than I estimated. I replace that fear with surrender, and get this feeling that it's okay today. I spend some time with my family at the end of the day, then hit my knees again with thanks for another twenty-four hours clean and for all God has given me.

Monday brings the peace that only recovery gives me. Only three days of work scheduled this week, but my God will take care of things. I get together with a couple of recovering addicts so that we can share our experience, strength, and goals with one another. Through the suggestion of my sponsor, I've chosen a goal: to quit smoking this week. Fear sets in again. Can I, will I, should I? Another addict shares that he will pray for me; I believe we can do it. I retire another day with prayer.

Tuesday. I awaken to meditate and pray, and pump out about six hours worth of work in three and a half hours. My body exhausted, I drive to my daughter's school to see her in their Halloween parade. I do these kinds of things in recovery today, things that were impossible before.

I decide to shut it down for the rest of the day to make some calls for the fellowship. I take a call from the phoneline, run some errands, get a hair cut, do some estimates and office work, then spend the evening watching my nine- and seven-year-old children while my wife is at work. As usual, I write about my day, and take a look at it in my inventory process.

Wednesday. There is no work, so I sleep in a little, then go out to run the day or let the day run me—estimates, repairs, and wax my wife's car.

Two o'clock. I had made a commitment to go get hypnotized to quit smoking. It ends up being an hour of serenity meditation and suggestive health. I believe it may work. I feel free of *something.*

Even days off are hard; there just isn't enough time to do everything I want to do, not even in recovery. I'm grateful that, just for today, I'm not smoking cigarettes. I read some literature, and pray, thanking God for another day.

Thursday. I am awakened by a phone call from one of my employees; she isn't showing up for work, and I have to let her go. She's in recovery, and it's not easy. I pray for a better day. Customers I work for are great, and the day seems to flow well. I take my lunch hour to do some errands, and call WSO about some local H&I problems—they'll get back to me.

After work, I run my kids here and there, and then I'm on the phone most of the evening with addicts and customers. A GSR from a local group comes over to type his ASC report, and asks for some direction on how it's supposed to be done. We share and hug; then, I relax the rest of the evening.

The effects of withdrawal from nicotine are starting to appear—no energy, tired, and that uneasy feeling I kind of had when I tried to stop using before I got involved in recovery. I thank God for another day clean after reading my Basic Text.

Friday. I take the day off, as I plan to work tomorrow, and arrange to hit a noon meeting with someone I sponsor—I've been trying to hit some new meetings that aren't getting support. I set the schedule for the day—run an errand, do estimates—and stop for breakfast with my sponsee. I've been having some personality problems with him. I suppose it's because he hasn't followed my direction, so that's on me.

I go to a noon meeting about forty-five minutes down the road, share, and head back home. My sponsee drives my truck. He starts sharing with me, saying he has to get another sponsor—and I don't take it well. How dare he let me go!

I begin to take his inventory. He says he can get more out of recovery with another sponsor. The timing is bad; we are thirty minutes from home, he is driving my truck, and there is a long period of silence. I take his inventory some more, out loud and in my mind, the whole way home.

We get back to his place. I look at him, smile, tell him again that his timing stinks, and we go our separate ways. I try to call my sponsor, but he is out of town, so I call another recovering addict and share. It gets better when he tells me that sponsees don't *outgrow* sponsors, we just grow *differently.*

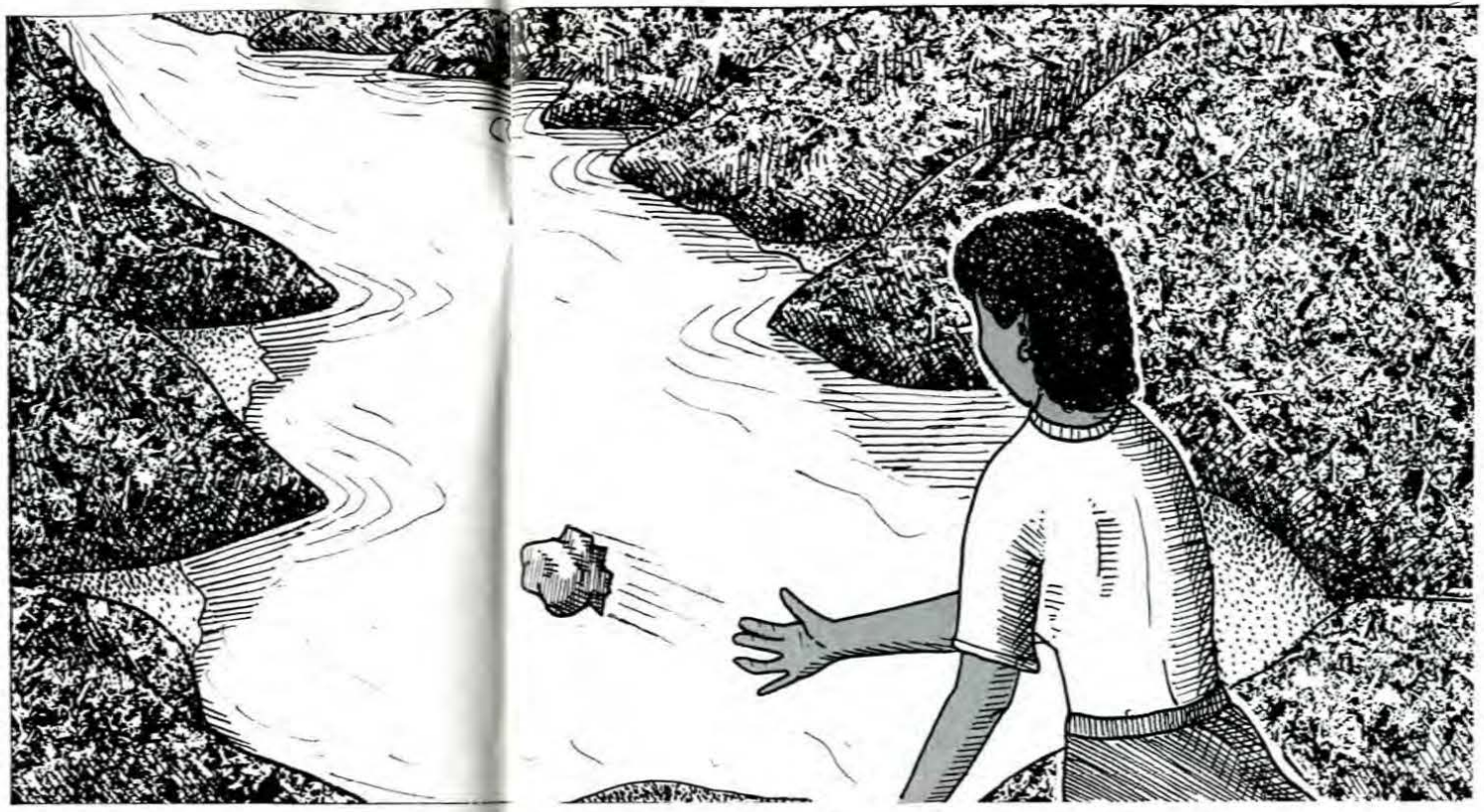
Another day in recovery. I thank God for seeing me through it.

Saturday. I pray, and decide to go into another day. I go to work, but it doesn't go too well. I keep my patience and peace, and don't really think of smoking all day. When I get home, I just don't have any energy; my mother-in-law is visiting from Michigan, and all I can do is sleep. My wife gets upset because I'm not spending time with her mom. I go to my home group, the 10:30 candlelight meeting, and share about this sponsee problem, which is getting a little better now.

A week in recovery, a day at a time, and look what it has brought me. Not too little, not too much; some happiness, serenity, gratitude, pain, love, surrender, patience, and understanding. Is this what I got clean for? Yes! I'll keep coming back.

J.L., Maryland

Rock throwing



Several months ago, I did another Fourth Step. I had been doing small ones on one thing at a time as I built up faith and an understanding of how the steps work. This time I was more honest, and maybe cut a little deeper than I had before. The topic I wrote about this time was guilt, for the things that I had done that might have played a part in others being out there using today.

It took several months before I could get up the courage to do the Fifth Step and tell someone. At first I was glad that it was over; but a few days later, I realized that I wasn't free of it yet. There were two more steps that had to be taken; I had to be willing to let it go. It was like I had hit a brick wall; no way could I go any further.

The fact is, I was unwilling to let the past go. Sure, there was pain in holding on to it, but the fear of what would happen if I let it go was stronger. The Sixth Step started to take on a whole new meaning for me; others in the program can make mistakes and not be perfect and be forgiven, but it is so hard for me to admit that I am human, that I have these defects of character, and to be willing to have God remove them.

I started to miss meetings, and when I did go, I didn't talk. I told my sponsor that I was going to have to step down (I was in service work) and leave the group, but it had taken many years for me to find a place where I belonged. It was a toss-up between the pain of deciding to give the past up and the pain of holding on to it. I needed to go on with my program, but I didn't know how.

One night, I remembered something I had learned a long time ago during my street days, something I hadn't done in over ten years—throw a rock. When something from the past became too much to hold onto, I would write it down on a piece of paper, tell someone, go to a river, and wrap the paper around the rock. Then I would throw the rock into the river, and let the river take it away. Maybe I could use this again, as a tool to help me work my program.

I took a piece of paper, and wrote down a few words about what I had done (a Fourth Step). I told someone about what was on the paper and what I was doing (a Fifth Step). Then I drove to the same place I had thrown a rock ten years before, picked up a rock, and wrapped it in the paper. I talked some to my Higher Power and threw the rock with the paper into the river. As I opened my hand to let the rock go, I became entirely ready to let God remove these defects of character (a Sixth Step). And as I sat on the bank looking down at the river, I humbly asked him to remove my shortcomings (my Seventh Step).

When I go to meetings now, I drive on the bridge where I stood that day, and sometimes I look down to where I threw that rock. I know the rock is still there, and it helps remind me of that day; but I also know, inside, that the paper and what was on it is not there—my Higher Power took it from me.

Recovery, to me, is not regaining things I lost, but finding things I never had. The holes that are left by letting go of the past, my Higher Power is slowly filling up with new things, things I didn't have room to hold before.

A.V., Alabama

Just like I am

"If I can stay clean and serene, then anyone can." Of course, that's my ego talking, a member of the committee that runs my disease. This voice has me alternately immersed in self-pity, or puffed out with pride that I am so damn *unique*. At times, it is difficult to remember that I'm just another recovering addict, and that all addicts have their tough issues to deal with, even if they are not as obvious as mine.

What makes me so "unique" is that I am a transsexual. I was born with a male body, but my mind doesn't quite match. And, as if that weren't enough, my body is such that I don't "pass" as a female any more often than half of the time. I'm not butch-looking, but I'm no cover girl either, and that puts me in a quandary at times.

My issue has taught me *a lot* about acceptance. I accept I cannot change my gender identity, and God knows I've tried. I accept I will never be taken as a born-female all of the time. And I've tried to accept a variety of reactions from other people, reactions ranging from smug amusement to downright cruelty. Even in a liberal city like San Francisco, I experience rejection on a regular basis, and I needed a lot of drugs to deal with that before I found recovery. Without the support of my Higher Power and many of the people in N.A., I would be dead or using drugs again by now.

> 'I accept I cannot change my gender identity, and God knows I've tried.'

Thank you, God, for my friends in N.A., the ones who stood by me, who sympathetically listened to my pain and my dilemma, who weren't afraid to openly associate with me or to call me "she," and who made me feel accepted as a woman.

At first, I was afraid to share my identity problem with you, because I'd come into recovery after a two and a half year effort of trying to be happy living as a man. In this long period of trying to deny my gender identity, my addiction got so bad that I didn't just *need* recovery—I *wanted* it! When my feelings came back after a few months clean, I knew I would use again or kill myself if I didn't accept that I couldn't change these feelings, and that I had to find the courage to change my body.

As the hormone treatments began again, I found I needed to trust my fellow recovering addicts. It was scary, but the strength I drew from our program made it possible to share my gender-dilemma with individuals and, finally, at a group level. And, to my amazement, the group accepted me, at least for the most part!

I know I will never be accepted by everybody, either in or out of the program, but that's okay. At times it saddens me to be rejected for something I cannot change, but I'm learning to deal with that.

At fifteen months clean, I am really noticing the miracles of this program. Aside from the material things—my promising career and the "look-good" stuff—that recovery can bring, I find the greatest rewards of recovery are those I can't put a price tag on. My obsession to use has been lifted. God is in my life, and my relationship with Her is based on my love and willingness, not on fear. I am coming to know and love myself as I am. Though I wish I had been born a woman, I no longer hate myself because I'm different this way. I have been granted the courage to change the things I can.

C.B., California

Came to believe

When I hit bottom, everything I'd tried had failed. My life was empty; I had mismanaged it, and had no power to stop using. I was an addict of the hopeless variety. My spirit was crushed. I felt like a useless piece of junk. I was a prisoner of loneliness, and felt like an alien from another world. I hated myself and dreaded living. I carried my fears around with me, and ran from my problems.

Somehow, one day, I found myself at a Narcotics Anonymous meeting. I entered the room not knowing what to expect, only to discover a special group of people. I sat down at a table and observed. After the closing of the meeting, some addicts approached me and gave me a hug. I felt warm, secure, and welcomed. They accepted me, and were not interested in my past. Before I went home that night, those addicts gave me their phone numbers and handed me literature. I went home with no doubt in my mind that N.A. was for me. For the first time in my life, I heard my thoughts, feelings, and experiences being shared by other human beings. I was amazed.

I kept coming back. I came back clean. I made a commitment to attend ninety meetings in ninety days. It was in those first ninety days that the foundation for my recovery was built. I got a sponsor. The group gave me a Basic Text. I started coming early to meetings and staying late. I helped set up, and helped clean up. I read the literature at the beginning of the meeting whenever I was asked. I learned how to chair. I began to study the Basic Text. I began to work the steps.

The home group was my first encounter with coming to believe. When I attended my meetings, a special feeling came to me, a feeling I had never experienced before. I had to see living proof before I could try it for myself.

> 'I began to feel differently. I no longer felt like a useless piece of junk.'

It was evident that the people in N.A. showed this proof both in words and examples. The addicts who had more time on the program were a vision of hope. I saw some power working in the lives of these people. They had a peace that shone from them. I wanted this for myself.

The process of coming to believe was furthered by the application of Step Two. After admitting to my innermost self that I was an addict and that my life had become unmanageable, a huge void opened in my life. It felt like a bottomless pit of nothingness. Turning to my sponsor was the key. My sponsor pointed out my insanity. Seeing the insanity revealed to me the absolute need to come to believe. He shared with me the way he approached Step Two. He referred me to the Second Step readings in the N.A. Basic Text. I began to read them carefully. I read, reread, studied, and underlined the things I felt were important.

I began to focus my thoughts on coming to believe. I started my day with the Serenity Prayer, asking for guidance. Everywhere I went, I carried N.A. literature with me. I attended meetings and asked for help. I got into the habit of thanking a power greater than myself before I went to sleep at night.

Gradually, over a period of time, it happened. I began to feel differently. I no longer felt like a useless piece of junk. I started to feel hope that I could recover. Faith came into my life, and my many fears began to fade away. The way opened onto a spiritual path, and freedom started to enter into my life.

I became aware of the importance of growing spiritually. I had a belief in a Higher Power. It worked. I now could begin to live life on its terms. I started to take my Higher Power everywhere I went.

I got honest about me and my condition. Honest with the need to come to believe. I became open-minded and stopped clinging to old concepts. I stopped being prejudiced toward spiritual principles, and humbled myself. Through surrender, I found peace. I started changing my old thoughts and attitudes, and trusting more.

All that had been needed was willingness and continuous practice, close association with other recovering addicts, lots of meetings, help from a sponsor, literature, and prayer. Those were the tools that enabled me to come to believe. I never thought that a three-word phrase would have such an impact on my life.

From that belief, a whole new way of life has emerged. At first, my understanding of it was small, but that understanding grew day by day. All that was required was admission of my need for faith. Then, the remaining steps could come into play.

After coming to believe, I had to learn how to use that faith in my daily life. I had to decide to turn my will and life over to it. Use it to help me inventory myself and admit my wrongs. Humbly ask for it to remove my shortcomings. To use it to help me make amends and continue to inventory myself. I had to nurture it through prayer and meditation. To rely on it to reach out and help others.

Coming to believe gave me an understanding of God that I am comfortable with. It is through my belief that I receive the strength to meet any crises that life on its terms deals out.

Coming to believe is a never ending process. Throughout my recovery, my belief has changed. It grows through every change. It restores me to sanity, but only insofar as it spurs me to live the program.

I hope that anyone who is struggling with coming to believe doesn't give up. I know it will happen. I, too, have struggled, but I didn't have to do it alone. I had to reach out.

Anonymous

Carry the message, not the addict

In the past five years, I've had a variety of sponsors. What I've learned from them is that there are many different ways of working together. Now it's time for me to give back some of what I've learned about sponsoring others.

At first, I had to learn the difference between carrying the message and carrying the addict. Somehow, I thought my sponsees were supposed to be exempt from being dysfunctional addicts—until the first one broke into my son's log cabin bank and lifted all his paper-route money. Fortunately, after she used, she came back to the program, and my son's money was slowly replaced.

What I learned is that sponsorship does not mean letting someone move into my home until they can get a place of their own. Nor does it mean going to my boss and recommending them for a job, when I may only have known them off and on for a year.

When newcomers come in, it is important for me to let them know that N.A. has a way for them to learn—on their and their Higher Power's time—how to stay straight, and that *I'm* here to share my own experience, strength, and hope. I try to make them feel welcome, without taking care of their lives for them. I listen, and share ideas for how they might solve their own problems.

It's not my job to become the puppet master. If a newcomer *asks* how to grocery shop without shoplifting, I let them know the process I went through. I'll offer to accompany them a couple times without doing it all for them. It's the difference between sitting with someone while they make a shopping list, and writing out the list for them, going to the store with their money, and bringing the stuff back to them. It took sponsoring a few more addicts before I got this lesson down.

> 'It's not my job to become the puppet master. If a newcomer asks how, I let them know the process.'

The most painful part is when I've gotten really accustomed to a sponsee calling, keeping a weekly appointment, and working through the steps together. Then I start seeing them withdraw, at first from the meetings, next from the daily phone calls, and after that the weekly appointment is skipped here and there. I've seen some go back into active addiction. My insides cry from the pain. I remember how it was, being out there; it's slow self-destruction.

It took a lot of rejection from the first couple of sponsees for me to finally surrender them back to my Higher Power. I wanted to rescue them from the depths of the pit of using, and it was just beyond my ability. They had to want it for themselves.

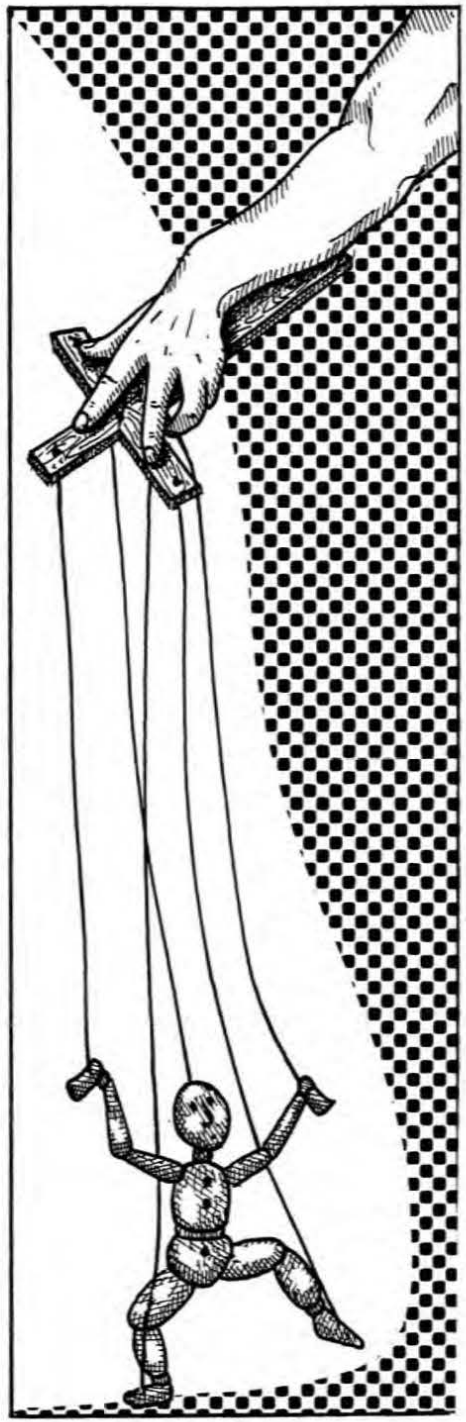
I still question my ability as a sponsor every time a sponsee stops calling or goes back out. One thing I had to come to believe is that I do not have the power to keep anyone straight; nor do I have the power to make them use. All I have is my own personal experience, strength, and hope to give.

I know that I never like someone jumping my case or ordering me to do anything. Now, in recovery, I talk with others the way I desire to be talked to.

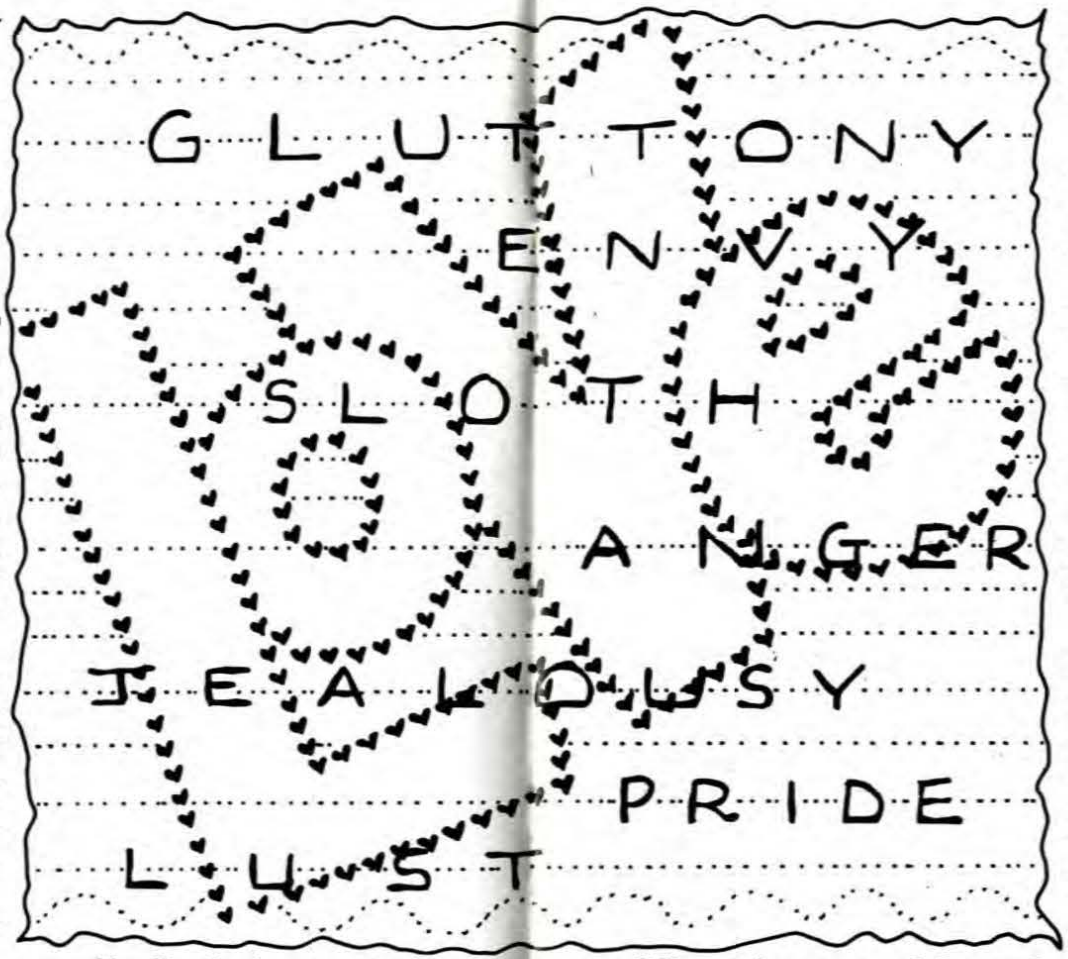
For myself, sponsorship is a way of receiving guidance in the process of recovery. In turn, I share with others what I've learned from others, those who've made this program a happy, joyous, and free way of living. I work with someone as far as I can. Then, I watch them continue their recovery, sometimes with a different sponsor capable of leading them in a new direction.

Since I have changed sponsors myself in this program over the years, I see it as a part of the growing process in recovery. I work the steps with a sponsor the best I can. Then, when the time comes along and our personal experience leads us in separate directions, we part with pride in the fact that we're both in recovery, even though our paths are different from one another's.

P.A., Colorado



Love



I enjoy discussion meetings because they allow me to hear varied messages on a specific topic. They also provide me with the opportunity to share my own thoughts and, in so doing, to formulate new ideas, new ways of seeing things. That's exactly what happened the other night. After the break, I decided to share about a different way of relating to God.

I have always had some difficulty with the phrase, "God, *as we understood Him,*" and not only for reasons related to gender specificity. You see, I am not convinced that I have the capacity to understand God. In fact, I sometimes think that it requires a certain arrogance to think that I can. So I frequently refer to "God, as I *don't* understand It."

But I do believe that love is a gift of God—God's grace given to humankind. Love is a manifestation of God, and if it is beyond my mortal limitations to *understand* God, well, I am grateful to that Higher Power for making itself known in my life through the *experience* of love.

The concept of making a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God still mystifies me. However, to make that same decision with reference to love has profound implications for the way I conduct myself. Similarly, praying for knowledge of God's will for me becomes more meaningful in the context of love, for obtaining knowledge of love—the quest to become a more loving being—is a fundamental goal of my recovery.

It seems probable that one of the reasons that character defects cause me so much pain is that they are in direct conflict with love. My anger, fear, resentment, envy, and false pride create a distance—*are* the distance—between myself and love. I am convinced that, as an addict, there is no difference between my defects and those of most other humans, although mine may be wildly exaggerated. As a *recovering* addict, I see the exaggerations disappear, and then I am left with your average, garden-variety shortcomings. And, exaggerated or not, the answer to all these shortcomings is love.

When I am unsure whether a particular feeling is self-centered, the measure that helps me decide is love. Not all the painful or negative feelings I experience are the results of defects of character. Feelings, too, are God-given. Anger at injustice, for example, may be God's way of telling me that I should take action to promote justice. Similarly, other emotional responses may call me to change my own attitudes and behaviors, or to influence others to change theirs. Powerlessness does *not* equal helplessness!

Like many other recovering addicts, I have lofty, valid ideals that are worth striving for, but I must remember that they are precisely that: ideals. I have difficulty accepting reality sometimes, and consequently become despondent at my inability to effect change, both internal and external, at a more rapid pace. Love requires my commitment to a process, a process which leads steadily *toward* the ideal, but only rarely takes me all the way to its doorstep. It is when I forget about the gradual nature of the process and focus only on the final result that I become most alienated from the benefits of the N.A. recovery program. That can be extremely painful.

I grew up in the Sixties, and part of my using was related to a spiritual search. Narcotics Anonymous has given me the tools to re-channel the energy that became so badly misdirected in my drug adventures. When I live the Third and Eleventh Steps, finding in them a connection to the source of love, my attitudes and actions are influenced greatly, and I am able to integrate my ideals with my daily reality. That is a gift for which I am truly grateful, and I *love* it!

P.W., Quebec

Fear and faith

Fear has reared its ugly head again, as it often does in my life. It found a focus. It persisted. How can I be rid of it? Some fears can be relieved by sharing; some, by asking questions. Some fears, however, will only respond to faith—the faith that things will be all right, if I allow my Higher Power the opportunity to help.

When fear approaches, there are tools I can use to deal with it, the most effective of which is sharing that fear, either at meetings or with my sponsor. When my anticipated disasters do not come to pass, my fears prove unjustified. I am allowed to see that my fear had no basis in reality.

There *are* things to fear. Death, illness and injury are always possibilities. Financial setbacks. Social setbacks. Spiritual setbacks. Surviving each day without these experiences is no guarantee against the possibility that one or another will come to pass. There is no escaping that possibility. There is no way to live without risk. There is always something to fear.

My fears are not usually as significant as these. Most of them are downright petty. Fear of the car breaking down. Fear of the landlord raising rent. Fear of making the wrong decision—and life presents so many decisions to be made. These are the kinds of fears that practically leap out at me every day.

Before I came to recovery I had no faith. My fears were vague and nameless, except for the fear that I would not be able to secure the drugs I wanted. Today, most of my fears are clear, the issues distinct. I choose to give some of them life each day, although I know they have no value. I understand this intellectually, but my fears persist because I am unwilling to let them go.

The core of the disease of addiction is self-centeredness. These are, after all, *my* fears. I am afraid of negative outcomes in *my* life. Each of these fears centers on an issue over which I am powerless, and each fear signals the need for faith. If I can accept that I am powerless, not only over this disease of addiction that distorts my perspective, but over the focus of my fear, I will have made a beginning.

If I can accept that there is no way to manage my own life to exclude the possibility of problems, I will have moved a bit further forward. However, it is only when I am able to demonstrate my faith, by releasing my problems to the care of my Higher Power, that I actually get relief.

Although I demonstrate my faith in specific areas of my life, I am yet to develop anything like an all-encompassing faith. I long for a faith that would allow me to release my fears of every kind. Yet, I have been unable to accept that God will take care of me—period. I believe that He will take care of *this*, but not *that*. *Now*, but not *then*. *Here*, but not *there*.

As I have seen "miracles and coincidences" come to pass in my life, my faith has grown. However, it has not yet grown to encompass all of the fears I continue to nurture. It has been several years since I came to believe that there was a Power that could restore me to sanity. I have yet to allow that Power the opportunity to do so in all areas of my life.

Today, I want to place my life in the care of my Higher Power. I want to feel the ease that I know would follow. My belief grows, but I stop short and refuse to let go of the whole thing.

I came to Narcotics Anonymous with no hope. I found hope at my first meeting—hope that I could be happy and find some peace of mind. That hope was real; it was not misplaced. My life has been transformed, and only continues to improve. Neither my faith in N.A. nor my faith in God has diminished.

I know in my heart that if I simply continue to practice the principles of the Narcotics Anonymous program in all of my affairs, I will continue to move toward a faith that touches all areas of my life. A faith I could apply no matter what the issue, grand or petty. A faith I could apply more readily.

I want to remember that fear is fear, no matter what the issue. And faith is faith. Life will present its difficulties; but if I allow my Higher Power to take care of me, He will help me through them—today.

Anonymous

Starting here

I first came back into the rooms of N.A. at the county jail—my sponsor, encouraged me to get back into recovery. At first, I felt ashamed. The H&I people who brought the meetings into the jail had been in my recovery on the street, and it was hard to face them again. I was at a loss for words, and I mostly just kept my head down from embarrassment, until one person who knew me quite well asked me how I was doing. I told him I couldn't face the fact that I had screwed up again and was in jail for the fifth time.

I kept going to these meetings, trying to understand where I had gone wrong. Before, I'd thought I had it all together—good job, nice home, a van, and some very special people in my life. But I gave it all up because I couldn't deal with my personal feelings; I was only working part of the program of N.A. I was giving out information to others who were in the program, and I felt good about it, but I wasn't working on myself. So I just gave in and went back into the world of addiction.

This addiction took everything from me and brought me to my knees, but my life was worth saving, and my sponsor never gave up on me. He stood by me at my trial, and was there for me every day to talk about how I got back behind the walls of prison again.

Today, I still sit behind the walls. But I sit with head up, and my feelings are open to anyone who wants to listen. I can't afford to stuff my feelings again if I want my recovery to work. Today, my freedom is gone, and there is anger within these walls, but I'm striving not to get emotionally torn apart by it.

I was sentenced to a total of twelve years, and was sent to the reception center where I was locked in for twenty-three hours a day. I was fortunate to have a lot of N.A. literature with me. I started reading every day, and writing to my sponsor.

Finally, I got a better understanding of the whole concept of recovery and how it works. My sponsor started to put the pressure on; he got me to write the steps out and to put my true feelings out into the open. I wrote my Fourth Step in that hell hole, and it took me four months. It took a lot out of me. I'd made a commitment to myself to finish this task when I accepted my Higher Power into my life. Things started to turn around, and it felt like someone else was helping me to take part of this load off my shoulders.

This Fourth Step made me a stronger and more determined person. I am far from being well again or perfect, but my sponsor helped me find some good qualities about myself. The feelings of self-hatred, anger, worthlessness, and the thoughts of suicide went away after taking this step.

Today, I am working the Ninth Step. I can admit my mistakes, and I'm trying to make amends to all those I've hurt. Today, my life is stronger with the help of my N.A. friends. They are there when I need them, no matter how far apart we are.

Today, I can see a change in my life. I feel good about myself, something I couldn't say before. I take my recovery very seriously, and I don't let anyone get in the way of it except the newcomer who is reaching out for help.

I've been given a new beginning behind these walls. I know I can't make up for lost time, but I know that, now that my recovery has begun, it will continue to grow. Just so long as I continue to follow the Twelve Steps of recovery, my life will be free of addiction.

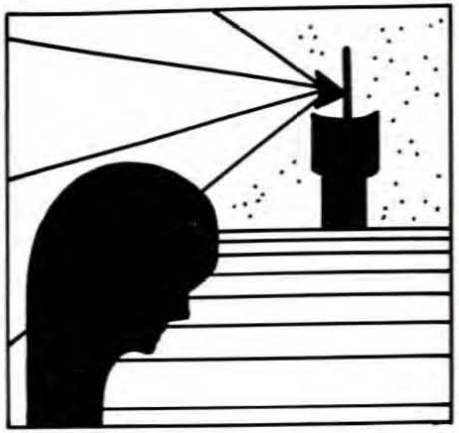
B.P., Maryland

From the editor

Next month readers of *The N.A. Way* will have an opportunity to see the first issue composed entirely by a new managing editor. R.H. continues to graciously share his expertise, as do many others. I am grateful for the opportunity to add my energy and experience to a solidly established instrument of the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship. Some slight changes may prove beneficial during the coming months, but please rest assured the formal mandate of the conference as well as the evolving desires of the readership will be respected. My personal view is that the magazine should continue to symbolize an attractive alternative to our disease without rejecting occasional humorous notes about our shortcomings. The established policy of a monthly feature on a topic of obvious interest to members of Narcotics Anonymous will continue. Next month's feature will be a thumbnail sketch of the history of *The N. A. Way*, (calculated to be the beginning of a survey on members' opinions about the content of the magazine) and incidentally providing a thesis on the diverse opinions of the nature of the "image" we ought to portray. Glad to be here, A.M.,

Managing Editor.

A plea for help from jail



I am the type of person N.A. was made for. After years of drug abuse, I am beginning to realize the value of a clean lifestyle. I just wish I hadn't had to go to jail to learn that life without drugs is not only possible, but extremely gratifying.

Drugs and my compulsive nature were a perfect match. I started drinking at the age of fourteen; addiction took me by storm. By the age of fifteen, I was smoking pot and doing speed and acid. Along with the drugs, I started finding myself being escorted home by the police.

I took drugs for more than just "the fun of it." Drugs seemed to give me a new personality—though most of the time it was the personality of a troublemaker. That, in turn, drew the attention of the law. Then, I found my true love, heroin, and thought it was wonderful. All that mattered was that next syringe full of dope.

I am thirty years old now, and have been in and out of jails and institutions much of my life for drug-related crimes and incidents. I got clean in jail after being introduced to Narcotics Anonymous by a visiting H&I panel. Lately, I have noticed that N.A. has been lax in its support. Don't get me wrong; I'm not complaining. They are almost always there for their scheduled H&I commitments. But inmates serving time and trying to stay clean in jail need extra support. It seems to me, based on my experience in several jails, that the support inmates get from one another is just not enough. We in jail want, moreover we *need*, more outside participation.

I'm serving a twenty-three-month sentence, and I'm sure there are a lot more inmates serving more time than that—and we want more support. We need sponsors, a home group, and a real communication network. These things can only be achieved with the support of many members, something we don't have in all the H&I presentations.

With this story, I'm trying to encourage N.A. members to remember that the meeting behind the walls is just a group of addicts getting together who need support. Any of us could have ended up in jail, because the mere use of most drugs constitutes a felony—and, in the end, an addict is an addict, whether they are inside or out. Please, help us.

J.F., Massachusetts

Michigan outreach:

an N.A. legacy lives on

A major factor in the growth of the Michigan Region has been a five-year program of outreach to isolated groups. The regional outreach committee chairperson explains how it works.

The Michigan Region's outreach efforts grew from the belief that what had helped us could help others—if only we could find a way to let them know about it. Outreach is simply a broad application of our Twelfth Step: one group, area, or region helping another group, area, or region. In the 1960s, many addicts on the U.S. east coast were introduced to Narcotics Anonymous by groups of traveling N.A. members from the west coast. In the mid-1970s, a similar group of N.A. members visited Michigan, planting the seeds of N.A.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, N.A. groups began to appear in Michigan. Members and regions from other states reached out and helped us form the Michigan Area Service Committee. They also helped us in our early public information and H&I efforts. Later, in 1983, they helped us form the Michigan Regional Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous.

By the mid-1980s it was the Michigan Region's turn to do some outreach work. Although the Michigan Region officially served the entire state of Michigan, most of the active groups were within a fifty-mile radius of Flint, in the state's eastern Lower

The two of us who went met representatives of about twenty-five different groups, most of whom were unaware of the existence of any of the other groups.

Peninsula (see map, below). We were getting scattered reports of groups in the western Lower Peninsula, but it was very difficult to track down hard information. The only thing we had to go by was the *World Meeting Directory*, which listed meeting places but gave no information about how to contact group members themselves. We tried writing to the groups in care of the facilities where they held their meetings, but with only limited success.

In 1985, we started having direct contact with addicts in these western groups. We encouraged them, over and over, to attend regional meetings and take part in the service structure as it then existed, but, again, only with limited success. Finally, we decided to send our regional chairperson and vice chairperson to a meeting we'd set up with representatives of these isolated groups. We publicized the event several months beforehand by every conceivable method. We sent fliers to all the groups, and told people about it, and let it spread by word of mouth.

The two of us who went met representatives of about twenty-five different groups, most of whom were unaware of the existence of any of the other groups. They were in about ten different towns; no town had more than two meetings, and some of the meetings had existed for three years or more. There were about thirty people there, and they each thought that all the *others* had come from eastern Michigan to help them; they were truly shocked to find out that all these people were their neighbors.

In the ensuing months, with all those people having been put in touch with one another in western Michigan and with the rest of N.A., things really started to happen. Those groups formed an area service committee in 1986. Since then, that area has grown so much that it's had to split in four. In 1988, the western areas hosted the regional convention.

From that experience, we were led to believe that the same situation might very likely exist in other parts of Michigan. It became our goal to locate other such groups, and not only put them in touch with the RSC, but with other groups near them so that they could support one another. About the time Western Michigan became a functioning area, we started doing some exploring in the northern part of the Lower Peninsula. We relied on reports from members who travelled, and encouraged people to get mailing addresses and telephone numbers when they chanced upon meetings in that part of the state.

During this same period, the World Service Office began sending our regional service representative copies of new group registration forms and requests for group starter kits

New outreach program beginning in Western Canada

In January, the Alsask Region (serving the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan) formed a new subcommittee to provide outreach services to isolated groups.

Statement of purpose:

1. To carry the message of N.A. to the addict who's still suffering;
2. To promote unity in the fellowship by welcoming these addicts as part of N.A. as a whole;
3. To reach isolated groups or individuals and to offer member/service support (e.g. workshops, convention dates, newsletters);
4. To open and maintain lines of communication with unaffiliated members and groups;
5. To make available a starter kit, as well as access to information through literature sales;
6. To maintain and distribute an updated meeting list of all established groups in our region, as well as isolated groups and individuals;

Continued from prev. page

7. To maintain and distribute up-to-date lists of all regional and area chairpersons, including subcommittees, to isolated groups and individuals;
8. To make available to the fellowship phone numbers in isolated areas, as well as helpline numbers in established areas;
9. To supply blank group registration forms and update forms, and to encourage all groups to register with the region, the Canadian Assembly, and the World Service Office;
10. To cooperate with other regions to establish regional boundaries;
11. To provide the regional newsletter committee with information on the progress of isolated groups, and to encourage those groups to use the newsletter as a vehicle by which they may share their experience with one another; and,
12. To cooperate with other regional subcommittees in coordinating services to isolated groups.

they'd received from Michigan. This supplied us with names, addresses, and phone numbers of addicts who were involved with starting new N.A. meetings. When we received word of a new meeting starting, the RSR would immediately send the group contact person a letter welcoming them into the Michigan Region and offering them help. This gave us the opportunity to make contact with these groups before they began to feel isolated, become discouraged, and disband. Not every group made it, but we knew that a lot more isolated groups were surviving than ever before.

We began mailing a bimonthly outreach letter to those groups, recapping what was going on in the Michigan areas, including fliers and registration forms for upcoming events both in and out of state. The members of these isolated groups said they appreciated the N.A. fliers. Even though they weren't likely to attend a campout in Hawaii, just knowing that things were going on elsewhere made them feel much more a part of N.A., they said. To them, the fliers symbolized hope—the hope of what N.A. could be like in their town some day.

Included with the newsletter was a personal contact list, so that members of isolated groups could support one another instead of depending only on the region. When formerly isolated groups finally succeeded in linking up with one another, forming an area committee, we encouraged them to establish their own outreach programs. Our goal was to foster independence for those groups, not dependence.

We encouraged members of groups in isolated parts of the state to get in touch with the N.A. mainstream by *attending* events—conventions, committee meetings, anything where they could contact large numbers of experienced members of the fellowship. But, sooner or later, we realized they wouldn't know why they needed to attend these things until they'd actually attended one. They were staying clean just fine where they were; why did they need to travel these great distances just to see other people doing the same thing?! So we figured, if we can't get them to come to these events, we're just going to have to take these events to them!

In September 1988, we held an "outreach campout," the first of three to date. The campout was held in a state park near the north-central Lower Peninsula town of Gaylord. There, we met face-to-face with some of the N.A. members we had been writing to for months—and, in some cases, years. They represented several groups we had been working with from various northern Michigan cities.

Members of groups in four towns—Boyne City, Petoskey, Charlevoix, and Cheboygan—got together at one of these campouts, and in talking discovered that they could go to a meeting every night of the week if they were willing to drive from one town to another. Each town had one or two N.A. meetings a week, but members had pretty much stayed in their own towns until then. It was like, all of a sudden, the lights went on, and now they're on the verge of forming an area of their own.

One of the highlights of the first campout was a mock ASC meeting. We had been encouraging these outlying groups to band together and explore the possibility of forming ASCs. They understood the need to do this, but had never been to an ASC meeting and couldn't picture how to hold one themselves. The mock ASC meeting gave them both the model and the confidence they needed to get started.

In 1989, our region published its first outreach meeting list, containing information on

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The Michigan outreach program didn't produce instant results—it had to be given consistent attention, but the rewards were tremendous.

more than fifty meetings in outlying areas of Michigan. It was distributed at the regional convention and by groups in the north, and was of great help to members in those areas who wanted to find N.A. meetings in nearby towns.

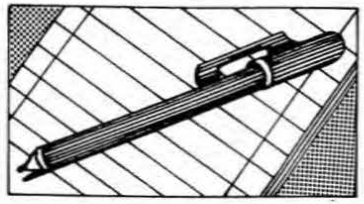
The outreach meeting list also became a good public information tool. Treatment centers in the larger cities often had clients who came from more remote areas of the state. They'd say, "What good does it do to send our clients to N.A. meetings while they're here, when back home there's nothing for them to go to?" We'd give them the outreach meeting list. If one of their clients lived in Petoskey, for instance, we'd show the center how that client could go to N.A. meetings seven nights a week back home if he was willing to drive a little. That helped N.A. appear to be more than just an urban phenomenon, but something that existed wherever it was needed.

The Michigan outreach program didn't produce the instant results that some had hoped for. It took a number of years to develop the program, and it didn't yield dramatic gains right away. It had to be given consistent attention, but the rewards were tremendous. It wasn't like we sent out a few letters one day, and all of a sudden had a bunch of new areas. But through consistency, communication, and caring, steady progress was made possible.

Although we remain powerless over the results of our work, the entire outreach experience demonstrates that we no longer need to feel helpless. By making the effort and applying what we have learned, N.A. in Michigan has been able to grow. We have every reason to believe that, so long as we allow the same principles and instincts to guide us, the N.A. legacy of service will continue to grow in our region.

R.W., Michigan

Viewpoint



I need to know more

Interest in an N.A. history book

I have been here only a few brief years, but my love for this fellowship is almost beyond expression. I have come to know a level of love and commitment here in N.A. that was totally foreign to me before.

At different times in my recovery, my priorities were my nursing license, my daughter, my job, service work, meetings, sponsorship, surrender, and so on. Today, it is about me and what I need to be happy and free from my disease. That need today is to know more about Narcotics Anonymous.

I have become increasingly aware that N.A. has a history. When I came through the doors, I took for granted that N.A. just *was!* Today, I know there is so much more, and I need to know where we came from and what we came through to get here.

Last night after a meeting, I gave another addict a ride home. I had been meaning to drop in on him for some time, and last night I was right where I was supposed to be. For three and a half hours, I sat and looked through his archives. I asked so many questions so fast that he had trouble keeping up with me, yet he had answers for each question, detailed answers. He shared about the early days and the struggles and the growth. He shared about the loving God who was working overtime with many addicts to write "The Book." He shared letters, hand-written and typed. He shared fliers, *N.A. Ways*, service meeting minutes, reports, I.P.s, and so much more. He shared a minute of our history with me last night.

Yet, I feel there is so much more that I am missing out on. I need to know more about "the ties that bind us together." I feel that our history is just that—one of our strongest ties. If we had a book that showed how we got started, who these people were, what they did and the pain and struggles that they had to go through to get this fellowship going, maybe, just maybe, more people would appreciate N.A. or feel differently about this wonderful, life-changing fellowship.

Sometimes I feel as if I am the only addict in N.A. who has these feelings or needs. I know I'm not alone today.

I know that there are others of us out there who are where I am with the need to know more about our history.

It is possible for us to have a book about the history of N.A., a book to let the newcomer know that we didn't just happen. A book to show the newcomer and longtimer alike that we have worked and can continue to work together to carry a message of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. A book about Narcotics Anonymous, a never-ending story, written by the grace of a loving God, through the hands of His willing and trusted servants.

D.A., Georgia

Bring back Slugg!

In the December "From the Editor" column, we announced that the "Home Group" comic strip was being put on hold, asking for your comments. Here's one letter we received in response: The first thing I do when I receive my *N.A. Way Magazine* is flip through to find Slugg in your "Home Group" comic series... that face! I read it and share it with my husband. We get a big kick out of Slugg and the things he puts himself through! My husband and I have a good laugh together.

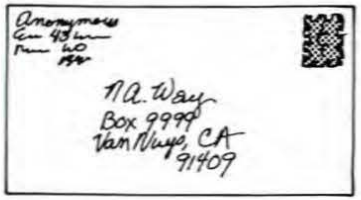
When I flipped through to find the comic strip in the December 1989 issue, of course I didn't find one there. I had made up my mind that I was going to drop a note to the editor to say: "Please bring back Slugg." Not only does he help me laugh at myself—but seeing what he puts himself through may mean I don't have to.

J.F., Kansas

Would you like to see the "Home Group" comic strip return to The N.A. Way? *Write us at:*

The N.A. Way Magazine
P.O. Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409
U.S.A.

From our readers



Dear N.A. Way,

Before coming to N.A. I was a living dead person, not knowing what way to go. I had tried all kinds of ways to stay clean. But I could not, because the obsession to use was too strong, and I did not know I had a choice.

Today, through N.A., I do have a choice, and, just for today, I am clean. My life is happy most times. I am no longer lonely or alone. I have other addicts who have taught me a new way to deal with life, a sponsor who gave me hope and helps me understand myself as well as others. Through her guidance and the steps, I am learning to be responsible for my life and change the things that I can.

With my sponsor's encouragement, I went back to school. She had faith that I would pass, and I did. I am now in college. I am loving every minute of my learning.

I am very grateful to N.A., to God, and to my loving sponsor. Thank you for giving me faith and a new life.

M.F., Connecticut

Dear N.A. Way,

Before joining N.A., I only knew two people who had gone through a rehabilitation center and had joined N.A. Both are still out there using. I believed for a long time that this program didn't work. Today, by the grace of God and the Fellowship of N.A., I know better.

I feel that I had reached my bottom when I hit my wife several times because she wouldn't give me the rent money for drugs. Most of this I did not remember, because I had blacked out. We agreed I would stop using. I thought I could do it; three weeks later, it started all over again. I tried twice after that to quit using, with no success. So I figured I would stop living. My attempt to commit suicide failed, and I went into the hospital for drug and alcohol abuse. There, I attended my first N.A. meeting.

The lead speaker was talking about how his mother was in the hospital dying. His brother had just died of a drug overdose. The love and concern in the room that night was overwhelming. That was eight months ago. I feel I found a home and friends that night.

I now know that, for my other friends, it just wasn't time for them to accept the program. Thanks to the fellowship and every person in it, I am still married, still have my kids, am seven months clean—and have a life again. Thank you, N.A., and God.

A.O., Illinois

Dear N.A. Way,

Through the years, there have been a lot of changes in my life—new jobs, new house, new friends. My recovery has gone up and down, but I keep coming back, trying to keep an open

mind and live the steps to the best of my ability. No one ever said it was going to be easy. But just for today, I will have faith in N.A.

So let me tell you about the spiritual awakening I had. My new job is over-the-road truck driving, mostly Cleveland to Chicago, a 600-mile round trip. It's real hard to get to any meetings, but I can still call people in the fellowship wherever I'm at.

We have been working hard this past week, and my mind has been cluttered with everything. I needed to sleep but could not. I was homesick for my N.A. family. Well, I applied the Eleventh Step—prayer and meditation—and then fell asleep.

While I was sleeping, my Higher Power hooked me up with my N.A. family back in Cleveland. We exchanged hugs with each other and had a meeting. When I woke up from my sleep, I felt spiritually refreshed. The feelings of joy, happiness, and unconditional love rang through my heart. It was such a good feeling, I called every one of those people to share it with them.

Well, the power of the program works. Every day, I thank my H.P. for the N.A. program, for the people in the rooms, and for the benefits I get from living and working the steps. Thanks, N.A., for a new way of life.

T.P., Ohio

Run no more

I have been incarcerated for a year now, and I'm not really sure how much longer I will be locked behind bars. I found the N.A. Fellowship in November 1986, but because I couldn't give myself totally to the program, I had to continue with the insanity that had possessed me for over twenty years. I had periods of eight and a half months, four months, and three months where I was clean of mind- and mood-altering substances, and now I have one year clean.

I didn't know how to be honest or how to trust anyone. I was never taught these things as a child. I come from a family of addicts. I knew that I had a problem with drugs, but I wanted an "instant cure" without having any pain in the transaction.

I can fully understand what it means when they say that this is a simple program for complicated people. My first time clean, when I had about five months without using, I discovered that I had been physically, mentally, and sexually abused as a child. I couldn't tell anyone this, because it hurt me, and I thought that nobody could possibly understand.

I continued going around family members who were using. After all, who wants to separate from their own parents and brothers and sisters? These were the same people who were giving me nightmares about the abuse I had as a child. I wouldn't let them go.

I started using again, and it was, by far, worse than when I had used before. I never would have believed that I could have gone even further down, to a bottom that I hope and pray I have finally reached. Before I got locked up, I was actually praying to God (whoever He was) that the dose I was taking would be the one that would kill me, so there would be no more pain. I was happy when I finally got arrested, and thank my higher power daily for helping to restore me to sanity. I don't have to run anymore.

I don't care about saving face; it's my ass I'm concerned about. I don't have to impress anybody but myself. I'm capable of being honest today, and with the help of other recovering addicts, I have found peace and serenity within myself that I have never before experienced.

I surrender. I no longer fight by myself. I can't, you can't, but we can. I don't just work a program today; I live the program, and that's what makes my recovery possible. I no longer have to suffer from the horrors of addiction. Now I can focus on the joys of recovery.

G.H., Ohio

Comin' up

ALABAMA: May 31-Jun. 3, 1990; 3rd Alabama/N.W. Florida Regional Convention; Sheraton Inn, 4404 University Dr., Huntsville, AL. 35816; rsvn.s (205) 837-3250; ANFRC-3, P.O. Box 5262, Huntsville, AL 35816

ALBERTA: Jun. 1-3, 1990; 5th Edmonton Area Convention; Polish Veterans Hall, 9203 144th Avenue, Edmonton, phoneline (403) 421-4429

ARIZONA: May 25-27, 1990; 4th Arizona Regional Convention; Ramada Renaissance Hotel, 200 N. Centennial Way, Mesa; rsvn.s (602) 898-8300; ARC-4, P.O. Box 44374, Phoenix, AZ 85064

ARKANSAS: May 18-20, 1990; 6th Annual Beaver Round-up; Buffalo Point National Park, Yellville; Northwest Arkansas ASC, P.O. Box 23, Lowell, AR 72745

2) Jun. 29-Jul. 1, 1990; 2nd Central Arkansas Area Convention; Arlington Hotel, Park & Central, Hot Springs, AR 71902; In State rsvn.s (501) 623-5511; rsvn.s 1-(800) 643-1504; Registration, P.O. Box 4223, Little Rock, AR 72221

BRITISH COLUMBIA: Jul. 20-22, 1990; British Columbia N.A. Rally; Beban Park Rec. Complex, Nanaimo

CALIFORNIA: May 26-27, 1990; Multi-Regional Public Information Learning Days; St. Jude's Reception Hall, 3824 Mitchell Rd., Ceres; phoneline (209) 526-1817; SVG-PI, P.O. Box 675, Modesto, CA 95350

2) Jun. 1-3, 1990; San Diego-Imperial Regional Convention; Holiday Inn at the Embarcadero, 1355 Harbor Drive, San Diego; rsvn.s (619) 232-3861; RSO (619) 587-1007; San Diego RSO, P.O. Box 184, San Diego, CA 92104

CONNECTICUT: Jun. 1-3, 1990; 4th Greater Waterbury Family Campout; Lone Oaks Camp Grounds, East Canaan; Campout, P.O. Box 1075, Woodbury, CT 06798

FLORIDA: May 4-6, 1990; 3rd Annual Florida Regional H&I Awareness Weekend; Clearwater Beach Hilton Hotel, 715 S. Gulfview Blvd., Clearwater Beach, FL 34630; rsvn.s (813 447-9566; phoneline (813) 894-6262; Florida RSO, 1110 N.E. 34th Court, Oakland Park, FL 33334

2) Jun. 28-Jul. 1, 1990; 9th Florida Regional Convention; Hyatt Regency Miami, City Center at Riverwalk, 400 SE 2nd Ave., Miami FL 33131, (305) 358-1234; RSO (305) 563-4262; FRC-9, Florida RSO, 1110 NE 34th Ct., Oakland Park, FL 33433

HAWAII: Jun. 8-11, 1990; 4th Big Island Gathering; Mauna Kea State Park; phoneline (808) 969-6644; Big Island Gathering, P.O. Box 5415, Kailua Kona, HI 96745

ILLINOIS: May 18-20, 1990; 6th Annual Little Egypt Area Flight to Freedom Campout; McNair Group Campgrounds, Carlyle Lake, Carlyle, IL; phoneline (618) 548-3547

2) Jul. 20-22, 1990; 2nd Basic Campout; Okaw Bluff Group Campsite, Lake Shelbyville, IL; phoneline (217) 373-2063; New Beginnings Area, P.O. Box 689, Normal, IL 61761

INDIANA: Jul. 27-29, 1990; 6th Mid-Coast Convention; Hilton at the Airport, 2500 S. High School Rd., Indianapolis; rsvn.s (800) 445-8667 or (317) 244-3361; send speaker tapes; MCC-6, P.O. Box 47462, Indianapolis, IN 46227

IOWA: Jun. 29—Jul. 1, 1990; 4th Iowa Regional Convention; Holiday Motor Lodge, Clear Lake

KANSAS: Jun. 22-24, 1990; 2nd Annual Southeast Kansas Area; Mirror of Miracles Campout, Elk City Lake, Independence, KS

2) Aug. 10-12, 1990; 3rd Just For Today Campout; Thunderbird Marina, Rolling Hills Area of Milford Lake; phonelines (913) 776-9933 or (913) 762-3861

KENTUCKY: Apr. 13-15, 1990; 4th Kentuckiana Regional Convention; Executive Inn, 1 Executive Blvd., Paducah KY 42001

LOUISIANA: May 25-27, 1990; 8th Louisiana Purchase Regional Convention; Hotel Bentley, 200 DeSoto St., Alexandria LA 71301; rsvn.s out of state (800) 356-6835, in state (800) 624-2778; LPRC-8, P.O. Box 3192, Pineville, LA 71361

MARYLAND: Oct. 5-7, 1990; 4th Almost Heaven Area Convention; 4H Center, Front Royal, VA; AHA Convention Committee, P.O. Box 2462, Hagerstown, MD 21741-2462

MICHIGAN: Jul. 5-8, 1990; 6th Michigan Regional Convention; Valley Plaza Inn, Midland; RV park avlbl.; rsvn.s (800) 825-2700; RSO (313) 544-2010; send speaker tapes w/clean dates; MRC-6, P.O. Box 597, Bay City, MI 48707

MINNESOTA: Jun. 8-10, 1990; 7th Upper Midwest Regional Convention; College of St. Scholastica, Duluth; phoneline (701) 234-9330; send speaker tapes; UMRC-7, P.O. Box 5393, Fargo, ND 58105

MISSOURI: Jun. 15-17, 1990; 5th Show Me Regional Convention; Holiday Inn Executive Center, 2200 I-70 Dr., Columbia; rsvn.s (800) HOLIDAY; phoneline (314) 635-0271; SMRC-5, P.O. Box 373, Columbia, MO 65205-0373

MONTANA: Jun. 9, 1990; 2nd Annual Montana State Gathering; St. Joseph's School Auditorium, Missoula; Gathering Committee, P.O. Box 351, Lolo, MT 59847

NEBRASKA: May 25-28, 1990; 10th Run for Fun Camp-Out; Alexandria Lakes State Campground; Alexandria, NE (park permit required); NRNA, P.O. Box 80091, Lincoln, NE 68501

NEW JERSEY: May 25-27, 1990; 5th New Jersey Regional Convention; Meadowlands Hilton Hotel, 2 Harmon Plaza, Seacaucus NJ, (201) 348-6900; send speaker tapes; NJRC-5, P.O. Box 852, Woodbridge, NJ 07095

2) Jun. 22-24, 1990; 11th East Coast Convention; William Patterson College, 300 Pompton Rd., Wayne NJ 07470; phoneline (201) 761-6646; ECC-11, P.O. Box 22091, Newark, NJ 07102

NEW MEXICO: May 25-28, 1990; 2nd New Mexico Regional Conference; Clorieta Conference Center, Glorieta NM; hotline (505) 984-2098; NMRC-2, P.O. Box 16358, Sante Fe, NM 87535

NEW YORK: Jun. 15-17, 1990; 6th Greater New York Convention; Concord Resort Hotel, Kiamesha Lake, 12751; rsvn.s (914) 794-4000 or (800) 431-3850

2) Jul. 13-15, 1990; 4th Recovery in the Woods Campout; phoneline (716) 878-2316; Buffalo ASC, P.O. Box 64, Buffalo, NY 14207

3) Jul. 27-29, 1990; 5th Northern New York Regional Convention; Wells College Campus, Aurora, New York; NNYRCNA, P.O. Box 142, 2604 Elmwood Ave., Rochester, NY 14618

NORTH CAROLINA: Jun. 29-Jul. 1, 1990; 11th Annual Regional Convention; Stouffer Hotel, Winston-Salem; CRC-11, P.O. Box 67485, Winston-Salem, NC 27103

OHIO: May 25-27, 1990; 8th Ohio State Convention; Seagate Center, Toledo; send speaker tapes; Ohio Convention, P.O. Box 1046, Toledo, OH 43697

2) Jul. 13-15, 1990; 6th Columbiana County CampVention; Chaparral Campground, 10136 West Middletown Road, Salem

ONTARIO: May 18-20, 1990; 3rd Ontario Regional Convention; ORC-3, University of Toronto New College, Box 7079 Depot A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1X7

PENNSYLVANIA: May 11-13, 1990; 8th Tri State Region Spiritual Retreat; Heritage Reservation Camp, Farmington, 15203; TTY (412) 281-1375; office (412) 381-8110

PORTUGAL: Jul. 27-29 1990; 7th European Conference and Convention; Colegio Pio XII, Av. Forcas Armadas, Lisbon; ESC-7, Apartado 21644, 1137-Lisboa, Portugal

PUERTO RICO: Jul. 27-29, 1990; Unidos Podemos, Together We Can; Caribe Hilton Hotel, San Juan; rsvn.s (809) 721-0303; Comite de Convenciones, P.O. Box 10524, Capparra Heights Sta, PR 00922

TENNESSEE: Jun. 8-10, 1990; 2nd Annual Spiritual Retreat and Campvention; Lake Taal Army Travel Camp, Fort Campbell; rsvn.s (502) 798-3126; helpline (615) 297-9762; Clean and Crazy Group, P.O. Box 1283, Clarksville, TN 37040

TEXAS: Jun. 29-Jul. 1, 1990; 7th Western States Unity Convention; Westin Paso del Norte, 101 S. El Paso St., El Paso; rsvn.s (915) 534-3000; WSUC, P.O. Box 12746, -324, El Paso, TX 79913

UNITED KINGDOM: Apr. 20-22, 1990; 1st London Regional Convention; for venue information call (1) 351-6794; LRC-1, P.O. Box 417, London SW10 ORN, England

WEST VIRGINIA: May 11-13, 1990; West Virginia Convention, Cedar Lakes, Ripley, WV; rsvn.s (304) 372-7000; Mountaineer RSC, P.O. Box 2381, Westover, WV 26502

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3TEA

The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

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

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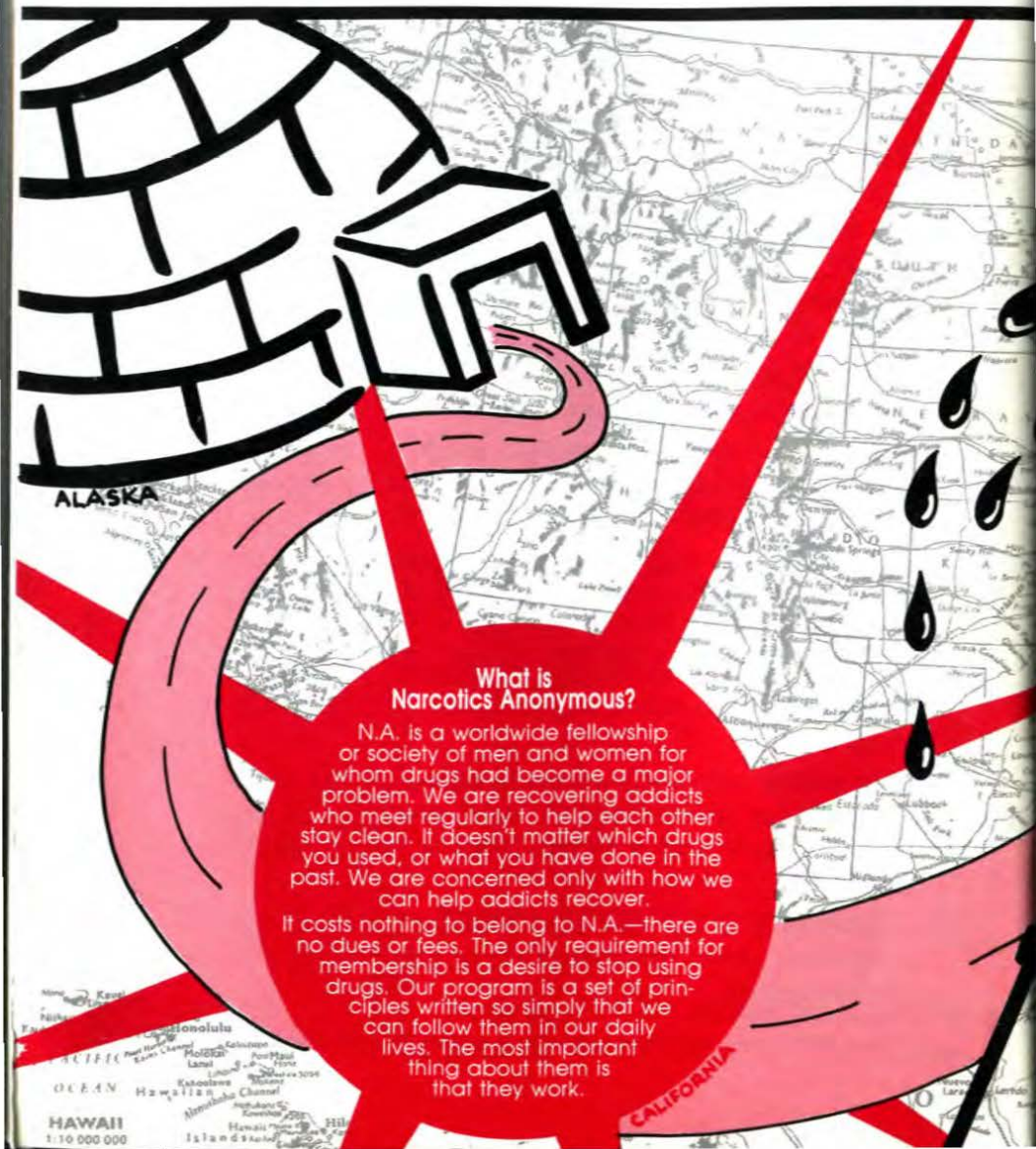
My gratitude speaks
when I care
and when I share with others
the N.A. way



What is Narcotics Anonymous?

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

It costs nothing to belong to N.A.—there are no dues or fees. 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.