

THE NA Way MAGAZINE®

February 1994

\$1.75 US, \$2.50 Can

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MESSAGE

The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous

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

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THE NA Way MAGAZINE®

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The NA Way Magazine welcomes the participation of its readers. You are invited to share with the entire NA Fellowship in our monthly international journal. Send us your experience in recovery, your views on NA matters, and feature items. All manuscripts submitted become the property of World Service Office, Inc.

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Subscription rates, 1 yr. \$15, 2 yrs. \$28, 3 yrs. \$39, single copies \$1.75. Canada 1 yr. \$20, 2 yrs. \$37, 3 yrs. \$52, single copies \$2.25. Please inquire about bulk rates.

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The NA Way Magazine is published monthly by World Service Office, Inc., 16155 Wyandotte Street, Van Nuys, CA 91406. Second class postage paid at Van Nuys, CA and other points. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to The NA Way Magazine, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999.



From the editor

NA history

Yes, something's missing—the "NA History" column—both from last month's issue and this one.

The column began in June with the publication of "NA Historical Tour," and has included a recounting of NA's beginnings in a couple of locales along with some WSO archives: minutes of our founding business meetings, etc.

We haven't published the column for the past two months because we don't have any material. The column was never intended to be strictly a forum to print WSO archives; rather we were hoping that some of you might contribute the history of your region or area.

Unless we receive more material from the fellowship, the "NA History" column will appear only infrequently from now on. We'd love to print it regularly but we need to hear from you to do so. Direct all manuscripts to *The NA Way*.

November Newslines and Product Supplement

If you receive the *Newslines*, you should be aware of a problem within the 1993-94 product supplement that was mailed with the November issue. On page 4 there is a clip-out order form for *The NA Way Magazine*. However, the actual form doesn't have the magazine's name on it so when it ar-

rives at our fulfillment house, they are unsure what is being ordered. In addition, some checks are coming in made out to "subscriber services."

This is our oversight and we do apologize for it. We hope that you'll help us by informing people who might be planning to use the form that checks should be made out to *The NA Way Magazine* and that *NA Way* should be written on the order form itself.

Letters to the editor

In the October 1993 issue of *The NA Way*, we notified you that we would publish letters to the editor that specifically address editorial concerns or comment on policy in this column. Here's one we recently received.

Dear editor,

I believe that the policy to censor our use of any words that reflect our heritage from AA such as: "alcohol, sober, sobriety, clean and sober, AA," is not the place of our magazine. We clearly state that we want to "present the experiences of individual members" and it is not to be attributed to NA as a whole. The problem is that by this intolerant policy, we are not allowing our members to share anything of real substance.

One member tried to tell me that to say, "I'm an alcoholic and an addict," (which I do at both AA and NA) is tantamount to saying "I've just had

breakfast and Coco Puffs." And, you know, I agreed with that—except when I say, "I'm an alcoholic and an addict." I am using this as a point of identification. I mean that I used alcohol and other drugs—socially acceptable and street drugs. I want other women who used legal and illegal drugs to know they can approach me. It's like a person saying, "I'm and alcoholic and a pill head," or "I'm a junkie," or "I'm a speed freak and anything-else-I-could-shove-in-my-face freak." That's not only acceptable, but *preferable* to me. No, it has nothing to do with Steps Two through Eleven, but it does have something to do with Step One and Twelve. It has a lot to do with telling it the way it was and remembering specifically where we came from. If it were not so, I could simply say, "Hi, I'm Shelly." But I need to remind myself of these specific things and I choose to be a touch more specific than some and less specific than others. To me I am saying, "I was addicted to socially acceptable drugs and to street drugs." It is my choice and an important one to *my* recovery. Why are the tools of my recovery for the last twenty-five years being censored? I don't care how others choose to identify themselves and recover, why are some interfering with me and my HP? Why are we doing it in *our* magazine—*The NA Way*?

Sincerely,
Shelly M.

Editor's response: Our editorial policy calls for four standard cuts. Explicit sexual references, references to excretion, and vulgar language are generally cut as a courtesy to our readers. Other cuts are made in keep-

ing with NA's understanding—expressed through specific changes to our literature and other avenues—of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Where "sober," "sobriety," "addict/alcoholic," or other similar terms are used, we substitute standard NA language such as "clean," "recovery," and "addict." Mentions of specific drugs are usually deleted. As for grammatical editing, we do this so that stories are easily understandable to as many readers as possible.

If you have questions or comments about *The NA Way* editorial policies, you can write us at:

The NA Way Magazine
Box 9999
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USA

Phone calls to the editor

On a related matter, we received a phone call a few days ago regarding the cover text on the back of the November 1993 issue. The text used for that issue was handwritten by the artist and happened to be a paraphrase of "What is the NA Program?" that had been used on the back cover at one time. It seemed acceptable to me at the time, but after receiving a complaint from one of our readers, I had a conversation with the former editor of the magazine. He informed me that some controversy about the cover text had arisen several years ago resulting in a decision to use only the approved text from the White Booklet on the back cover. I would like to apologize for this oversight and thank the reader who made me aware of it.

CS, Associate Editor

Basic training

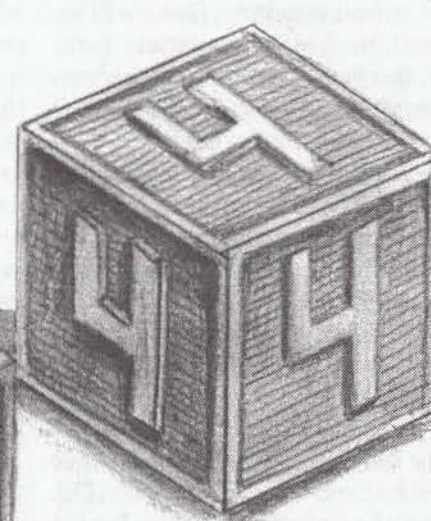
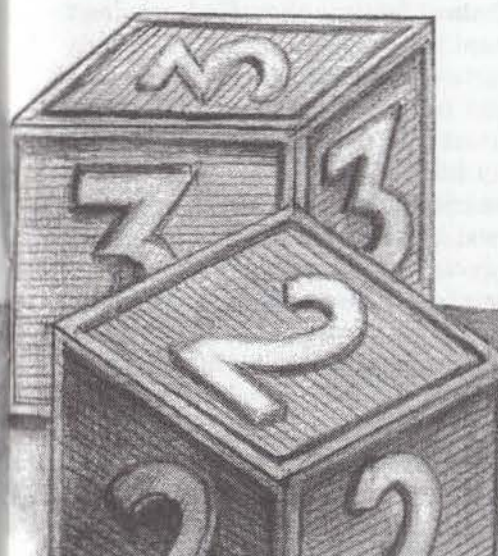
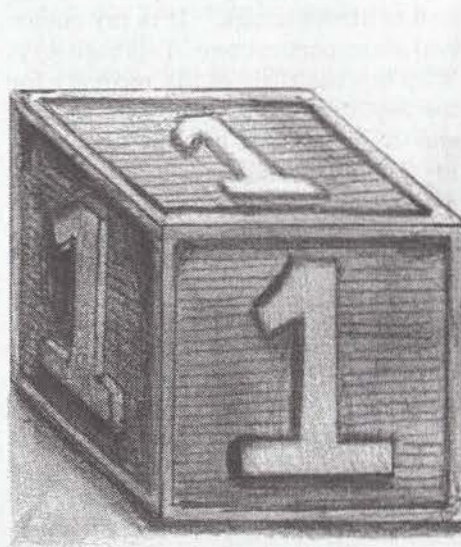
I am a recovering addict. I wrote to you about nine months ago, thirty-three days after a relapse. I'm very grateful to report that I am still clean, thanks to the grace of God and the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

These last several months have been different from the 7½ months of clean time I had prior to my relapse. I have not experienced the proverbial pink-cloud syndrome as I did before, although the first time around I could have sworn that the cloud was not pink, but twenty-four-carat gold with a diamond-encrusted lining.

This time I have experienced a slow, steady recovery based on what my sponsor calls "the basics." These include regular attendance at meetings, daily prayer, accepting opportunities to be of service, and writing on the Twelve Steps.

I mostly attend my home group, which meets four times a week at lunchtime. This is a real blessing for me in many ways. It allows me to be home at night to spend time with my family, time where I can learn about and accept God's will for me as a husband and a father. It also allows

me ample opportunity to be of service, whether it's setting up the room, making coffee, chairing the meeting, or cleaning up afterward. I've had the chance to do them all, and in doing them I've learned valuable lessons in humility, selflessness, and gratitude. At first, I didn't like doing menial tasks such as setting up chairs or making coffee. I wanted jobs that would put me in the spotlight and bring me recognition, as if that would increase my self-worth and dignity. It was revealed to me that there is as much dignity in emptying an ashtray as there is in being a group service representative or a committee chairperson. The dignity I sought was not found in the job itself, but in what I brought to it. I've since become more willing to do any small job that needs doing, knowing that in some way it helps me to recover and carry the message of recovery.



When I first started in the program, I was told to hit my knees and pray first thing in the morning and to do it again before I went to bed at night. I was very willing to do this and I did it regularly for months. Over the past few months I've slacked off in this practice. I do still pray daily, although it's not always the first thing in the morning or the last thing at night and it's not always on my knees. I'm not sure if this is a sign of complacency or not. At this point I tend to think that it isn't. My prayers are often short, just affirming the first Three Steps and asking for my Higher Power's guidance and protection throughout the day. Sometimes they are short prayers of gratitude for another day clean and gratitude for the things in life that I often take for granted; things like my wife and children, my job, the roof over my head and the clothes on my back, the

food on the table, my sponsor, and my home group. I hope to return to the discipline and spiritual practice of starting and finishing my day by kneeling in prayer. It helps me to remember that today is the only day with which I need to concern myself.

The work through which my sponsor has guided me on the steps since my relapse has been rewarding, thorough, painstaking, and, at times, a real pain in the ass. Before I relapsed, I was working the steps as *quickly* as I possibly could. Unfortunately, I wasn't working them thoroughly. After my relapse, my sponsor suggested that something was missing in my program, probably in my application of the first three steps. He said that if I was willing, we would go back through them together with a fine-tooth comb, making every possible effort to leave no stone unturned. So I went back to the First

Step, writing out the words of the step and the definition of each one before I did anything else. I thought that I was a pretty smart guy and knew what the words meant, but I got an education by using the dictionary. After writing out several items and instances of powerlessness and unmanageability in my life, the totality of it all hit me like a ton of bricks. And, man, did it piss me off! I mistakenly thought that I had no say in my own life, that it was some cruel cosmic joke that some people could run their own lives just fine but that I was forever doomed to being a powerless junkie. I cried tears of frustration and rage, demanding an answer from God. The answer He gave me is this: I am blessed with the power of choice. How I use this power is totally up to me. Used selfishly and within the confines of my own will, the power of choice is a curse, ripe for abuse, and will lead me back to the path of self-destruction. However, when I choose recovery, God's will for me, and to live by spiritual principles, the power of choice is a blessing, leading me into a life of true freedom that I never dreamed possible. It was at this point that my anger at being an addict began to be replaced with gratitude. I became grateful that, instead of seeing myself as a "powerless junkie," I was now free to be a recovering addict. What a burden was lifted from me at that time!

My work on the Second Step was greatly aided by the reminder I got from other recovering addicts: The process of coming to believe that a

Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity is just that, a process.

Over a period of weeks, I again looked up and wrote out the definitions of the words to the Second Step and my previous concept—the one that didn't work—of a Higher Power. I accepted my need to be restored to sanity, since my writing on the First Step and my relapse had revealed that I was sorely lacking in sanity. I began to sense a new faith and trust in a Higher Power and in the recovering addicts whose help I sought. I shared my work with my sponsor and he told me that I was now ready to do the Third Step.

I think that the first time I did the Third Step, what I was really turning over to my God was my addiction to drugs. I'm sure that there were things that I wanted to hang on to so that I could call them my own and take credit for them. There were probably also things that I hung on to out of shame, fearing that God wouldn't want anything to do with those ugly parts of my life. I realized that this was because I still had some ideas about God that no longer worked in my life. In fact, some of the ideas contributed directly to feelings that I used drugs over. Before I could make a decision to turn my life and my will over to the care of God, I first had to get an understanding of God that I could work with, live with, and trust. My sponsor recommended that I pray that God would reveal Himself to me as He would have me see Him. Before very long I had the understanding and the God I had prayed for.

One day, shortly after that, as I was driving to a meeting, I realized that I had the willingness to turn my whole life and all of my will over to God as I now understood Him. The fears that I would become some kind of religious fanatic, or that my life would change in ways not to my liking were gone. So as I drove along, I prayed, telling God that my life and my will were now His to do with as He pleased, and asking Him to accept my will and my life just as they were at that moment. I experienced a sense of calmness and assurance that I had just done the right thing. I've had my times of selfishness and self-will but, when I take the time to review and remember just Who is in charge, and how much I trust Him, and how He had never failed me, I am again reminded that I am in the care of One who loves me and cares for me like no other can.

As much as I wanted to bask in the warm feelings that I now had, my sponsor reminded me that I needed to move on to Step Four. I went through a period of weeks where I resisted putting pen to paper. I felt that since I had been so brutally honest in my previous Fourth Step, revealing my most shameful secrets, there couldn't possibly be much to write about at this point. How wrong I was! My sponsor directed me to use the Narcotics Anonymous Fourth Step Guide. When I finally began writing I became aware that I still had resentments, things about which I felt guilty and ashamed, fears, relationship problems, denial, self-centeredness, and a host of other

issues that needed to be examined. I'm still in the process of writing this Fourth Step. At times it has been a frustrating experience. I have even had periods of many days where I have done no writing on it at all. Sometimes I have rationalized that, by taking my time like this, I am less likely to miss anything, that I am using the fine-tooth-comb approach. I now think that this step deserves more consistent attention than I have been giving it. I am getting close to the final section of the guide, where I will list my assets and I'm sure that this part will be more extensive than the first one that I did. I think that the more thorough approach that I have taken these last few months, the increased honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness I've experienced, and the passage of time has made me aware that I am a better person and that I have more to offer than I have ever been willing to admit. I look forward to spending time in the next few days finishing my Fourth Step and then getting together with my sponsor for a Fifth Step.

These basics that I have been learning and practicing over the past few months have given me the freedom from active addiction that I had searched for in all the wrong places and hoped for against all hope.

Today, my hope and prayer for myself and all addicts seeking recovery is that these basic practices become as much a part of our daily lives as eating, sleeping, and breathing, so that we never lose our precious freedom.

A day in the life of an H&I volunteer

Sometimes I ask myself why I race from work, without eating, and go out to that facility every week? Why do I deal with the task of calling and asking people to go with me? Why do I go to a place and spend an hour locked up with people who just came off the street, or people who are so far in denial they seem hopeless, or some who don't really want to listen to me?

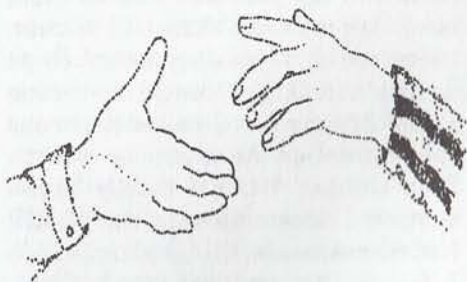
The answer is, because I feel so good after the meeting. H&I work, as well as other forms of service, gives me gratitude. Doing H&I work helps me to get out of my self-centeredness, forget my problems for a while, and carry the message of recovery. H&I reminds me that I am the same as "those people." We have the disease of addiction, which we can either fight and be miserable or surrender and then do something about it—change through working the steps!

Service is an important tool of my recovery. Without it something is missing. It, however, is not more important than—or a replacement for—step work, meetings, sponsor-

ship, Basic Text reading, writing, prayer and meditation, contact with newcomers, and daily phone contact with another addict. Without one or more of these tools, the job isn't getting done.

I become concerned when I look around our area and see many who are accumulating time, but do not appear to be involved in service. Call it inventory taking if you will, but I feel that if my fellow addicts could experience the benefits of carrying the message, then all would be involved. I can't describe the feeling I get when I see someone who is locked up and hungry for recovery. They want it but they are not able to attend meetings like we are; they are dependent on us. I can't describe the feeling I get when someone says, "Please, please come back, we are so grateful to have this meeting." It brings tears to my eyes, because I don't want anyone to die from this disease. No one has to. As long as they are somewhere they can hear the message, they have a chance to live and even learn how to enjoy life.

Anonymous



Worth it!

I remember one of my trips to a detox center. I had to lie to get in. I had to say that the only drug I used was the alcohol. I needed the bed, so I lied. I agreed to attend two meetings a day if I could get out of bed.

I was in detox only five days. On my third night there, some NA members came into this detox center. I remember that meeting well. I thought each of the panel members was talking about me. It turned out that NA members only brought a meeting to this detox once a month.

Since then I have become gratefully involved in H&I service work. My most recent H&I commitment at the local juvenile detention hall is what I want to share with you.

I got involved because I was new to the area and wanted to get to know the people who had something I wanted. I remember disliking the detention hall. I didn't want to go back. I did go several more times, but always felt like I needed a meeting afterwards.

The kids at the detention hall didn't, and still don't, like us. They are young, arrogant, and think they are indestructible. Sometimes they are unkind and hurt my feelings, but my attitude has changed drastically since those early days. I realize that many of us don't get here in the best place, or always really wanting re-

covery. Even so, something we hear can change our lives, sometimes without our knowing it.

Usually the panel leader and myself are the only NA members to go to the detention center. It is my belief that there is no hope if no one carries the message into places like this. Today I believe there is hope for all people.

I often hear that the detention center meeting is a "tough" meeting. Most NA members have never had the privilege of going. I have learned much tolerance, patience, understanding, gratitude, love, and hope through being of service at that meeting. I know that the kids haven't necessarily changed. But I have! I now look forward to each meeting there. I always get something out of it.

Occasionally I see a person that was once in the detention hall at a regular meeting. Or, sometimes, they stop in my work and ask me if I remember them! Once I was pulled aside by an addict who told me of six more arrests after hearing me share, but the memory of something I said made this addict come back and put ninety days clean together. There is no feeling greater than what I felt after hearing that. The message of hope and the promise of freedom from active addiction are truly alive and well.

Please don't let our message fall silent. You never know who might be listening! H&I service is a way to remain grateful and clean. It's worth it, worth it, worth it! Gratefully recovering,

JM, Washington



I was just reading *The NA Way*, and decided that I should write down what's happening in my life and send it in.

I realize that the story I am about to tell is not very inspiring and probably not too positive, but it's the way I've been feeling and it's part of my story.

I've been in recovery for many years. I am married to another recovering addict and we have a nice house. Everything between my husband and me is super. Sometimes I'm afraid I will wake up and find that it's all been a dream. Other than a few money problems, from which many seem to be suffering these days, everything is wonderful. I'm expecting our first child. We are both healthy and doing well.

With a life like this I should just be grateful. I should have no complaints. I don't, really. It's just that I'm afraid my recovery is suffering. I haven't attended very many meetings lately; I haven't wanted to go. I feel real burnt out. The things I seem to enjoy today are not NA-oriented: I like being home, I like my job and career, I like cooking dinner for my family. I

seem to find things I'd rather do than attend a meeting.

I still do other things for my recovery. I read the *Just for Today* book every morning, and still enjoy *The NA Way* stories. I know that none of these things would be possible if NA hadn't saved my life. If there weren't people to open the meetings, I wouldn't be where I am today.

Recently, some of my close friends have stopped attending meetings. Later, sometimes much later, they go out and use. I don't want this to happen to me. I don't have a service commitment for the first time in years. I quit chairing my weekly meeting and, at the time, was grateful to be done. I just felt like I needed a break. Now I don't know how to rekindle that interest in meetings. The positive thing about service is that it keeps us involved. I've heard others talk about burning out but I can't remember hearing what they did to get through it.

I've also realized that I don't have much in common with my sponsor, and maybe it's time for me to move on. But I feel too guilty to tell her it's time for me to move on. That's another story in itself. Well, maybe there's other addicts out there who are in my situation. I hope that this will all be over soon and I can write and tell you I'm attending meetings again. For now, I realize I have some work ahead of me.

There will be a new person in my life soon and I want to be as healthy and stable as I can, because I've been told these new little lives can be very demanding. God bless you all.

TT, South Dakota

Elevator out of order— use the steps

Today I'm a grateful recovering addict. I work the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous. The steps give purpose to my new life and help fill the void that drugs once occupied. They help me to understand that I cannot recover by myself, that my way doesn't work. I became willing to accept a God of my understanding and became willing to follow His will. I learned that the value of one addict helping another is one of the keys to recovery in NA.

By admitting I was powerless and believing that there was a Higher Power that could restore me to sanity, I realized that I could not get clean on my own. My best thinking got me here so, reluctantly, I listened to what others had to say. What I heard was that by turning over my will and following the Twelve Steps I can learn to live a new way of life without drugs.

The first NA meetings I attended were boring and uncomfortable but, as I kept coming back, I realized that by using the steps as a guide I was able to rid myself of idle time and

boredom. As I wrote my Fourth Step, I learned to accept myself as I am. I became better aware of my defects and started to work on them. Step Five gave me a feeling of freedom and relief. I released guilt, anger, resentments, and no longer felt ashamed to talk about personal issues.

In working the steps I learned that I am not responsible for my disease, but I am responsible for my recovery. Physically and mentally ready isn't enough, however, I must be spiritually ready to recover and stay clean, which takes time. I didn't become addicted overnight.

Working the steps also prepares me to make amends to the ones I harmed. I first thought I deserved respect, but I learned that I must be humble and earn it. I take a daily inventory so I can stay aware of my defects and work on them. Those who don't remember the past are doomed to repeat it.

Steps Eleven and Twelve remind me that I can't keep it unless I give it away. Whenever I share, I ask for my HP's help. I do service work so I can carry out His will for us. I came into these rooms physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually bankrupt. My spiritual awakening has given me a vision of hope that I never saw in my days of using. By following these steps, in the order they are written, in my daily life, I am able to redefine what living means to me. Honestly, open-mindedly, and willingly is how I did it. Anyone who wants it can do it, too. Just use the steps! It works if you work it.

RC, New York

From a different world

Recovery is alive and well at the federal prison in which I am incarcerated.

The New Directions group of Narcotics Anonymous is held here every Sunday evening. We currently have approximately twenty-five inmates who attend on a regular basis, but our meeting is always growing.

Now this isn't exactly an "open" meeting, if you know what I mean. However, we do have many wonderful "outside" speakers and guests who take the time to get clearance so they can come in and share their experience, strength, and hope.

For those of you who have never been of service in a prison fellowship, I strongly urge you to consider it. The federal prison system is nothing like a "Hollywood prison" or a TV movie. Instead, it's more like a college campus. It's a place where recovery can root and grow without the distractions of the outside world.

Many, many times our outside guests have said it's the best meeting

they've ever attended. We're serious about our recovery. We share real strength and hope from our hearts. There are no brownie points for attending our meeting. We don't get time off for playing the game. What we get is another day of clean living. That's a precious gift for an addict like me and I cherish it with all my heart.

Yes, I love NA. The fellowship saved my life.

We also are able and willing to give what was freely given to us. We are having a mini-conference soon at this prison. Thirty outside guests from all over the state of Oregon have been cleared to come in, thanks to the support of the prison administration. Hundreds of inmates will have the opportunity to experience the fellowship, many for the first time.

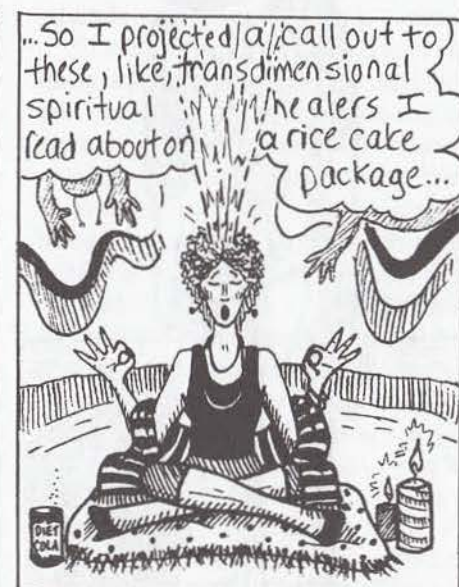
Well, my friends, I've got to go, but I'll write again soon and I hope to meet some of you as we walk the road of recovery. May God bless you until then.

CA, Oregon



Home Group

Denilah's Seventh Step





Every once in a while we like to feature events happening around the fellowship. We recently received this story from an addict in the Florida Region who was a part of the committee that put on Florida's first all-subcommittee awareness weekend.

Whether you're on a subcommittee that is currently planning a similar event or a trusted servant who has already been through the usually sleepless experience of working at a weekend event, you're sure to find some valuable experience in the following story.

In loving service

Friday night: It's after 2 a.m. and, as far as I can tell, I'm the only one still up on the first night of our region's first all-subcommittee awareness weekend. When we counted the registrations after the meeting we got really excited—forty-two people registered already!

This concept of the subcommittees working together on service awareness seems to be successful. Unity works!

I'm seriously hyped! My sponsor claims that I haven't talked about anything but this event for weeks. I've announced it at every meeting for months, I've spent the last two or three weeks calling addicts all over the state, as well as the staff of the WSO for input and help. In short, I've done everything I was supposed to as best as I could. I know the other members of the committee have also been working really hard.

The people attending all seem really excited about being here. All the individual subcommittee presentations are happening tomorrow. I'm supposed to share at the "What is H&I?" session. I'm scared to death and I haven't got a clue about what

I'm going to say. I'd better go to sleep so I can pay attention.

Saturday Night: It's 1:30 a.m. I've learned one really important lesson so far—not to work on a convention committee! Three hours of sleep last night, two hours this afternoon, and I have to be up and going by 7 a.m! The workshops were scheduled one at a time so no one would have to choose between one subcommittee and another. We had the usual late start for the first workshop, "Helpline." We had a six-foot beeper making beeping sounds with a flashing red light at the front of the room to get people's attention and we demonstrated some calls. Luckily, the "Literature Review" session took less time than scheduled so we stayed pretty much on time for the rest of the day.

The literature chairperson and I are both NA Way Networkers, so he asked me to share about *The NA Way*. I had to admit to everyone that I hate to loan or give away my copy of the magazine. I can't seem to stop with just one story; I have to read the whole thing no matter how determined I am to make it last longer. It seemed to go over well and we did find four or five subscriptions cards in the box at the end of the session.

After lunch we played a game. PI asked what we called "The Twelve Questions of NA." It was really fourteen questions taken from *The NA Way*, the Basic Text, and the PI guidelines. A lot of people found out they didn't know as much as they thought they did! Thanks to WSO staff for suggestions on where to research the questions and answers.

H&I had five speakers covering "H&I History," "What is H&I?," "How it Works," "How I was Introduced to H&I," and "How H&I Service has Enriched My Recovery." I survived my part and realized I knew exactly what to say when the time came.

Then a break (naptime! my grandsponsor woke me up in time to get dressed for the evening), a speaker, and a dance. We ended up with ninety-nine registrations. Wow!

Sunday evening: I'm home, exhausted, excited. Our "All Subcommittee Superskit" this morning demonstrated how all of the different subcommittees interrelate and how necessary they are to each other and to carrying the message. We did a skit where a member acting the part of a practicing addict went from the street through the court system, to jail meetings, and into recovery. The literature review committee covered IPs that pertain to H&I and PI, which were used later in the skit. Also in the skit, PI made a presentation to a judge who sentenced one addict to five years in NA service and another to attend meetings while he did a year in jail. The helpline committee oriented a beeper carrier who answered the addict's call. H&I's part of the skit featured a panel orientation to do institutional meetings. The panel then carried a meeting to jail, where our "addict" decided he really wanted this recovery thing, then he got a ride to a meeting on the outside with the assistance of the helpline. The end of the skit was the beginning of his recovery.

By the time we broke up the circle at noon we'd all learned a little, got-

ten a little closer, and truly had a good time. Everything we did was unrehearsed and very loosely planned—and it worked! Everyone did exactly what they know how to do to best: carry the message of recovery in whatever area of service that they have found best suits them.

When I accepted the nomination as secretary of this subcommittee, all I saw in my future was taking notes at meetings and maybe keeping track of the registrations in my computer, jobs that are low-profile and that I know how to do well. I never dreamed that I would be asked to share my experience, strength, and hope in two different subcommittee presentations. I still feel like the new kid on the block at the regional level. I still think that surely there are lots of people who have much more to give.

Before this weekend, I felt that the people who have been in service for a long time would think I was pushing myself to the front so I kept trying to stay in the background, but the chairperson "encouraged" (delegated, volunteered, drafted) me to do things like be the stage manager/narrator of the superskit. By the time it was all over I had learned a lot about these "service junkies."

I'm learning to not be intimidated by those who have been in service longer than I have. I've only been showing up at regional meetings for about a year and a half, but this weekend I was repeatedly asked by people who've been in service way longer than me what I needed them to do. I didn't find those giant egos here that I'd heard about; I saw a lot

of humility. Everyone who was asked to participate seemed truly surprised that their experience was what we wanted to hear, yet these same people have been involved in the segment of service that we asked them to share on for years at the area and regional levels. No one behaved as though a job was beneath them. It didn't matter if they had been clean two years or twenty-two, each was happy to have been asked to serve in any capacity, whether it was taking registrations, selling T-shirts, or playing an inmate in the jail meeting part of the superskit. They brought their sponsees with them, and took time to answer questions that newcomers had, encouraging them to work a program that includes sponsors, steps, and service. The hospitality suite was often empty; everyone wanted to be where the workshops were taking place. The addicts who attended the 1993 Florida Regional Awareness Weekend all shared something special, learned a little, and got a little closer to each other. The phrase, "in loving service," makes more sense to me all the time, because that is all I saw for the past three days.

Next month many of those same addicts will be with me at the regional service conference when I celebrate four years clean, still a baby but not scared to death today.

In loving service,

MT, Florida

Newsletters



Opinions

From *Free Spirit*, the Calgary, Alberta area newsletter: Opinions, opinions, opinions! There are lots and lots of opinions in recovery. Informed or not, everyone is entitled to his or hers, and has the freedom to express those opinions within the principles of NA.

One thing I am grateful for is that I do not hold the same opinions today that I formed when I first came into recovery. If I still did, in my opinion, there is no way I could be writing this. I'd probably not be in recovery; even the best-case scenario would have me a vegetable and institutionalized.

My first opinions in recovery reflected my disease. They were symptoms of what needed to be healed in my mind and in my spirit. Referring to a dictionary, I found the following definition of opinions: "judgements or beliefs; estimations; (and this I love) formal statements by an expert."

My expertise left something to be desired, so much so that the night I joined Narcotics Anonymous I saw myself as just a pot addict. It seemed such a natural extension of this obvi-

ous fact that you guys and gals should have let me waive that part about alcohol being a drug. There was no way I wanted to see beer as a problem. The gently expressed opinion of another addict—that if alcohol wasn't really a problem for me, then it shouldn't be a problem giving it up—certainly didn't agree with what my mind clung to so dearly.

Typical addict that I was, I kept arguing for my opinion, trying to change things to suit me. You can just imagine the time I have since had with life on life's terms.

The more I argued that night, the further I felt myself slipping away from the salvation NA promised. I find myself still repeating this lesson but, thank God, less often today. Simply put, the more I argue for my opinions, the more they own me. Sometimes awakening to how fiercely I defend my opinions is enough to let me know how closed-off I am being. Other times it is my own closed and stubborn mind that becomes the final club that beats me into submission and therefore a willingness to see the truth, as I teeter on the edge of that final denial.

The more I find and accept the truth, the more apparent it is that truth is self-evident, and arguing for or against does not change its existence. Also, changing an opinion

against my will leaves me still with the same opinion. The miracle of change is more in the hands of my Higher Power.

In my opinion, opinions are stepping stones on my path to truth. They serve as places where I can stand until I am able to see the next step and receive the courage or whatever else it is I need to step across. Often, like stepping stones across a creek, they are slippery and the foundation isn't always so good, as time erodes what is loose beneath the surface. Nor do opinions lead only forward. They also act as trail markers back into the confusion of my motives and values, some of which are still in need of healing.

I try to hold my opinions more loosely today. I can be more true to myself to admit that I am wrong when I am wrong. I am grateful that God has not condemned me for faulty beliefs. In fact, he has repeatedly carried me away from pride, fear, and stubbornness and on to new and, I hope, better opinions.

KH

No reason to relapse

From *The Clean Sheet*, the Dallas area newsletter: There are many who relapse. The reasons vary from the truth (I wanted to) to a lie (my girlfriend/boyfriend dumped me or my dog died.) Well, I told the lies, but soon realized the truth.

One fact is I surely wasn't hanging out with the winners. I started talking to people who were using and losing. I had heard others say they would talk to newcomers and relapsers to stay green. Not knowing what "green" meant, I just listened and followed the relapsers. (I figured they knew more than I did.) My sponsor told me to hang out with people with time. So, you see, it was my own fault and my own decision to relapse.

Another fact was the one about not working my program. I just slowly stopped reading my text. I kept forgetting to call my sponsor. I just forgot how to apply my steps in my daily life.

I did keep going to my meetings. I picked up thirty-, sixty-, and ninety-day chips. I hid my using from my boyfriend, sponsor, and parents (little did I know that those in the program knew).

I didn't realize what I was missing. I missed the famous pink-cloud experience. I wasn't learning gratitude, humility, or just living life on life's terms. I didn't know what it meant to be clean.

I finally acquired the desire to stop using. I did it for me and not a parent, boyfriend, a job, or anything like that. I finally have an honest desire to stay clean.

I now have three years clean. I have experienced the pink cloud. I learned what gratitude is and how to express it. I have felt humility and know it won't kill me to say that I am sorry when I am wrong. I am not just clean; I am recovering. Recovery means so much to me that I cannot put it on paper.

Since then my life has taken off. I have gotten married to another recovering addict. I was able to help my dad get clean through the power of example. I moved from South Florida to Dallas, Texas. Most of all, I found myself and I found my God. Things just keep happening.

I have also been in a lot of tough situations. I saw my parents divorce. I watched a stepbrother and a cousin die because of this disease. I lost twins through a miscarriage. I couldn't have handled any of these things without this program.

That's another thing I have learned. I believe pain is good. Call me crazy, but pain is good. I believe that every tear I shed is an ounce of growth. (I know I've heard that before.) Here's an example: You get fired from a job. The reason is that you are always late getting to work. You see! You have a problem to deal with. You are either lazy (which is a character defect) or your Higher Power has a better job for you. See—either way you grow.

Now that I have gone on and on, let me just make this point: There is no real reason to relapse. I do have a few hints on how not to:

- 1) Suck on your key tags until they dissolve in your mouth.
- 2) Call someone and tell them what you feel like and what you are going through.
- 3) Read "Recovery and Relapse" out of the Basic Text.

Well, you can always ask around for other suggestions. Those are my favorites. So, read your text and good luck.

MBG, Texas

A celebration

From *NA Newsletter*, the Western Massachusetts area newsletter: I waited a long time for this day to come. I just knew that when I reached the magic day, everything in my life would change. It took three hundred and sixty-five days, but I made it—one year clean today!

Guess what? Not much changed. The date on the calendar is different, and my interpretation of "just for today" is a little different, too.

Clean time is not like putting money into the bank; it draws no interest. If I pick up today, it really doesn't matter how many clean yesterdays I have; I can't cash them in.

The purpose of celebrating clean time is to remind us that NA works. The thing I sometimes forget is that it works just for today. But isn't that enough? After all, "yesterday is only a memory and tomorrow is just a dream."

So, I can "remember" that I have one year clean, and I can "dream" of the day that I'll have two, as long as I don't forget that I couldn't have made it this far without NA and continue to live my life just for today.

Anonymous

A fellowship forum on motion #39



What is motion #39?

What has come to be known as "Motion #39" is, in actuality, an entire set of complex issues surrounding the wording in our steps and traditions where God is referred to as "He" or "Him."

Motion #39 itself was presented by the Australia Region and discussed at last year's World Service Conference. 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."

As you can see, what has been suggested in Motion #39 is that where God is referred to as "He," we instead just say "God."

After some discussion by a conference working group, it was decided that the issues expressed in Motion #39 are bigger than the language used in Motion #39 and should be discussed in depth by the fellowship for a period of time. Conference participants decided to send both the motion and the working group's recommendations out to the fellowship, hoping to encourage the fellowship to talk about this motion and the issues surrounding it.

The 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.

Toward more accurate communication

Well, I see *The NA Way* is providing a forum for me to stretch out on my word processor again. I love it. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Discussions such as this one—a potential change in our steps and traditions—are really stimulating for me, plus they provide an excellent opportunity to get our members thinking about God. Gee, to get out of my usual self-obsession . . .

Allow me to throw in a disclaimer at this point. The following is simply my personal analysis of how the English language developed, why we use the words we use in our literature, and why we should consider changing some of those words.

When the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, which we adapted for our use, were written, the English language was quite different than it is today. The First Edition of AA's Big Book was published in 1939, fifty-five years ago. The tone and language of this book are, quite simply,

dated. By the way, none of this is meant as an insult to AA. Their book is chock-full of spiritual wisdom as is ours, despite the fact that both are filled with sexist language. By focusing on their recovery text, I believe I can illustrate how language both reflects and shapes our culture.

It seems to me that the Big Book was written by men for men. The chapter titled "To Wives" is probably the most obvious example I can point out here. It was simply *assumed* in 1939 that the actual members of AA were men. AA has recognized this problem and taken steps to correct it. In the most recent edition of their book a footnote is added to that chapter explaining that the chapter was written in 1939, that it "assumes that the alcoholic is likely to be the husband" and how the suggestions may be adapted for someone living with a woman alcoholic. I don't think the authors meant to exclude women because alcoholics of both genders have been welcome in AA since its beginning as far as I know. The language they used was simply a reflection of society's attitudes and beliefs at the time.

When our book was written in 1982, a chapter titled "To Wives" would have been laughably out of sync with reality. However, we have passages in our book that are both sexist and inaccurate. You see, I believe that choosing inclusive language for NA literature isn't just a gesture of goodwill to people offended by exclusive language, it's a matter of accurate communication. Inclusive language is accurate and realistic.

tic. Where is the accuracy in identifying a Higher Power or God as "Him," in the same breath as we proclaim the addict's unconditional right to arrive at his or her own understanding of God? Where is the accuracy in saying "When a member carries the message, he is somewhat bound by interpretation and personality," (Basic Text, p. 65) when women also carry the message of recovery?

Sexist language is astonishingly destructive. It promotes and maintains attitudes that stereotype according to gender. It assumes that the male is the norm—the meaningful gender. The "generic" *he* or *him*, when used to refer to a unnamed person or God, instills in us through its repetition the idea that everything of importance is male. Defenders of the "generic" *he* who argue that it means both and isn't intended to offend anyone keep ignoring the fact that it *does* offend large numbers of people.

I think that if the language in our steps and traditions truly reflected the principles of the program, no one would be offended. I have grown more and more sensitive over the years to sexist language in our literature and the god of my understanding isn't even a being, much less male or female. I can only imagine what someone whose understanding of a higher power is specifically female must feel when "God as we understand Him" is said again and again during our readings at the start of a meeting. I applaud those who brought Motion #39 to the floor of the World Service Conference. Even if the mo-

tion doesn't pass in the near future, the discussions we as an organization have about the relevant issues are certain to raise the consciousness of many.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my feelings about the God and gender issue. I trust that our organization will arrive at a solution we can all live with through its group conscience process. With love and respect,

Anonymous

Is God a woman? A man?

A light bulb?

Motion 39 provokes thought

"As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that would tear us apart, all will be well."

There is currently an issue under close scrutiny by all members of NA. It does not make any difference which "side" of Motion 39 you stand on, you will be asked to choose.

The basis for the motion is this: reference to God as "Him" as used in Steps Three, Seven, and Eleven, as well as in Tradition Two. Gender specificity is found to be offensive and objectionable to some members of Narcotics Anonymous.

The arguments on both "sides" make a lot of sense. The staunch traditionalists say "that's how it was written in those formative years of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions, and by God, that's how it should remain." However, there are many who feel that "God as we understand God" is more of a true reflection of the basic principles of the program because nobody is telling

you who or what God is. Consider, if you will, how many of us had sought help through organized religion before coming to NA? They were more than happy to tell you exactly who and what God is. As a matter of fact, it is their duty to do just that. Someone back in the days of the creation of this program had the foresight and guidance to know that "a power greater than ourselves" and "God as we understand Him" would identify the program as a nonreligious entity and allow those who came through the doors to discover or rediscover God.

The question is, are the methods which have brought recovery to a multitude of suffering men and women now antiquated and no longer useful? Should we not also look into the practice of using the Lord's Prayer for closing our meetings? Whose Father? Mother? This prayer is straight out of the Bible; for many—Muslims, Hindus, etc.—it could be offensive to their chosen beliefs. For that matter, many of us brought up in Christian homes see the usage as an outright identification with Christian values. So should we stop saying this prayer?

At our meetings, we say, "those who would care to join us" in closing the prayer—but what kind of unity can those who don't join us experience when they step back from the circle?

Did you know that the original "Serenity Prayer" doesn't mention God at all? It was written by a German philosopher named Friedrich Ghistoph Oetinger (1702-1782) and

was originally titled "Tranquilitat." Should we abandon this prayer also since it began as a "Godless" prayer?

What should be of concern is whether or not we are going to allow NA to be split into "factions." Ironically, one of the traditions in controversy has the only answer we can allow ourselves to have. Tradition Two: *For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority, a loving God as He (as may be) express(ed) Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.* (Parenthetical comments added, of course.) The "as may be" is one of the proposed changes in Motion 39. Do you feel that it makes a great deal of difference? The addict who still suffers, the newcomer who finds hope inside the doors of NA; do they understand or care about such a dilemma as Motion 39?

On the other hand, what if people come in the doors of NA and see "Him" up on the wall, find resentment, and go back out and possibly die?

These are hard questions and the answers should be left to our "loving God." We all stand; or we all fall.

Reprinted from Inside Connection, the American River area newsletter, California

Viewpoint



A vital part of NA recovery

The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous have been important to me in my recovery. In the last five years, there have been times I've had to defend myself for believing in them. I realize that I am powerless over my feelings and I recognize my part in things. However, I would like to address the part that isn't.

This article is addressed specifically to those who have a little bit of clean time and who still insist on separating the Twelve Traditions from the rest of the NA program. The Twelve Traditions protect us from our worst enemy: ourselves. Without these traditions, NA couldn't exist because they are the ties that bind us together.

One of the requirements for service in Narcotics Anonymous is "a working knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous." Being a member of NA does come with some responsibilities. I feel that one of these responsibilities is to at least be aware of the traditions.

More and more frequently, I hear labels applied to members who aren't afraid to stand up for our traditions. Sometimes members hang around outside, gossiping, and labeling others. This is old and dangerous behavior for addicts and we need to take a look at it. It's not healthy for us to set ourselves up as different from other addicts. When I was new, I focused on the differences between myself and other members. After all, that's the way most of us feel when we get here—different. As a loving fellowship, we need to focus on similarities, not differences.

For the most part, my life prior to recovery was all about rebellion and going against the grain. I never listened to anyone who had anything worthwhile to say about improving my life, especially when it involved getting clean. I compare this scenario to people in recovery who don't listen to ideas that would immensely improve the quality of their recovery. The Twelve Traditions follow the Twelve Steps, in that order, because they are a vital part of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. It's up to those of us who have a working knowledge of the traditions to set an example for newcomers and let them see just how beautiful recovery in Narcotics Anonymous can be.

TL, California

Put the NA logo on it and sell it!

NA was almost a year old in my area when I got clean over eleven years ago. I spent my first nine years clean actively involved in service to Narcotics Anonymous from the group to the world level. In the short time I've been clean I've witnessed many changes in Narcotics Anonymous in my home area as well as worldwide. Sometimes I sit with my friends, many of whom I met early in my recovery, and we talk about the "old days" and what it was like trying to stay clean in a fellowship where the oldtimers had one year clean. These were hard times, but they were also very good. Some of my best friends today are people I met within my first year clean.

I believe that most of the changes I've seen in NA have been for the best, even though I resisted them at first. From the changing of the Little White Booklet to the Fifth Edition of the "NA Book," from the green service manual to the concepts, I have, at some point, resisted these changes, but now believe they have been for the best of NA as a whole. However, one issue I can't seem to feel comfortable with is merchandising in Narcotics Anonymous.

Early in my recovery I purchased T-shirts at NA functions and participated in auctions, many times bidding more than I could afford. About eight years ago I virtually quit purchasing T-shirts and coffee mugs and

stopped participating in auctions at NA functions. I believe I have bought one NA sweatshirt in the last eight years. What I do instead is increase the amount I put in the basket at meetings; I generally put in three to five dollars a meeting or about ten dollars a week.

I quit participating in merchandising in Narcotics Anonymous because I felt the detriments far outweighed the benefits. I felt I was paying a spiritual price every time I bought an "NA T-shirt/coffee mug/jacket/underwear/etc..." I began to realize that at auctions I wanted everyone to see how much I paid and what a good guy I was. I saw huge arguments at convention committee meetings surrounding what items to merchandise and how much to charge. I actually heard one person say "Let's get all we can for these items, the idea is to make as much as we can." I saw people standing in line for hours to buy merchandise only to finally get in and find that what they wanted was sold out because several people ahead of them went in with hundreds of dollars; more resentments and arguments. I even saw a convention committee open the doors of the merchandise room an hour early for committee members only! What is wrong with this picture?

There are people in this fellowship who make their living from selling NA stuff. They go from convention to convention selling their wares. When there was talk of WSO licensing vendors who sold NA stuff there was an uproar from some of these members. Do we owe these people a living? I don't think so! More resentments and arguments.

This taping thing has really become a racket also. Over the past three years I have had the opportunity to speak at two regional conventions. I felt honored that the committees chose me without hearing my tape, because I didn't have any at the time. Well, after I spoke I had two tapes; one from each convention. One taping guy told me, as I signed the release, that my tape would only be sold at this convention. Boy, have I gotten gullible in recovery; a friend of mine bought that tape six months later at another convention. I'm angry that I was lied to and that this person made money from my story.

Two incidents involving merchandising that have happened in the past year have pained me. The first happened at my home state's regional convention; they sold NA teddy bears. I almost cried, I couldn't believe it! We used to joke that we could put a teddy bear or butterfly on anything and sell it at another twelve-step fellowship's conventions and make millions. I guess the joke was on me. The fellowship where I find my recovery is now selling teddy bears. The other thing that has happened is the "Slugg Mugg." Again my heart was pained. Does our fellowship now own the rights to a cartoon character? What kind of copyright and registration nightmares are we getting into? How long before we see Slugg's picture on some of our literature? Does NA now have a corporate icon? I hope not. He looks too much like my sponsor.

Where is all this going to end as we try to outdo one another and come up with new merchandising schemes? Our entire service structure, except the groups, depend upon merchan-

dising. However, I've heard several stories of groups selling merchandise, so maybe even our groups are not untouched by the merchandising mania. Our Seventh Tradition is a joke, the majority of the service committees in our fellowship merely pay lip service to the Seventh Tradition, and it appears that world services is leading the way.

I personally would like to see us stop merchandising altogether, but I don't believe this will happen, so what about some moderation? First of all, license all independent vendors of NA stuff and charge a licensing fee, that way some of the money will go to help fund world services. Limit merchandising to only those items that are appropriate. Please, no more NA underwear or condoms. Limit how much we purchase for resale and how much is charged; a reasonable profit of, say, fifteen to twenty-five percent is adequate. Limit how many of each item any individual can purchase. There are certain steps we can take to put spiritual principles in our merchandising.

I'm not going to lose any sleep over this issue and I won't give it much space in life; I'm much too busy. The "Slugg Mugg" order form in *The NA Way* and a cup of coffee was my inspiration. I realize not many people in the fellowship share my feelings about merchandising. I have talked with a few people about it and have gotten very little response. Those who have come in within the past eight years have probably not known anything different. Stick the NA logo on anything and sell it. I believe we can practice NA principles in all our affairs; yes, even in merchandising!

BH, Ohio

From our readers



Reality

I'm a recovering addict named Mike. I've learned that I must remember that I have a incurable disease called addiction. I must also remember that I'm human and change is uncomfortable to me.

Today my recovery is about change, changing old playgrounds, changing old behavior, and changing old attitudes.

One of the biggest changes in my recovery has been the ability to feel feelings and let them go. At times I have problems letting my feelings go. The solutions to this problem have been sharing with other addicts and putting the feelings down on paper so I can get a good look at them, accept them, and let them go. My fellow addicts let me know it's okay to feel, that none of my feelings are wrong; they just *are*.

I'm coming to believe that my new way of thinking must be balanced with my new awareness of my feelings. Reading the Basic Text as well as other recovery literature is an important part of my recovery, but it is not necessary to remember each page, word for word. There will not be an exam. What is important is to receive the messages of honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness and put these into action. Today I have people

in my life that allow me to be real, to be myself. I do not have to impress. I just have to follow directions. When I share in meetings, I ask my HP to help me share honestly and lovingly.

I'm grateful to the fellowship and love I've found in NA. I have found a home. Thank you NA. Thank you HP for allowing me the courage to reach out to the love of the fellowship. Love ya.

MF, Wisconsin

Using dreams

I would like to share my experience with using dreams and perhaps help someone else who is going through the pain and suffering that I did.

Earlier in my recovery, I went through a period where it seemed like every morning I would wake up filled with anxiety and depression because of dreams of my drug of choice. They made me feel guilty even though they weren't real, and I worried about the strength of my recovery. I asked for help from other addicts at meetings, but still they persisted.

One night, on my way to my home group meeting, my wife insisted I take a little extra money in case I needed it. Sure enough, when I got to the meeting we had just received cop-

ies of *Just For Today: Daily Meditations for Recovering Addicts* and I purchased one. At home, after the meeting, I looked up using dreams in the subject text and found the answer to my prayers. It says, "Some of us think of using dreams as gifts from our Higher Power, vividly reminding us of the insanity of active addiction and encouraging us to strengthen our recovery." With this attitude, I no longer feared the thought of using dreams and they quickly disappeared.

If any reader is having this same problem, I hope this will help you as well as it did me. Sleep in peace!

DC, Ontario

Once again

I would like to thank everyone who has walked into the room of Narcotics Anonymous. Your experience, strength, and hope have helped me so much in my times of emotional breakdowns.

I live in a community with four NA meetings a week. We are close-knit and fun people. When it comes to a broader view on recovery, we are not there, but we know where we came from and what we did. This is why I thank everyone.

I read *The NA Way* for the recovery it has to offer. I am involved in service, so I read that stuff, too. The recovery that is offered from all over the world is tremendous. In times of emotional turmoil I think about all those addicts that have been there and are still here. They come through and share it with others.

At one point, I had emotional feelings toward another human of the

opposite sex, and I let it go due to my own fears of the unknown. I was shaking, acting loose, and depressed. By reading *The NA Way*, I have the tools NA offers me: Higher Power, service, self, society, and the presence of other addicts. These are a few of my favorite things! (Lighten up)

Seriously, without *The NA Way* and other NA writings I would not have come back to the calmness that this program has given me, once again. I thank you, HP, and all those who care to share the NA way!

BL, Illinois



Comin'up

Calendar											
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ARKANSAS: Mar. 12-13, 1994; 1st Northwest Arkansas Area Convention; Fort Smith, AR; info (501) 783-2766; rsvns. (800) 356-7046; Convention Committee, PO Box 23, Lowell, AR 72745

CALIFORNIA: Feb. 11-13, 1994; 3rd San Diego/Imperial Regional Learning Conference; info (619) 469-6490; SDIRLCNA, PO Box 16505, San Diego, CA 92176

2) Feb. 11-13, 1994; 2nd Annual Central California Regional Convention; info (805) 566-1261; CCRCNA-2, 1409 Kuehner Dr. #116, Simi Valley, CA 93063

3) Mar. 3-6, 1994; 16th Northern California Regional Convention; Oakland; rsvns. (800) 338-1338; NCCNA-16, PO Box 3592, Danville, CA 94526

4) Jun. 10-12, 1994; San Diego/Imperial Regional Convention; San Diego; info (619) 272-7005; rsvns. (619) 239-4500

ENGLAND: Apr. 8-10, 1994; 5th London Convention; Holland Park School, London; LCNA-5, PO Box 1980, London, England, N19 3LS

FLORIDA: May 27-30, 1994; 4th Gold Coast Area Convention; Pompano Beach; info (305) 832-9518; GCNA-4, PO Box 23325, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307

GEORGIA: Mar. 31 - Apr. 3, 1994; 13th Georgia Regional Convention; Atlanta

HAWAII: Mar. 25-27, 1994; 10th Annual Gathering of the Fellowship on Oahu; info (808) 676-7763; Oahu Gathering Committee, PO Box 75271, Honolulu, HI 96836

ILLINOIS: Feb. 18-20, 1994; 3rd Rock River Area Convention; Rochelle, IL; info (815) 967-9010 or (815) 626-7210; RRCNA-3, PO Box 1891, Rockford, IL 61110

INDIANA: Feb. 26, 1994; Multiregional Service Learning Day; Fort Wayne; info (219) 422-0825; NEIASC, PO Box 12737, Fort Wayne, IN 46864

2) Mar. 4-6, 1994; Indiana State Convention; Indianapolis; info; ISNAC, PO Box 17106, Indianapolis, IN 46217-0106

KANSAS: Apr. 8-10, 1994; 11th Mid-America Regional Convention; Great Bend, info (316) 343-7740 or (913) 823-3854; MARCNA-11, PO Box 242, Salina, KS 67402-0242

LOUISIANA: May 27-29, 1994; 12th Annual Louisiana Regional Convention; Alexandria; rsvns. (318) 442-9000, (800) 523-9724; LRCNA-12, Program Committee, PO Box 762, Montgomery, LA 71454

MARYLAND: Apr. 8-10, 1994; 8th Annual Chesapeake/Potomac Regional Convention; Ocean City, MD

2) Sep. 1-4, 1994; WCNA-24; Need main speakers, clean time requirement—5 years, deadline—Jan. 31, 1994; workshop speakers needed, deadline—Apr. 1, 1994; submit tapes to; WCNA-24, c/o WSO Inc., PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409

MASSACHUSETTS: Mar. 4-6, 1994; Just For Today Group Cape Cod Convention; Hyannis, MA; info (508) 540-4505 or (508) 563-5715; JFTCC, PO Box 590, N Falmouth, MA 02556

MICHIGAN: Mar. 31, - Apr. 3, 1994; 2nd Detroit Area Convention; Detroit; info (313) 361-4214; rsvns. (800) 228-3000; DACNA, Tickets and Registrations, PO Box 241221, Detroit, MI 48224

MINNESOTA: Apr. 22-24, 1994; 1st Minnesota Regional Convention; Saint Paul; info (612) 926-7341; MNNAC-I, PO Box 14152, Minneapolis, MN 55414-0152

MISSOURI: Feb. 18-20, 1994; Cabin Fever Prevention Convention; Hosted by Mid-Missouri Area; info (314) 496-3752 or (314) 642-0175; Looking for speaker tapes; Cabin Fever Convention, PO Box 7114, Jefferson City, MO 65109

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Mar. 12, 1994; 2nd Multiregional Learning Day; Fitzwilliams; helpline (603) 432-0166; Learning Day 2, PO Box 1752, Portland, ME 04108

2) Jun. 24-26, 1994; 4th Granite State Area Fellowship in Field Campout; Bethlehem; helpline (603) 432-0166; Campout 4, PO Box 4354, Manchester, NH 03108

NEW MEXICO: Mar. 25-27, 1994; 5th Rio Grande Regional Convention; Albuquerque; info (505) 836-2329; rsvns. (505) 869-6574; M/G, 13 Church Road, Peralta, NM 87042

NEW YORK: May 20-22, 1994; 9th Greater New York Convention; info (718) 398-0012; rsvns. (800) 431-3850

NORTH CAROLINA: Feb. 5, 1994; Twin City Area Unity Day; Winston-Salem; info (910) 924-8990

2) Mar. 18-21, 1994; 7th N Carolina Capital Area Family Reunion; Raleigh, NC; info (919) 231-8104; rsvns. (919) 872-2323; NCCAFRANA-7, PO Box 818, Carrboro, NC 27510

3) Apr. 22-24, 1994; Greater Charlotte Area Convention; hotel (704) 525-8350 or (800) 847-7829; Bound for Freedom, 1620 S Boulevard, Suite A, Charlotte, NC 28203

OHIO: May 27-19, 1994; 12th Annual Ohio Convention; The Ohio convention is in Kentucky, five minutes from downtown Cincinnati; info (513) 820-2947; OCNA-12, PO Box 0541, Cincinnati, OH 42501-0541

PENNSYLVANIA: Feb. 4-6, 1994; 10th Mid-Atlantic Regional Learning Conference of NA; Redding; info (610) 375-9724; rsvns. (800) 383-9713; MARLCNA-10, PO Box 6233, Wyomissing, PA 19610

SOUTH CAROLINA: Feb. 25-27, 1994; CCANA Just For Today 5; Hilton Head Island; info (803) 791-9591; rsvns. (803) 699-0717; Just For Today 5, PO Box 23534, Columbia, SC 29224-3534

WASHINGTON: Apr. 15-17, 1994; 9th Washington/N Idaho Regional Convention; Spokane; rsvns. (800) 547-8010; WNIRCNA-9, PO Box 9245, Spokane, WA 99209

WISCONSIN: Apr. 15-17, 1994; 9th Mid-Coast Convention; Delavan; info; MCC-9, PO Box 1621, Janesville, WI 53545

WYOMING: Sep. 23-25, 1994; Unity Convention; 3 speakers needed, respond by February; info (307) 789-7746; Unity Convention, 855 Sundance Ave, Evanston, WY 82930

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The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

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

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My Gratitude Speaks
When I Care
and When I Share with Others
The NA Way

What is Narcotics Anonymous?

NA is a nonprofit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs has 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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\$1.75 US, \$2.50 Can



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