

THE N A Way[®]

M A G A Z I N E

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B R E A K O N T H R O U G H

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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Come as you are

Somewhere between my first and second year clean, I ran into an old friend. He started coming to meetings with me. He never had to introduce himself; everyone immediately recognized him. His name was Ego, and I became very attached to him.

You see, when I first came into this program I had no real friends left. I hated myself so much that even Ego had abandoned me. I felt completely and entirely alone. I was defeated in every way and surrendered myself to the suggestions, acceptance, and love I found at NA meetings. Slowly, I made some new friends—friends I could call at all hours of the night, cry in front of, be honest with, and sometimes even laugh with. They seemed to actually like me! But I still hadn't found many reasons to like myself and I didn't feel that I was growing fast enough. I kept thinking that, sooner or later, my new friends would give up on me unless I did something to impress them.

That's when Ego called. It was so good to hear from him after being lonely for so long! I knew I could count on Ego for fun, excitement,

distraction, and justification. I didn't recognize my new self and here was an old identity I could use to define myself!

Ego and I started hitting the meetings in style. We always looked great together—never a problem we couldn't solve and be color-coordinated at the same time! We hung with the "right" crowd and attended all of the "happening" functions, being careful to stay away from any of those serious service committee meetings where my new clothes and "cleaner than thou" attitude wouldn't really fit in, let alone be admired.

Ego and I had private study sessions where we'd plan which meetings to attend, what to wear, whom to sit with, what to say, and how to say it. Usually, we'd get so involved preparing for a meeting that we'd walk in late and cause quite a stir. Ego likes attention of any kind. During this time we avoided those "geekie" newcomers, but decided it would look pretty cool if we had a sponsee. Together we selected an unsuspecting soul and teamed up to run her life. When she "misbehaved" we felt justified in gossiping about her and siding with her husband against her.

Eventually I moved away to a new town (Ego came with me), and lost touch with that sponsee. Ego and I didn't think too much about it. We didn't need her anymore.

At the new town's small meetings we were an instant hit. We put a lot of time and effort into "educating" these "wayward" addicts about the fellowship. They didn't have officers. They didn't know about area service

meetings, regional service, or the WSO. They'd never even been to an NA function. Since Ego knows it all, we got involved in "saving" one meeting and starting three new ones!

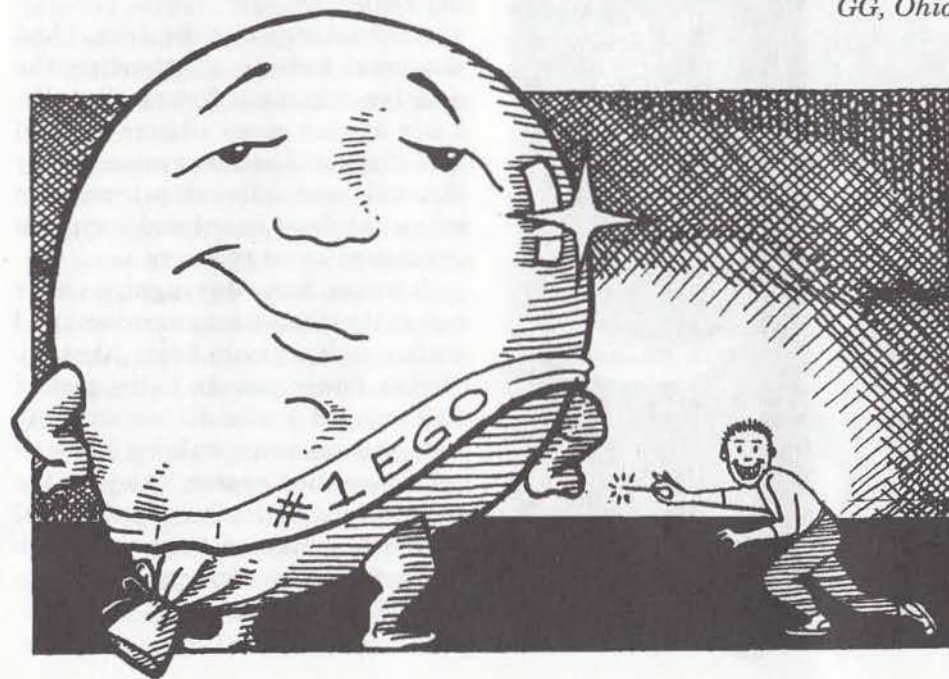
It was hard work keeping Ego happy throughout all of this. Ego had always been demanding, but now he seemed to need even more of my attention and I was getting tired of putting up with his nonsense.

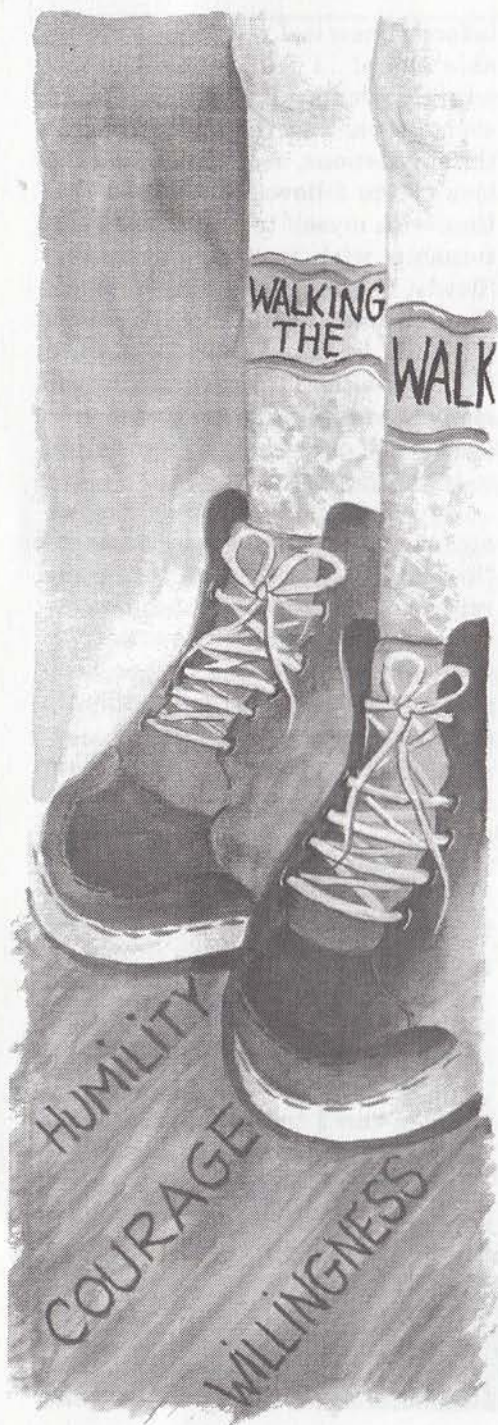
Because of my service positions, I began feeling responsible to the fellowship's needs, not just my own. I started to carry the NA message. I had less and less time to flirt with Ego, be judgmental with Ego, and play dress-up with Ego. I found myself going to meetings, arriving on time with my hair a mess and still wearing my work clothes. With recovery on my mind, I'd sit wherever I could best concentrate. Surprisingly,

before I knew it, I was feeling miserable again! I felt completely and entirely alone. I was defeated in every way and surrendered myself to the suggestions, acceptance, and the love of the fellowship. I used this time with myself to deepen my relationship with my Higher Power. Slowly, I began to make new friends. These friends I can call on anytime, cry with, be honest with, and even have fun with! Through working the steps I keep finding new reasons to like myself, and I have less of a need to try to impress others.

My old friend, Ego, still shows up occasionally and tries to talk me into "looking good" and exaggerating my recovery. But throughout my recovery, no matter what I have said or done, I've always been told to keep coming back. I've learned to silently add, "And come as you are."

GG, Ohio





I would like to share with the Fellowship of NA an experience that I had. It was an experience of unconditional acceptance rooted in the willingness to help another addict. Perhaps it was even a spiritual awakening.

Before I arrived at the rooms of NA, I was completely self-absorbed. I always wanted things my way and I'd help someone else only if there was something in it for me.

In the last stages of my addiction, my whole attitude screamed, "I don't care!" I didn't care about my family, job, the world, or even if I lived or died. Once I got clean and started to live the NA way of life, my attitude started to change. I started to care about myself, my family, my fellow addicts, and my recovery. I was increasingly aware of love and spirituality. My life started to have meaning again.

At about nine months clean, I had the great fortune of attending the world convention in Toronto, Ontario. I saw a great many addicts from all over the world and was overcome by the love and fellowship among so many people. I heard and learned a great deal about recovery.

It was on Saturday night, an hour before the clean-time countdown and main speaker would begin, that my Higher Power put me to the test. I had enjoyed a nice dinner with my wife and we were walking through the convention center, enjoying the moment and each other. From out of nowhere, a woman approached me and said "I'm lonely, scared, and isolating! Can you help?"

If this had been a beautiful woman, I'm sure I would have jumped at the chance to be helpful. Instead, this woman was dirty and looked like she had just dragged herself in off the street. My first thoughts were "Why me? I'm with my wife! We're having a good time! Why did she choose me from all the thousands of people here?"

My first selfish impulse was to brush her off, or give her money—anything to get her to go away. It was at that moment, with my thoughts racing and whirling, that a clear and powerful message came to me. "Well, are you going to walk the walk or just talk the talk?"

I shall never forget how clear and commanding the message was in my jumbled brain. I looked at this person in front of me, past the outer shell, and saw someone as confused, lonely, and hurt as I had been nine months earlier. Here before me was another addict asking for some help.

With an apologetic look to my wife, I proceeded to sit her down and got us both a coffee.

I listened to her and shared what I had learned in my recovery. I empathized with her pain and tried to give her some hope. She was afraid that she'd go back out and use. I suggested that before she did, to come upstairs and listen to the countdown and speaker. Maybe she'd feel better after.

Throughout the evening, my attention was divided between what was going on around me, and what had become of this person and how she was doing. Outside on the street, when it was over, I kept looking to see this person. At last I saw her coming

out and she was wearing a big smile. I went over and gave her a big hug and asked how she was doing. She thanked me for the time I had spent with her, and told me she felt better and more hopeful than she had in a long time. I thanked her, but she didn't know what I was thanking her for. I said "It took a lot of courage to reach out to a stranger, and to risk rejection when you were hurting. One of my greatest problems is asking for help, but I'll never forget you or your courage the next time I need help."

We parted with a hug and good wishes, and I've never seen her again. But she changed my life.

For out of thousands of people at that convention, my Higher Power guided her to me. He chose a worn and bedraggled package to contain the lessons of courage, humility, and willingness. I'm grateful that I chose to walk the walk, because it instilled in me the willingness to help others, regardless of their shape, size, color, or walk of life.

Today I more completely understand the ways in which we are fully self-supporting and how important the concept of one addict helping another is. I'm grateful to the Fellowship of NA for providing me with a chance to learn a new way of life. I'm also thankful that there is a world convention because I now know, that anywhere I go there will be my family of addicts waiting to welcome me.

To all the fellowship: the next time you see a newcomer or see someone hurting, I hope you'll stand up and be counted among those who "walk the walk."

WF, Ontario

The road gets narrower

During the last several days I've been feeling a little bit empty. I found a question about myself that I am unable to answer, and it's causing me a great deal of pain. It goes something like this:

On 8 February 1994, I will be thirty-two, and clean for nine years. Through the years, I've been very committed to NA, both in recovery and in service. I sponsor several people and share with them the principles of NA recovery. I've become a responsible, productive member of society, and have found the freedom to experience a spiritual awakening, commit to a wonderful marriage, a clean future, and a life of security.

Many of you are probably wondering where this is leading. For certain, I've experienced more than just freedom from active addiction. Life is essentially good. The thing about me—and, I believe, most addicts—is that this place is where we struggled against being all of our lives. I seem to have grown up to be exactly what my parents wanted me to be.

The reason that this has come to light is through a person I sponsor. Over the last year or so I've grown to

like him very much. We relate on almost everything, and that has helped me to help him. He is currently experiencing what we sometimes refer to as a "honeymoon." He's having a lot of fun, he's acting out, and experiencing freedom from using drugs. In other words, he's happy...

The key phrase is "acting out." You know the story: dating newcomers, staying out late, not working, kind of foot-loose and fancy-free. In trying to help him, I've shared my experience and guided him toward a working knowledge of the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous. What troubles me is that I find myself envious of his lack of regard for "staying within the lines." It reminds me of the feelings I had as an adolescent and the way I expressed myself. Now my life is an expression of my marriage and a principled program, and is, in a sense, very dull and sedate.

Now I want everyone reading this to be clear that I'm not willing to give up on my principles. It's just that I seem to have lost myself "within the lines." I lost my "cool" and feel like I've become old. I have nieces and nephews who look at me as an adult. I sponsor a twenty-year-old newcomer who seems to want to call me "Sir" (my impression).

Let me see if I can show you a vivid example of what I'm talking about. I'm married, and deeply in love with my wife. Having an affair would clearly be a wrong thing to do, and not within the principles of my program. Notwithstanding, having an affair would be exciting, and bring a wealth

of intense feelings. Of course there would be consequences, but the act itself would be like ditching school as a kid, smoking pot down by the railroad tracks, or stealing something that wasn't mine. No matter what the consequences are, I miss the feeling of acting out, of "experiencing the extreme." Does anyone relate to any of this?

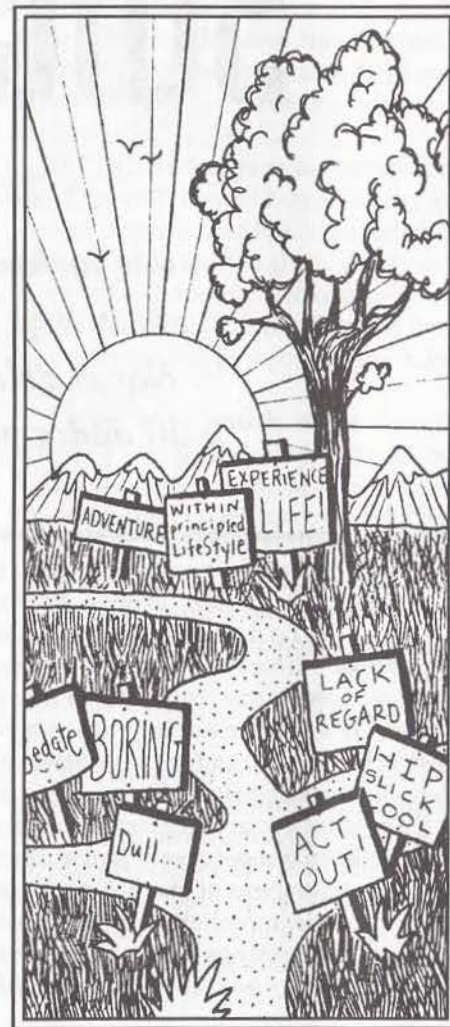
Recognizing my insanity, I spoke with my sponsor. How lame must this be? We talked and he totally related to what I have been experiencing. We talked about choosing a lifestyle, to the exclusion of self-destructive behaviors. He asked me whether I wanted to experience some adventure or if I wanted to change my lifestyle to include acting out; you know, like the person who acts out and doesn't care whether it's the "right" thing to do or not.

It has become clear that a principled lifestyle offers more to me as an addict than one that involves having affairs or being single, street racing, being otherwise sleazy, etc. It really wasn't that hard of a decision to make.

The recovery in all of this, besides the self-evaluation (i.e., defects of jealousy, ego, self-centeredness, etc.), is that I've become aware that my desire and need is simply to find a way to express myself, to be cool in my own way. This does not mean I can't live my life according to the principles of NA. I'm growing up, and while I don't know whether that is good, I clearly need to accept things the way they are, rather than the way I wish they were.

In closing, I want to share that I do have a tremendous amount of gratitude for the life that my Higher Power has given me. Most people have genuine respect for me and admire my desire to live by the principles of NA. I feel good about my actions, and don't have to live with the kind of secrets that burned in me during my active addiction.

Anonymous



GROWING IN SWEDEN

*Vår tacksamhet talar . . .
när vi bryr oss om och
När vi delar med oss
till andra på NA:s sätt*

Sweden has an active NA community, made up of four ASCs, and forty-four groups holding seventy-two meetings each week. Last year's European Convention and Conference was held in Stockholm and attended by trusted servants from all over Europe. Literature translations into the Swedish language are progressing. Several IPs and the keytags are now complete. The *Introductory Guide* is the next scheduled item for translation, then the White Booklet. It is expected that the Swedish Basic Text will be published in 1997.

The following articles are from recovering NA members in Sweden. The first, written almost a year ago at the request of the editor, is from one of the founding members of the NA community in Sweden. The second is from a relatively new member. For all those who have ever gone to a new place and started NA meetings where there were none before, we hope the connection between these two letters is apparent and as exciting to you as it is to us.

Dear NA Way,

As our fellowship grows in communities across the globe, I feel inspired to share my experience of recovering in NA in Sweden. I am a French Australian who found recovery in NA in London. As God's will would have it, I married, started a family, and continued to recover in NA. A lot has happened to me during my nine years clean.

When I moved to Sweden several years ago, there was no NA there. I came close to regretting my decision to marry and leave the safety of NA in London. In my recovery I have worked with a formidable sponsor. She said, "Go marry, live your life, and start NA meetings." That was all she said, and that is what ended up happening.

NA works in my life despite, in spite, and simply because; despite the fact I could not speak nor understand the Swedish language, in spite of cultural differences and the feelings of isolation I experienced, and simply because addicts desiring to recover can overcome many obstacles.

During my early and difficult years of recovery in Sweden, I simply kept coming back. I shared only during the coffee break with individuals. I tried to imagine what it must be like to be a Swedish newcomer to NA. Getting clean and staying clean is hard enough without having an English-speaking secretary and no Swedish literature. However, what was lacking in language was made up in kindness and hope. Twelve addicts turned up for the first NA meeting in Sweden; four stayed.

There were two male addicts who were well acquainted with my husband and, as no women joined NA for more than a year, those addicts and I clung to each other at my kitchen table while we translated the readings and one IP. As there was only one meeting a week at first, we relied on each other for support. Actually, we still do.

Translation work continues, sometimes with difficulty, sometimes with ease. NA in Sweden has formed a national service structure, held conferences and conventions, and participates at the WSC.

NA in Sweden gave me something very special: a new home for my recovery from addiction, new friends, and renewed spirituality. A bonus is that today I speak, understand, and share in Swedish. I learned not from dull lessons but by opening my mind and heart.

There is so much more I could write. I feel a slight injustice at not being able to share all of the joys and frustrations I have experienced; however, I believe today that this story of my experience of NA in Sweden shall be written and repeated by other members in other countries in the future.

VR, Sweden

Dear NA Way,

Hi! My name is Charles, and I'm an addict. I have almost five months clean, and have totally surrendered to the principles of NA. This obviously took some time because I've been going to meetings for over eight months. Back in the beginning of March 1993, without knowing any-

thing about the fellowship, I came in to these rooms to check out what you guys could do for me and my problem with a particular substance. I had a lot of other problems, but I wanted you to deal with this one. I refused to think that I had problems with other substances. I still used them for almost three and a half months, but went to meetings and said I was clean. No one told me anything about this, because I didn't ask. I just went to a couple of meetings a week, not mingling with anyone before or afterwards. Every now and again I would take a new white chip.

This was in Stockholm, Sweden, where the fellowship is young (seven years maximum), and growing fast (from hundreds to thousands of members this year only).

"Crossovers" are widely represented. So far, the Swedish fellowship has not adopted a specific translation of the word "addict." This means that you can introduce yourself as you wish, perhaps identifying your particular "drugs" of choice. I've heard "Hi, I'm so-and-so, and I'm an alcoholic, overeater, and co-dependent." Unfortunately, I used this as a way to be in denial. I shared about the substance that I thought was my problem. I kept on using other substances.

However, in June I took a one-month course in Paris, applying for a school that has now accepted me to study there after the new year. Suddenly finding myself in NA meetings in both French and English, being given phone numbers—whether I wanted them or not—made me feel welcomed to an atmosphere of recovery. The bonds between members were warm. I suddenly found myself eager to follow them after meetings

to restaurants. While sharing with them I found out many things about the program, such as abstinence from alcohol not meaning, "Just make sure you don't get drunk," which, of course, had been my interpretation. My jaw was left open. "You seriously mean that I can't even have

one beer!" This after going to meetings for over three months. Of course, any sincere NA member reading this will now react and say that I just wasn't open-minded enough to really listen to the messenger and, sure, I had reservations. I kept some of them even after cleaning up for real in Paris. But when I found a sponsor in the only English-speaking meeting in Stockholm, and then the Swedish fellowship hosted the Tenth European Convention and Conference,

I decided for the first time to really work a program. I decided to try service, and chaired a meeting at thirty-one days clean.

It took quite some time to start work on the Second and Third Steps. Not because I had no faith—there's not much wrong with my spirituality—but because I never could go completely beyond the First Step. You see, my First Step was like a lasagna, once I got through one layer of pasta and sauce, thinking "this is it," a new reservation would surface. Consequently, my craving for drugs never really disappeared.

Then something happened. In fact, it is the reason I need to share my experience (with surrender and the First Step) with the magazine in this way. On my 101st day of recovery

I found myself a loner in Eastern Europe. I'm now, through my job, in the middle of a two-and-a-half-month stay in Bucharest, Romania without anything that even faintly resembles a twelve-step meeting. I was working without a break for more than two weeks so at first I had no problem. I found acceptance by being in a poor country that had suffered so long under dictatorship. I felt like I was on another planet. Seeing beautiful young people who were crippled,

dirty, and begging, first made me feel privileged to have access to recovery.

I had all the literature with me and not much else. When I was suddenly put on hold at the job, I found myself having nothing to do, not knowing anyone in this country where very few people speak a Western language. Nothing to do, literally, because there is nothing here, and even if I have money, there is hardly anything for sale. Amusement and stimulation

are just a little above zero.

I figured this was HP's way of telling me: "Get down to business, it's time for you to take responsibility and work the program!"

So after three days of complete apathy I dived into it. I was willing in a way I wouldn't have been had I been in any other situation. The

thing I miss most from my home in Western Europe is NA meetings. However, I also realized how I had used meetings as an excuse for not working the steps. Keeping clean when you're with plenty of recovering addicts almost 24 hours a day is one thing. It's just that. Keeping clean. Now HP was telling me that keeping clean doesn't necessarily equal recovery.

It was hard at first. Then, it got worse! I came to believe that all the

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problems that I ever had were, in fact, manifestations of one thing only. This "thing" had been with, or rather inside, me since I wore diapers, and it will always cast a shadow over my life until my body rots.

Being deep into step work and close to HP made me feel serene half of the time. The other half was filled with insanity. You see, some of the drugs I used are only now beginning to leave my system. And they don't leave quietly, I can tell you! I've been put on hold from work for almost four weeks now. Part of the time I feel better and better, and part of the time I just feel worse and worse.

The other day I did something I have always wanted to do. I've always felt the need to tell my story to anyone who would understand. So, I recorded it on tape. It's two hours and two minutes long. I sent it to someone special in the Swedish fellowship, and he'll also give it to my sponsor. I also listened to it. It was not the same as just sharing it. My whole life, especially my using and insanity, was brought into light. I suddenly relived my personal hell from Day One and followed it until I completely surrendered.

I was surprised how I recalled hearing NA speakers say similar things, how I had read in the Basic Text and *The NA Way* things that I didn't remember doing myself. I finally was one-hundred percent honest about myself and, by the end of the tape, one thought resounded in my mind: "My God, I belong in NA!"

After having breakfast the next day, I just sat watching the falling

snow, feeling serene, feeling more than serene, feeling that HP was relieving me from the chains of slavery. I don't ever want to go back to where I came from, and going to any lengths to avoid it is what I'm doing these days. I have flashbacks. I'm more paranoid now than when I was using and evil visions haunt me every night. However, I endure all this willingly and with gratitude. Not because I'm a masochist or anything like that. It's just that HP has assured me that all of this will pass. In fact, my whole insane life is saying good-bye in the most obvious fashion: by one last encore before the curtain falls. I don't have to applaud. As I said, I am serene half of the time knowing, "This, too, shall pass." My cravings for drugs are long gone. Not that I don't think about it—I do and know that I don't want it! At last, the lasagna is in the oven.

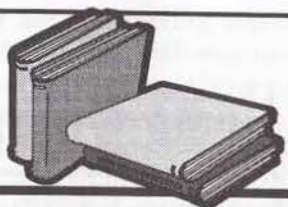
In ten days I'll have five months clean. By then, I'm back to work. One month and a few days to go as a loner; it's tough, but I finally have a firm foundation for recovery. My surrender is, by God, complete with my last reservations out the window. I am proud to recover within the boundaries of Narcotics Anonymous!

CM, Sweden

Home Group



NA history



This is in response to the request in the February 1994 *NA Way* asking for NA history articles. However, that is not the only reason for this correspondence. In the city in which I live several addicts have died recently, some from accidents, some from addiction, and the reality of my own mortality has come to me in meditation. It became clear to me that I wasn't going to be here forever and someone should write this stuff down.

I was not clean when the Carolina Region formed, but got clean shortly after. My sponsor and close friends were and they have related to me the events of a year or so prior to my getting here. I have tried to portray the events prior to God giving me my clean time the way they have been shared with me but, as with any recounting of history, I may not get the facts the way you remember them. So I offer my apologies in advance, and if you don't like

it or don't remember it this way, write your own.

The first NA meeting in the Carolinas was in Greenville, South Carolina in January 1980. Started by members from Atlanta and fresh recruits from AA, this meeting still exists today. Soon after Greenville NA began, Asheville, North Carolina started its first meeting. Where the next meetings were held remains a hotly debated topic; however, it is safe to say that by 1981 there were NA meetings in Charleston and Columbia, South Carolina, and Hickory, Wilmington, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

These cities had only one to two meetings a week so if we wanted to go to more than one meeting a week of our fellowship we rode. We all got into a car and went to each other's meetings. One only has to look at a map of our region to see we cover a large geographic area. Nowadays they call what we did "outreach"; we called it "staying clean." It was a given that if you wanted to stay clean in NA you traveled and supported small isolated groups because most likely you belonged to a similar type group and knew the visit would be returned.

Our region has always included both North and South Carolina and, for the last eleven years or so, part of Virginia. Our RSC has formed ad hoc committees in the past to explore the division of the region along state lines; however, we have always arrived at the same solution: "If it works, don't

fix it." We now have over twenty areas and seem to hold together as a region pretty well.

Our RSC was formed in 1980. This was prior to any ASCs being formed. We didn't have any service guide to tell us we were doing it wrong; we just felt a great need to link up. I've been told that a bunch of addicts who were attending an AA convention at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, got together on the grandstand and founded the Carolina Region of Narcotics Anonymous in the fall of 1980.

The Carolina Regional Convention also started in 1980 although at that time it was called The Blue Ridge Mini-Convention and was put on by members from Atlanta. Our original convention was held on the Cherokee Indian Reservation in Cherokee, North Carolina. It was held there annually until 1986 when it was moved to Boone. This year we will hold our fourteenth regional convention in Charleston, South Carolina.

After the formation of the region the subcommittee system was set in place, the first being the literature committee. For years we relied on the volunteer system of literature distribution. We utilized this system throughout most of the eighties. However, this became unmanageable as we grew and found ourselves going to a different address to buy literature every time we elected a new literature chairperson. Also, the number of hours that a literature chair had to devote to his or her duties was too much to ask of one person. It

became evident in the late 1980s that our region needed an RSO with two paid workers whose primary duties would be literature distribution. To the credit of our staff our RSO has always operated in the black. Our board of directors also plays an active role in our RSO. They have to; they are ASRs of all the areas. Our region incorporated as a 501C3 nonprofit corporation under US tax laws in 1989.

Our region has a long history of H&I committee service at the regional level. The first H&I committee formed in 1983, although H&I meetings or presentations have been in place before we knew it was called "H&I." We called them "prison meetings." According to North Carolina Department of Corrections records, the first prison meeting was at the Forsyth Advancement Center in Winston-Salem, North Carolina in early 1982. Shortly after, meetings sprang up in prisons throughout the Carolinas. A lawsuit against the South Carolina Department of Corrections made it mandatory that NA be made available to any that wanted it. Those of you familiar with H&I can understand that this was a period of great growth for our fellowship. One city in our region, Columbia, South Carolina, became known as the H&I capitol of the region due to the fact there were eleven H&I meetings and two home groups. Thankfully, we made it through that period. H&I continues to grow in our region and for the last three years we have held an H&I awareness weekend.

All other areas of service have continued to grow over the years. Our region hosted a WSC "quarterly" meeting in 1985 in Charlotte, North Carolina. Some feel this was a prime catalyst for promoting service in our region. Around this time our region began to fund our standing committee chairs to all WSC meetings to the extent to which our treasury would allow. We feel this is invaluable to our service efforts. We also have consistently sent Seventh Tradition funds to the WSC (even if we don't agree with how our money is spent) in the spirit of unity.

What is this place called the Carolina Region? An NA Utopia? I think not. We are not without our problems. We had our ups and downs, all the same old bulls___ that rears its ugly head elsewhere. Through it all we have worked together and stayed Carolina Clean together.

PC, North Carolina

Newsletters



Scraping off the rust

From *The Recoverer*, the Washington/North Idaho regional newsletter: Ah yes! Tools! You know those rusty things we hang in sheds, throw in drawers, or toss in the basement. Those things we sometimes can't find because we were so casual in tossing them aside. They were so cool at first. They looked good and, boy, did we have to have them. They were the shiniest, sharpest tools ever. Better than anyone else's. But soon they became just like any other tool—not so new, not so shiny, not used as often. But that's okay. A hammer gets used a lot more to build a house than to maintain one. But tools need maintenance. They should be cleaned, oiled, and stored away properly, or they may not be any good when they are needed.

Sponsors are a tool just like that. They need care and maintenance. They should be protected so they are available when they are needed. All of this takes responsibility.

You know, I probably haven't been a very good sponsor. I've been willing to wake up at 3 a.m. and talk to my sponsees about anything. I've been willing to put my family, friends, and projects on hold to help my sponsees with their latest crises. I've listened, nurtured, babied, cajoled, enabled, loved them unconditionally, and tried to let them know that, no matter what, God has a plan. But I never taught them about responsibility—the responsibility of treating your sponsor like a fellow recovering addict, someone with a life, with problems, with flaws and failings. Someone who needs that "two-way street." For that, I need to make amends. I wish I had taught my sponsees that tools are to be taken care of. They aren't to be feared—just respected. They aren't to be placed out of reach—just not left lying on the floor.

So, I shall try very hard to scrape any rust off my sponsor. I'll get the oil can and polishing rag out. I'll make sure that I'll be able to find her in that safe place I left her. I'll try to listen when she is hurting. I'll call just to ask how she is doing. I'll understand

that she makes mistakes because she is just a recovering addict. I'll be gentle with her like I would be with a newcomer. I'll respect her like I would an oldtimer. But most of all I will try very hard to love her for who she is.

Thanks for listening! With much love,

Anonymous

Understanding

From *Together We Can*, the Freestate regional newsletter: My name is Angelo and I am an addict. I came to this country from Spain, without any knowledge of the English language. I was introduced to Narcotics Anonymous four years ago. When I came to NA all I wanted to do was to stop using drugs. Someone told me that what this program offers will be beyond my wildest dreams. I have almost a year clean, and I'm involved with starting the first Spanish-speaking meeting in this area. I know that this is God's will, not my will, even though my self-doubt has gotten in the way a few times. I have felt alone in this a few times, but other addicts have encouraged me to keep on.

I am grateful that I can speak the language. What has motivated me to

go ahead and start this meeting is the fact that had I not been able to understand English I would not have been able to understand what this program has to offer. It's very likely I would still be using drugs and that thought scares me.

I'd like to thank my Higher Power, the Fellowship of NA, and even those outside the fellowship who helped me to make this dream come true. As we say, "No addict seeking recovery need ever die." In loving service,

Angelo

Perfumed stinking thinking?

From *The Bottom Line*, the Gold Coast, Florida regional newsletter: One question we as trusted servants of NA can never take lightly or avoid asking and answering is, "How can we better carry out our primary purpose?" If we avoid this question, lives may be lost. We know from our personal recovery the importance of making a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. We also know the consequences of not continuing to take our personal inventories. But we usually forget that this spiritual principle is just as important to the NA service structure

as it is to us as individuals. From the group level right on down to our World Service Conference, we as trusted servants need ask ourselves, "Are we practicing these principles in all our affairs?"

As trusted servants we need to beware of thinking that we or the groups, boards, or committees on which we serve are sacrosanct, rendering us immune from our disease and therefore exempt from worrying about practicing principles. This is merely perfumed stinking thinking!

In fact, it is our responsibility to question our trusted servants. As trusted servants, we are directly responsible to the fellowship. As trusted servants, we should never fear admitting when we are wrong. Through these truths God gives us opportunities to change. We should welcome changes that allow growth.

We need not be timid in our business meetings. We need to ask the tough questions. Remember: "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." The dictionary definition of "conscience" is "the faculty of recognizing right and wrong in one's own conduct."

Anonymous

Ten reasons to write your Fourth Step now

From *In Step*, the Bay Cities, California area newsletter:

1. Makes flashy wallpaper for your home when finished.
2. Makes for juicy gossip when left in the back of the meeting room.
3. Lets your sponsor compare instead of identify.
4. Just when you thought you were well, it brings you back to earth.
5. Gives you a chance to use writing skills not used since grammar school.
6. Keeps you busy while you're not creating wreckage of the present.
7. Any "secret writing" helps to annoy nosy family members.
8. Helps boost your ego because you are envied by those who haven't finished.
9. Helps to keep your head from becoming a suppository.
10. Gives the rest of the fellowship more time to share in meetings, because you have finally stopped talking about your painful childhood.

Anonymous

A fellowship forum on Motion #39

What is Motion #39?

At the 1993 World Service Conference, Motion #39 was presented by the Australian Region. It stated:

"To make the following changes to our steps and traditions: *Step Three:* We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of a God of our understanding. *Step Seven:* We humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings. *Step Eleven:* We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with a God of our understanding, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out. *Tradition Two:* For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as may be expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

A conference working group recommended that the fellowship consider the following questions when talking about Motion #39:

1. Does the language of the steps and traditions truly reflect the principles of the program?
2. If not, what language does the fellowship feel would better reflect those principles?

The NA Way Magazine wants to know how you feel about this issue. The staff and trusted servants responsible for this magazine have pledged to keep access to this column as open as possible. We will publish your thoughts and feelings on the specific wording in Motion #39, other suggestions for changing the steps and traditions, or opinions that the steps and traditions should not be changed at all. Please share with other *NA Way* readers your views on this very important matter.

Praying for knowledge of God's will for us

Thank you, *NA Way*, for this opportunity for addicts from all over to express their views on this issue. As ASR for my area I know that we will, as usual, get the CAR so late in the year that we will have to rush to get any kind of area conscience in time for the March RSC but, thanks to you, my area can be well-informed and ready to discuss at least one issue.

When I first began to hear about the motion, I thought it was going to be another of those "he/she/it" things, which I hate. I've tried to write articles for *The NA Way* in such a way that no gender was detectable, and in some cases that was so difficult that the story lost its meaning in a flood of "this addict, that addict, the person who." Now that I have read the mo-

tion several times I see that whoever wrote it did an excellent job of keeping it gender-free and still as simple as possible.

As one of the many addicts who came here with a deep resentment against any kind of organized religion and a serious fear and distrust of men in general, I tried at first to think of God as female, or as a gender-free spirit. But the early training was too heavy to change for me and I found it easier to think of God as "He" as I had been taught to do. Since I was willing to do anything I was told in order to stay clean, I was also willing to accept whatever the fellowship as a whole had decided worked, which included the wording of the steps and traditions. But this is about the fellowship as a whole, not just what worked for me.

I dislike change. I don't understand why our Basic Text has had to change so many times, but I wasn't around to be part of any of that. I know that these words have been working in NA for forty years, and even longer in the fellowship where they originated. By the way, when we received permission to adapt these words, was it a blanket "change them however you want" or a "you may change them to these specific words" type of permission? Could that be a factor in whether this motion can really be put into effect if it is passed at WSC'95? Some of us have been wondering about that.

When it comes time for me to cast my vote at my home group for Motion #39, how will I vote? I find the words to be acceptable and, in the case of the Step Seven wording in particular, I

believe the change to be an improvement. I like to think of myself as being a little bit open-minded. I hope I'm not just stuck in the sixties, wanting only to tear everything down whether or not I have an idea what to replace it with. In this case, what we have to put in the place of the old may be better. Maybe removing the "He" and "Him" will help one addict to stay clean, in which case it is a good change. I just don't know. I do know I will have to pray, talk with other addicts who have been around for a little while, and pray some more, before I have to make a decision. I hope that all of you will be praying with me for the knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

MT, Florida

Mixed feelings

I have mixed feelings about Motion #39. When I got clean all I had was a misunderstanding of God. I had a fire and brimstone deity that was always out to get me. I got clean and learned that God was never out to get me and was actually there for me even though I wasn't there for myself.

I learned about God through the Third Step. It was important that I did not think "God" in Step Two. Step Two was about a power greater than me, and it didn't have to be God, at least the first time through the steps. I learned, with the help of a lady to whom I owe my initial spiritual awakening and growth, about how to pray, whom to pray to, and what to pray for.

Since I had no knowledge of what a God in my life was, I relied on what Janet told me about what she believed. She helped me to find a God that was loving, caring, and a greater power than myself. "Jantie" once told me that if my God wasn't working, I could call on hers.

It wouldn't have mattered at that time if my God was man, a woman, a spittoon, or a cockroach. I'm not even sure if I knew, let alone cared, at that point.

I used Janet's God until I developed my own understanding of a power greater than ourselves. She used the steps to find her God and prayed to Him every morning and every night. I watched and learned.

The steps were very informative and specific. I prayed to God for knowledge of His will for me and the power to carry it out. I asked Him to help keep me clean and I thanked Him for keeping me clean.

Now the steps are a part of my life, just as a power greater than me is a part of my life. I now have a picture of that power in my mind, and it is masculine. I now have an understanding of my God, and it's been developing into what it now is for the whole of my recovery.

Whether or not it's male, I would still use the term Him and His because up until this whole "politically correct" movement got started, "Him" and "His" were non-gender specific, just as "Dear Sirs" was meant to address anyone reading the letter, male or female. I have become very comfortable reading the steps the way they were written, and they have

worked for so many people for so long that it seems callous to try to change them now.

People have used "Him" and "His" in this fellowship regardless of who or what they understood their Higher Power to be. Very many of my close friends have stated that they have feminine Gods, or Goddesses as they prefer to call them, yet still read our steps the way they were written.

That's where my mixed feelings come from. I have become very comfortable with the God of my understanding, and am extremely comfortable with the wording of our steps; however, should our group conscience decide that being politically correct is more important than the idea of "If it works, don't fix it," then I will read the steps in meetings the way our fellowship decides. I will continue my belief in the power greater than ourselves that has been the saving force in my recovery since I've been clean. Sort of reminds me of a saying that some computer hacks I know use, "If it works, take it apart and find out why, then put it back together differently."

LR, North Carolina

Viewpoint



Come in and believe

I recently re-read an article from the May 1993 issue, "Diversity is the key to unity." I felt stirred to share my experience.

When I came to NA, I was desperate and dying. I wanted help, but I didn't want the "God stuff." My experiences with religion and religious people involved being sexually molested and unprotected from other inappropriate behavior. Because of these experiences, I doubted the existence of God.

I did not get clean right away. I wasn't ready yet. It only took a few more months of active addiction, including much degradation and overdosing on a regular basis. I was reintroduced to NA through a hospital-based treatment program. I knew I was dying and needed to try something new. I came to believe in the program as a way to get clean and get better. Through meetings and conversation with recovering people, I

was loved until I could love myself. I learned that NA was a spiritual, not religious, program. I didn't quite understand what that meant, but it helped me open my mind a bit. People told me that I only needed to be willing to believe that there might be some power greater than myself. I did not have to believe in God at all.

People used examples to help me understand the concept of a power greater than myself such as, if all the people in the group were holding one end of a rope, and I was holding the other, which end had the greater power? The group, of course. But I knew in my heart I needed a Higher Power that would go with me everywhere because I couldn't keep a group of people around me all the time. I became willing to believe that there might be something "out there."

I went to my room and, with my hand on hips, I said to the ceiling, "Hey you, or He, or whatever, if you're really out there, I'm trying!" I was very insolent and disbelieving in my tone and mannerism. But within three hours, I experienced, for the first time in my life, that something was there. I didn't know what to call it, how to use it or anything, but I believed in it. My way of living and believing had almost led to my death, so I was willing to try something new, even if I had doubts.

When, after a little time in recovery I started to remember and flashback to the incest, I again doubted the existence of any Higher Power. I was stuck back on my Second Step, needing to find something to believe in. It was difficult to come to believe in a loving Higher Power because of the new awareness I had of my past and other tragedies that had happened in my life. But I had experienced the love of the NA Fellowship and recovering people. I had experienced abstinence and recovery in my own life. I knew miracles did happen. I remembered people saying that when God is anonymous, it's called "coincidence." I thought of the coincidences in my life, such as practicing the fatal disease of addiction until recovery was available to me. The coincidence that I blocked out all memory of the incest and other abuse until I was surrounded by loving people and other resources to help me heal from those wounds. There are many, many more "coincidences" in my life.

Prayer is simply entreating or humbly asking for something. God is simply a short term that implies some sort of spiritual power. No one has to believe in a religious God, but to fully recover it seems a belief in a spiritual power of some sort is necessary.

I hope that all of you out there reading this will remember that NA is a spiritual, not religious, program. No one is required to believe anything in any certain way. I pray that CW and others will let themselves into our spiritual fellowship, rather than standing on the outside, blam-

ing NA for their difficulty with the Second Step. Let yourself be loved, let yourself be a part of the NA way of living clean.

DB, Indiana

We're all the most important person

Recently I joined a new home group called Basic Recovery. Since almost all of our members have over five years clean we are considered a controversial group. Some concerned addicts believe that we are being selfish in attending this group. It is their contention that these "experienced" members would best serve the fellowship in the other home groups in our area.

I consulted my sponsor, hoping he could shed some light on this concept. He said that maybe we need each other.

After I gave it some thought a few questions came to mind. What motives did the members have for joining the group? Are the oldtimers being separated and discriminated against due to their clean time? Are other groups actually suffering due to a lack of experienced members?

I believe we are all addicts and therefore the same in that sense.

Newcomers, oldtimers, and middle-timers are words that cause separation. It says in the Basic Text that the most important person in any meeting is the newcomer. I think that an addict with three years clean could be suffering as much as any newcomer. It is sad that some addicts view us as those damn oldtimers who joined that group to keep all of the recovery for themselves. In being diplomatic and supportive we will find a lot more truth than being hostile and judgmental toward others. Recovery isn't easy. We can't afford to get diverted from our primary purpose: carrying the message to the still-suffering addict, no matter how long he or she has been clean.

SD, Pennsylvania

It just takes two

I've been noticing a trend in the last couple of years in my area that disturbs me a great deal. It seems that some people have decided that a certain number of people must be present before a meeting can happen. Recently I asked a sponsee how the meeting was that she went to the night before. She told me that only three people showed up, so they decided to lock up and go home. Three people? That sounds like a meeting to me.

I told my sponsee a story about a newcomer who was brought to her first meeting by another addict one Sunday morning. They arrived forty-five minutes late to find one addict in the room, reading a Basic Text. That addict immediately handed out the readings and began a meeting, which lasted for the next hour with just the three of them. The newcomer asked the chairperson to be her sponsor that day and they stayed clean together for the next three years. My sponsee said, "Oops, I forgot." You see, three years ago she was that newcomer and I was the chairperson.

When I first came around I heard two things about meetings: that it just takes two to have a meeting, and once you arrive at a meeting you don't leave before the miracle happens. It doesn't matter if you spend an hour alone with your Higher Power—that's two. It doesn't matter if the person with the key doesn't show up—some areas have regularly scheduled outdoor meetings. It doesn't matter if there's no coffee, no meeting format, no chairs, or whatever. Once you're at a meeting you stay there and have a meeting.

Despite all this, I am hearing more and more people say that a meeting didn't happen because only a few people came. What about the newcomer who gets lost or scared and shows up late? What about the person who is shaky and needs a meeting now before they use? Don't they matter anymore? Did we drop the Fifth Tradition while I wasn't paying attention?

Anonymous

On conventions and financial responsibility

I went to my first convention in 1986. I had about five months clean and was living in a halfway house. Because I was unemployable long before I came into NA, I was still without a lot of spending money. Consequently, my new recovering friend and I stayed in the basement of the university's athletic building where dozens of folding cots were set out for newcomers without means to pay for a room. We slept little and laughed all weekend. A member with more resources than I gave me a banquet ticket and for the first time I experienced a clean-time countdown. My heart soared and pounded as I stood shouting, "Keep coming back" to the person at the banquet with one day clean. I felt so alive. On Sunday morning, we sat and listened as someone with more clean time than we dared allow ourselves to think we could have, spoke about recovery. The

addict shared about NA hugs, and how if we could only keep the hugs going in our hearts we could change the world. We were moved, as I still am when I replay that tape and remember my first convention.

Now, several years later, I no longer live in that halfway house, nor that small town. Instead, I am a member of a large, metropolitan region. Along with my residence, many things in my life have changed dramatically. My experience with the Eighth and Ninth Steps has taught me many things. Not the least of these is my viewpoint on responsible celebration. Specifically, I now realize the importance of celebrating life while not causing others harm in any way. I must not continue to live my life without considering how my actions impact others or NA as a whole. This brings me to the reason I am writing.

In the past two years, our regional convention committee has lost thousands and thousands of dollars. Fortunately, the regional service office has been sufficiently solvent to protect the convention committee from the properly outraged creditors gathering at the door. It is no small concern that funding for the RSO comes from a variety of places, including literature sales to organizations outside the NA community. In addition to the financial woes, several hotels in the city have respectfully told us not to keep coming back. Unfortunately, there is a laundry list of reasons for this. Too often addicts express indifference when they learn that we have been asked not to return to this hotel or that one. Or, recover-

ing people are shocked to find out that we have worn out our welcome. For example, our group service representative was somewhat reluctant to read the regional service committee minutes containing the bad news to our home group and report the trouble we were in. As he expected, the group's members were surprised and very disappointed.

The convention of 1992 was particularly embarrassing. While many of the members were still reeling from the financial irresponsibility of 1991, we sat and listened as our GSRs reported that once again the RSO would be forced to pay creditors because several thousand dollars of cash and merchandise were unaccounted for. This time, the motions requesting dissolution of the convention committee poured into the regional service committee through the area service committee meetings and eventually one such motion passed in the region. There was to be no convention in our region the next year. Many of us felt a loving God had been expressed in our group conscience. In 1994, the region again decided not to hold a convention. However, the committee has recently been reformed and plans are underway for a convention in 1995.

Throughout the fellowship, many areas and regions are learning to hold conventions. I know the individuals involved are dedicating countless hours of their precious time. However, it is my opinion that we may be pursuing positions of money (registration chair), property (merchandising chair), and prestige (program com-

mittee chair) without regard to our continued economic stability and community image. Perhaps this is simply a matter of redirecting our efforts through shared understanding and communication.

My experience with conventions has caused me both tremendous joy and great despair. In this period of unprecedented growth, worldwide expansion, and rapid change, I think we should stop and look at one of our high-profile and potentially very expensive activities. If NA is going to be here for a long time, and I believe we are, then I think we should begin to think about the whole community, not just our celebration of recovery. We have put the old lie, "Once an addict, always an addict" to rest. We have gained the respect of medical and legal communities. Now we must convince the countless civic and business organization that we can also be financially responsible. After all, it's not where we were that counts, but where we are going.

ED, Pennsylvania

From our readers



Strength, hope, and courage

I've a story to share and hope that maybe it'll touch another's life. I've had AIDS for nearly two and a half years now, but what's ironic is that I didn't have any follow-up test after just the first test. The results of my first test were negative so I assumed all was well. Unfortunately, eight months ago I started to develop symptoms of HIV infection. So I went and was tested again. The shocker was that my test came back negative again. I asked the doctors how this could be. They explained that the test got mixed up with someone else's or was read wrong.

I've been clean since 11 January 1990. I've had no unsafe sex and used no needles. Yet I'm infected and have TB MAI (a serious type of tuberculosis). If it wasn't for NA in my life, I believe I'd go out. My Higher Power and the principles of Narcotics Anonymous give me strength, hope, and courage. I will not give up.

Recently I was close to death and had to be hospitalized. I had never before felt so helpless and afraid. I really thought I was going to die and I cried for two days. Funny, but it took this happening for me to break down and cry: I hadn't cried in three and a half years of recovery.

My Higher Power gave me all I

needed: friends, sponsor, the Twelve Steps, and faith. The power in Narcotics Anonymous is unbelievable. The faith that I have today helps me live. I'm ever so grateful for every day I breathe. True, I'm afraid, but I believe I won't suffer. My God and my NA brothers and sisters give me the love I need so desperately now.



Through this program I've had a taste of real life. I try to live it to its fullest now, even though I know death is imminent. I won't quit! I get mad at times when I think of all I'm going to miss in the future, but then again I get great joy out of the past three and a half years. Many of us never get a chance to truly live. I thank God for what I've had and did. I pray for the faith, hope, and courage, until it's time to join Him.

If you're new in recovery and have had an AIDS test, get another after six months and every six months after that. Never trust in just one opinion. Please take care of yourselves, don't take life for granted, practice safe sex. You've got a chance for a truly amazing life in NA. God bless all of you and stay clean!

DD, California

A decade of recovery

I'm an addict called S. This week I have nine years and six months clean. I know this program is a miracle. I've maintained a subscription to the *NA Way* since I had about six months clean. However, this is my first attempt at writing. The "Meeting in Print" section has greatly enhanced my recovery. My job has me on the road often and, as scattered as meetings are in the areas to which I travel, the connection to other recovering addicts in the magazine has been lifesaving. Often in small meetings lacking a topic, reading and discussing a member's experience, strength, and hope from *The NA Way* stimulates and renews our commitment.

This past year my focus has been on carrying the message to still-suffering addicts. I regularly attend two treatment center meetings. Neither are H&I meetings. They are both regularly scheduled meetings of NA held at treatment facilities. I talk a lot about the steps and my experience with them and strongly suggest that newcomers make an honest attempt at working them. I can't, we can! You people have taught me to greet the newcomer and give out my phone number (for me, same sex). I've learned to listen and hear their pain. I've learned to contribute constructively, not to criticize. I place principles before personalities. Honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness are necessary. Pain is mandatory, suffering is optional. If I stay silent, I stay sick. There are no elevators in NA, only Twelve Steps that need to be taken slowly, surely, and safely to prevent slipping.

NA is teaching me how to live, not just exist. The great gift of sponsorship has allowed me to become a positive influence in others' lives. The joy of sharing and caring the NA way overwhelms me. I always benefit more than I possibly could have helped another addict.

If you're new or nearly new, like me, welcome to a new experience in the art of living.

Anonymous

Comin'up

Calendar						
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

AUSTRALIA

New South Wales: Sep. 30-Oct. 2; Sydney Combined Area Conv; info 61-2-552-4354; SCACNA, 72 Darghan St., Glebe, NSW, AUSTRALIA 2037

CANADA

Alberta: July 29 - Aug. 1; 5th Summer Campout; Innisfail; info (403) 342-1444

British Columbia: July 22-24; 15th British Columbia Regional Conv; info (604) 540-2610; BCRCNA-15, PO Box 399, 720 6th St, New Westminster, BC V3L 3C5

2) Oct. 28-30; 17th Pacific Northwest Conv; Vancouver; rsvns (604) 689-9211; info (604) 876-4055; PNWCNA-17, PO Box 43066, Burnaby, BC V6G 4S2

Nova Scotia: Aug. 5-7; 5th Nova Scotia Area Conv; Truro; info (902) 443-2428; PO Box 65, Halifax Central, NS B3J 2L4

Prince Edward Island: July 15-17; 5th Prince Edward Island Campout; info (902) 892-0211; Campout, 94 Oak Drive, Chiptown, Prince Edward Island C1A 7Z1

Quebec: July 1-3; 4th Canadian Conv; St-Hyacinthe; info (514) 755-2777; CCNA-4, CP 47518, Plateau Mont-Royal, Montreal, Quebec H2H 2S8

2) Oct. 7-9; 7th Quebec Regional Conv; rsvns (819) 822-1989; info (819) 563-7809; CP 463, Sherbrooke, Quebec J1H 5J7

Saskatchewan: Sep. 2-4; 8th Central Saskatchewan Area Conv; info (306) 652-5216; CSANA-8, PO Box 9718, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 7G5

MEXICO

Baja California Norte: Oct. 14-16; 2nd Baja California Conv; Tijuana; rsvns (800) 333-3333; info US 011-52 (66) 80-90-80 or in Mexico (66) 80-90-80; CBCNA-11, 1329 3rd Ave #116, Chula Vista, CA 91911

NETHERLANDS

North Holland: July 22-24; 11th European Convention and Conference; Amsterdam; rsvns 31 20 665 8181; info 31 20 665 9810; ECCNA-11, Postbus 11976, 1001 GZ Amsterdam, Netherlands

UNITED KINGDOM

England: Aug. 26-28; 8th UK Conv; England; info 071-272-9040; UKCNA-8, PO Box 1980, London, UK N19 3LS

UNITED STATES

Alabama: Sep. 8-11; 1st Greater Birmingham Area Conv; Guntersville; rsvns (205) 571-5444; info GBACNA-1, PO Box 320818, Birmingham, AL 35232

Alaska: Sep. 23-25; 10th Alaska Regional Conv; Anchorage; info (907) 248-7955; Convention Committee, 401 W International #18, Anchorage, AK 99518

Arkansas: July 1-3; 6th Central Arkansas Area Conv; Little Rock; info (501) 666-1485; CAACNA-6, PO Box 250516, Little Rock, AR 72205

California: July 16; 10th Annual Unity Day; info (707) 528-3324; SCFNA-10, PO Box 1365, Santa Rosa, CA 95402

2) July 22-24; 6th Santa Barbara Area Unity Campout; info (805) 569-1288; SBANA-AC, PO Box 22902, Santa Barbara, CA 93102

3) Aug. 20; 2nd Eastern Inland Empire Unity Day; San Bernardino; info (909) 881-2361; PO Box 328, Colton, CA 92324

Colorado: July 22-24; 7th Standing on Higher Ground Retreat; Telluride; info (303) 728-6023 or (303) 728-5711

Connecticut: July 29-31; 4th GDANA Campout; Durham; info (203) 744-5499; PO Box 2253, Danbury, CT 06813

Florida: June 30-July 4; 13th Florida Regional Conv; Jacksonville; info (407) 897-2003

2) Sep. 30-Oct. 3; 10th Year Anniversary; Tampa; rsvns (813) 623-6363; info (813) 265-2694; Anniversary, PO Box 9730, Tampa, FL 33674-9730

3) Oct. 6-9; 2nd South Florida Regional Conv; Fort Myers; info (813) 575-7751 or (305) 445-4606; SFRCNA-2, PO Box 70155, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307

Georgia: July 22-24; 12th Piedmont Area Anniversary; Macon; rsvns (912) 474-0871

2) Aug. 4-7; Midtown Atlanta Conference; rsvns (800) 228-3000; info (404) 438-6504; PO Box 1194, Stone Mountain, GA 30086

Hawaii: July 29-31; 2nd Gathering of the Fellowship; info (808) 822-0387; Gathering, PO Box 1537, Hanalei, HI 96714

2) Oct. 27-30; 3rd Hawaii Regional Conv; Maui; info (808) 878-3444; 190 Ali'iolani Street, Pukalani, HI 96768

Idaho: Aug. 5-7; 5th Snake River Valley Area Campout; info PO Box 4342, Pocatello, ID 83204

Iowa: July 1-3; 11th Iowa Regional Conv; Des Moines; rsvns (800) 532-1466; info (515) 244-2277; IRCNA-11, PO Box 764, Des Moines, IA 50303

2) Sep. 2-5; 9th SWINA; Red Oak; info (712) 323-2309 or (712) 243-1628

Kansas: Aug. 12-14; 6th Just For Today Campout; Thunderbird Marina; rsvns (913) 238-5696; info (913) 762-5108; Crossroads NA, 119 W 7th, Junction City, KS 66441

Louisiana: Oct. 21-23; 2nd NOACNA; New Orleans; rsvns (504) 523-0376; info PO Box 52212, New Orleans, LA 70152

Maine: Sep. 9-11; 11th South Maine Area Conv; Alfred; rsvns (207) 633-2081; info (207) 882-6114; SMASC-11, PO Box 5309, Portland, ME 04101

Maryland: Sep. 1-4; 24th World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous; info WCNA-24, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409

Massachusetts: Sep. 30-Oct. 2; 2nd Cape Cod Area Conv; info (508) 255-1822; PO Box 684, Hyannis, MA 02601

Michigan: July 1-4; 10th Michigan Regional Conv; Lansing; info (810) 544-2010; rsvns (800) 333-8123

Missouri: July 1-3; 9th Show-Me Regional Conv; Springfield; rsvns (417) 831-2910; info SMRC-9, PO Box 8221, Springfield, MO 65801-8222

Nevada: July 15-17; 3rd CAN Area Conv; Laughlin; info (602) 754-4260; PO Box 1085, Bullhead City, AZ 86442

New Hampshire: July 22-24; 4th Campout; Camp Wakuta; info PO Box 652, Dover, NH 03820

2) Aug. 12-14; 1st Canoe Camp Trip; info Camp Trip, PO Box 652, Dover, NH 03820

New Jersey: Aug. 19-21; 4th Northern New Jersey Regional Conv; Parsippany; info (201) 676-4481; NNJRCC-4, PO Box 5064, S Hackensack, NJ 07606

New York: Aug. 26-28; 5th Mid-Hudson Area Conference; info (212) 691-9748

North Carolina: July 22-24; 1st New Hope Area Conv; Durham; rsvns (919) 682-2986 info (919) 682-3777; NHACNA-1, PO Box 25043, Durham, NC 27702

2) Aug. 19-21; 4th Carolina Regional H&I Awareness Weekend; Charlotte; info (910) 273-4204; rsvns (704) 392-1200

3) Sep. 30-Oct. 2; 3rd Central Piedmont Area Conv; Salisbury; rsvns (704) 637-3100; info PO Box 282, Landis, NC 28088

Ohio: Sep. 9-11; Hamilton Area Conv; info (513) 829-3915; PO Box 8594, Middletown, OH 45042-8594

Oregon: Nov. 11-13; 8th Western States Public Information Learning Days; Portland; info (503) 224-8345; PIC-8, PO Box 262, Eugene, OR 97440

Pennsylvania: Aug. 19-21; 3rd Spiritual Retreat; New Castle; info (412) 287-4161; BASC-3, PO Box 2657, Butler, PA 16001

2) Nov. 18-20; 12th Tri-State Area Conv; info Call Collect (412) 322-5337; TSSRO, 24 Woodville Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15220

Puerto Rico: July 22-24; 5th Puerto Rico Regional Conv; rsvns (809) 721-1000; info (809) 763-5919

Texas: July 1-3; 2nd Houston Area Conv; Houston; rsvns (800) 822-4200 or (713) 875-2222; info HACNA-2, PO Box 147, Houston, TX 77008

2) Sep. 16-18; 7th Best Little Region Conv. Washington: July 1-3; 10th Western States Unity Conv; Seatac; rsvns (800) 228-9290; info 17650 140TH Ave SE, Box B6-373, Renton, WA 98058

2) July 1-4; 6th Blue Mountain Retreat; Anatone; info (208) 746-9726; 428 5th Street Apt. #1, Lewiston, ID 83501

3) Sep. 16-18; 11th Spiritual Connection; Oak Harbor; info (206) 428-7171; NPSA, PO Box 1001, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273

Wisconsin: Oct. 14-16; 11th Wisconsin State California Conv; rsvns (800) EM-BASSY; info (414) 437-5664; WSNAC-11, PO Box 12503, Green Bay, WI 54303

Wyoming: Sep. 23-25; Unity Conv; info (307) 789-7746; CUNA Convention, PO Box 2792, Rock Springs, WY 82901

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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.

Twelve Traditions reprinted for adaptation by permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

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

What is Narcotics Anonymous?

NA is a nonprofit 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. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only one requirement for membership, the desire to stop using. We suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that they work.

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