

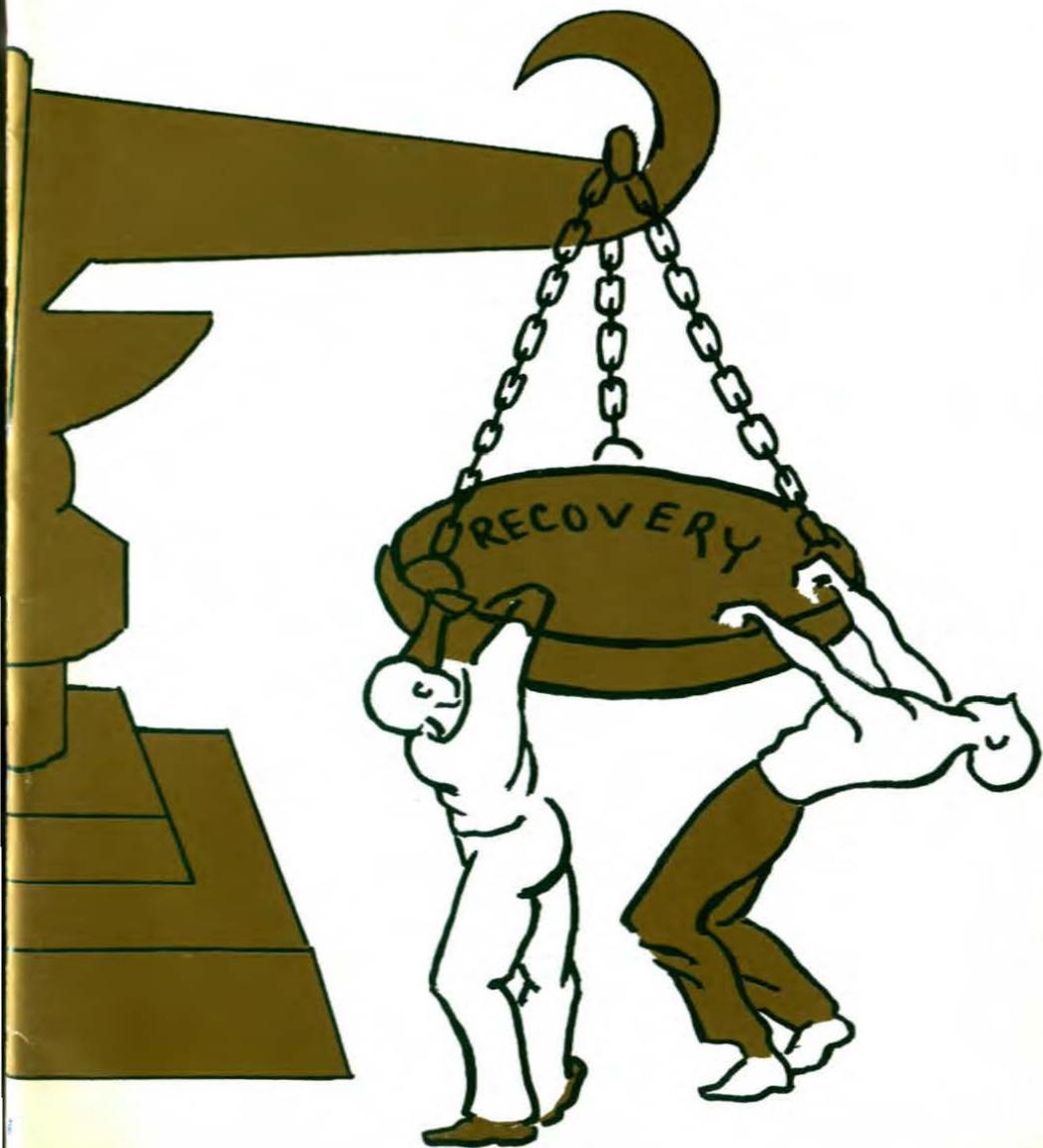
THE NA Way[®]

MAGAZINE

October 1995

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The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous

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

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From the editor

A reminder about "Comin' Up"

The NA Way is happy to run announcements for your upcoming NA events.

We must have a minimum of two-and-a-half months notice to get your event announcement into the monthly issue of the magazine that corresponds with your event. In other words, if your event is in February, we need to know about it by 15 December in order for it to run in the February issue of *The NA Way*.

If you want your event to run in more than one issue, we need even more notice. We do our absolute best to run the information as far in advance as possible. Your best bet is to let us know about your event as soon as you've set the dates for it, booked a location, and established contact phone numbers and/or an address. It's never too early to let us know.

Coming next month

Beginning next month, *The NA Way* will run a bimonthly column called the "Group Services Corner." This column will feature letters from individuals, groups, and service committees, and the office's response to those letters.

It seems to us that there's a tremendous interest out there about real-life issues that go on in groups or

elsewhere in "local NA." We are hoping that this column will do two things: One, share information with groups and members who may be experiencing the same or similar situations, and two, solicit the experience of our readers.

If the column is well-received and if we continue to have available material, we may begin to run it every month.

Wanted!

The NA Way is seeking NA members with experience, strength, and hope to share about dual-diagnosis recovery (recovery from addiction and an emotional or psychological disorder), and who are willing to be interviewed for a feature on this topic. Of course, we will be sensitive to your concerns, and we realize anonymity will be one of those. Please write or call me at the WSO if you want to help.

CT, Editor

The smallest miracle

When it happened, I wanted to tell everyone about it. I started to write my sponsor about it—I didn't include it. I was going to write a close friend in NA about it—it didn't feel right. I thought the need to share it would pass—it hasn't. Then it dawned on me—I can tell you.

It all started quite a while back. I had found recovery in NA and gotten clean, something I never thought possible. I stayed clean and am still clean today. To make a long story short, though, I got complacent, stopped doing some things I knew I should do, and started doing some things I knew I shouldn't do. I didn't let other recovering addicts know what was going on with me, and I wound up in federal prison. I have been here a little over eight months at this writing.

When I got here, I found myself in a very scary place. I was allowed to bring almost nothing with me, so I had no Basic Text or other NA literature. I went to the inmate library and there was no NA literature there, either. There was supposed to be a weekly NA H&I meeting, but it was temporarily cancelled due to staff problems.

I became despondent. Any hope I had before seemed to have evaporated. I felt lost and began to lose faith in my Higher Power, seriously wondering if everything I had learned and felt before in NA had been a delusion, another way I'd lied to myself.

Then something happened. I needed to see a senior officer on my unit and went to his office. The first things I noticed in his office were a few NA Basic Texts on his shelf. When we concluded our business, I asked him about them. He said he had found them left behind when inmates were transferred. They were all older editions. He said I could take one.



Now I had "something NA" that I could touch and hold. I read old familiar passages. I felt better. The NA meeting resumed on an irregular basis as well, and I related to the H&I guys and the few inmate addicts in attendance. I became more comfortable in prison life. I felt a lot better. But still, I questioned and despaired. I couldn't seem to regain the faith and hope NA had once given me. Maybe it *had* been a lie.

In the meantime, I had begun working in the inmate library. I had occasion to see the officer with the Basic Texts again, and I told him there were no copies in the library. He said I could take two copies to place there. This was special to me and I felt grateful.

I immediately went to the library and catalogued and prepped the first copy. I lovingly placed it in a clear protective cover and put it on the shelf. I imagined that it would pretty much just sit there and collect dust, but I felt better anyway.

Then it happened. It was the smallest of miracles, but it was the miracle I needed. A couple of hours later that same day, I went back to the library to check on some things. I was not on duty and was normally not there at that time of the day. A new inmate came in and asked for a book "about stopping habits, like smoking." He looked like he had it pretty rough on the outside. I showed him a book about quitting smoking, but he asked if there was anything else. I walked with him to the shelves where the Basic Texts were located. In what seemed like a split second, his eye fell on the blue cover of our

Basic Text. He pulled the book from the shelf, said he needed nothing else, and was gone.

I was stunned. Then, in a rush, I began to feel what I had been missing. Everything seemed in balance for the first time in a long time, and I felt my Higher Power's presence. NA was the same; nothing had changed throughout my long "dry spell." To get back on track, I had to experience giving it away in a manner that was very personal and profound to me.

Today, I'm still in prison and, like everyone else, I have my ups and downs. However, since the experience I just related, I have been able to keep what the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous has given me. Our H&I meeting has grown dramatically and is meeting regularly now. I have found many opportunities to contribute and grow and have availed myself of them. I try to be a responsible and productive member of the society here, and I'm usually successful.

Oh, yes, about my not being able to share my experience with my sponsor, NA friends, etc., I now understand why. I guess I thought it would sound like I was taking credit for what had occurred. I didn't think I could express what I needed to express without being misunderstood. But I can tell you—*anonymously!* Somehow, I think you'll understand. Thanks for being there.

Anonymous

Hey, you, get onto my cloud!

I didn't "earn" my seat in NA and have never done anything to deserve it. I am blessed to have it. It's a blessing of our Higher Power for any addict to be able to live life free on life's terms, without the use of drugs, one day at a time. I've learned that as long as I am willing to do the footwork, listen to suggestions, make meetings, and practice NA's principles in all my affairs, I can recover.

Recovery wasn't easy for me when I first came around. I didn't know how to stay clean. You see, I had the desire long before I stopped using. I must have been through a dozen or so detox centers and heard the message of hope, but I needed to feel more pain, misery, and suffering before I surrendered. I was stubborn and self-willed. In essence, I had no spirituality. What I did have was a destructive power that told me, I'm still alive, so therefore I'm okay, and I can still use. It wasn't until I lost everything and hit my second rock bottom that I gave up.

When I first started going to meetings, there was a lot that could have

kept me away. I didn't know how to identify with the feelings that were being shared. I looked for the differences in the story and found much I couldn't relate to by doing that, but I kept coming to meetings anyway. I didn't know what NA language was, but I kept coming. I felt intimidated and out of place, but I kept coming and more was revealed. I heard addicts say, "If you want what we got, then do what we do." So I made meetings, sat up front, took the cotton out of my ears, and listened to learn. What I learned was that "an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live." I saw miracles happen and recovering addicts blossom before my eyes.

Three years ago I heard someone say that NA is built on failure. My HP knows that I failed many times and made mistakes along the way. Today, I can learn from my mistakes and failures through the blessing of recovery, the promise of freedom, and the unconditional love that addicts gratefully share with each other. I can be open-minded and listen to suggestions. I have a loving God of my own understanding who has blessed me and restored me to sanity. I thank my Higher Power daily for saving my life and giving me the things I have.

Today, I can see the miracle of this program and the wonder of this fellowship at work. I can now recognize the gifts of recovery we hear so much about.

One of these gifts is the spiritual awakening mentioned in Step Twelve. When one day you realize

the obsession to use has been lifted, you're so excited you want to share the good news with the world.

Last Sunday I experienced such a gift. I was asked to share on Step Two at a meeting and was awed at the euphoria and inexplicable feeling that overwhelmed me that evening. It was a spiritual high that lasted all night.

I've gone through many feelings in recovery, but nothing like what I felt that night. When I explained to a friend in recovery what happened to me, he asked if I had ever heard of a pink cloud. I told him I had heard of pink elephants, but never a pink cloud. He then explained it to me. Despite his assurances that the "pink cloud" feeling is usually temporary, I think it's a blessing to experience such a feeling.

In our Basic Text it says, "As we recover, we gain a new outlook on being clean. . . . We come to know happiness, joy, and freedom," and, "When the drugs go and the addict works the program, wonderful things happen." This tells me that any addict who has a desire to stop using and works the NA program can experience joy, happiness, and even a pink cloud!

RC, New York

Powerless like me

I have often heard the expression "relapse prevention," usually in reference to a service offered by a drug treatment facility. But the most effective method I know for preventing relapse is to work the steps. When an addict stops using the steps, the addict will eventually start using drugs.

My own relapse, which came after being clean for a year, resulted when I half-stepped the first three steps. When I lost hope, Step Three was nullified. When I stopped making meetings, my primary method for working Step Two was removed. When I told myself that I was no longer powerless because my life had become relatively manageable, I dismantled Step One. I found out the hard way that Step One is dependent on our making an honest and complete admission to ourselves. I made an incomplete admission by thinking that the reduction of unmanageability in my life was evidence of my no longer being powerless.

I actually told myself that now that I had my act together, I'd be able to budget my drug money. When the allotted money ran out, I simply wouldn't use for the last nine or ten

days of the month. I quickly found out what a lie that was. Once I started using, I couldn't stop. I had to get high every day. Two months into the relapse, I knew that I had to get back to NA if I were to have any chance of surviving. I still stayed out there though for an additional fourteen months, stuck in the grip of the disease.

I recall one day when I told myself I'd go into the city and just cop a small bag of grass and smoke it, knowing if I were to cop my drug of choice I'd be flat broke. As soon as I finished the first joint, I turned on my heel and, as if drawn by a magnet, started to head to the neighborhood where my favorite drugs were sold. I remember that, as I cut through Chinatown to get to the Lower East Side, tears began to roll down my face. I remember how, in the sea of Chinese faces, some turned to look at this tall, twenty-nine-year-old white man and wonder why he was crying.

I was crying because, even though I didn't want to use and knew how empty both my pockets and my soul would be afterward, I was powerless to stop myself.

The collective experiences of my relapse illustrated my powerlessness to me. By the grace of God, I made it back to the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous. Today I know that I will always be powerless over my addiction, no matter how manageable my life becomes in recovery. No matter how well I learn to deal with life through spiritual development, no matter how many material rewards I reap, no matter how many friends I have, no matter how much clean time

I accumulate, I will always be completely powerless over my addiction.

For me an admission of powerlessness does not end with simply admitting I can't use drugs successfully. To admit powerlessness is to admit I can't hang out with the old people, in the old places, or do the same old things and expect to stay clean. It would take a powerful addict to do that. I also need to admit that I must

"I turned on my heel and, as if drawn by a magnet, started to head to the neighborhood..."

never attempt to sell drugs and think I can stay clean. It would take a very powerful addict to get away with that.

Finally, if I am truly admitting I am powerless over my disease, I am also admitting I need help recovering. This help I receive at NA meetings, where I can listen with a patient and open mind to other addicts who are powerless just like me.

PH, New Jersey

Lessons learned

I have recently become acutely aware of the number of people in my life who have relapsed. It's very sad. It would seem I want recovery more than my friends.

I moved here to this small town in the north woods a year before I got clean. I was hitting bottom, consumed with paranoia, and I would not talk to people any more than I had to, much less make friends. So everyone I know here, I met in recovery.

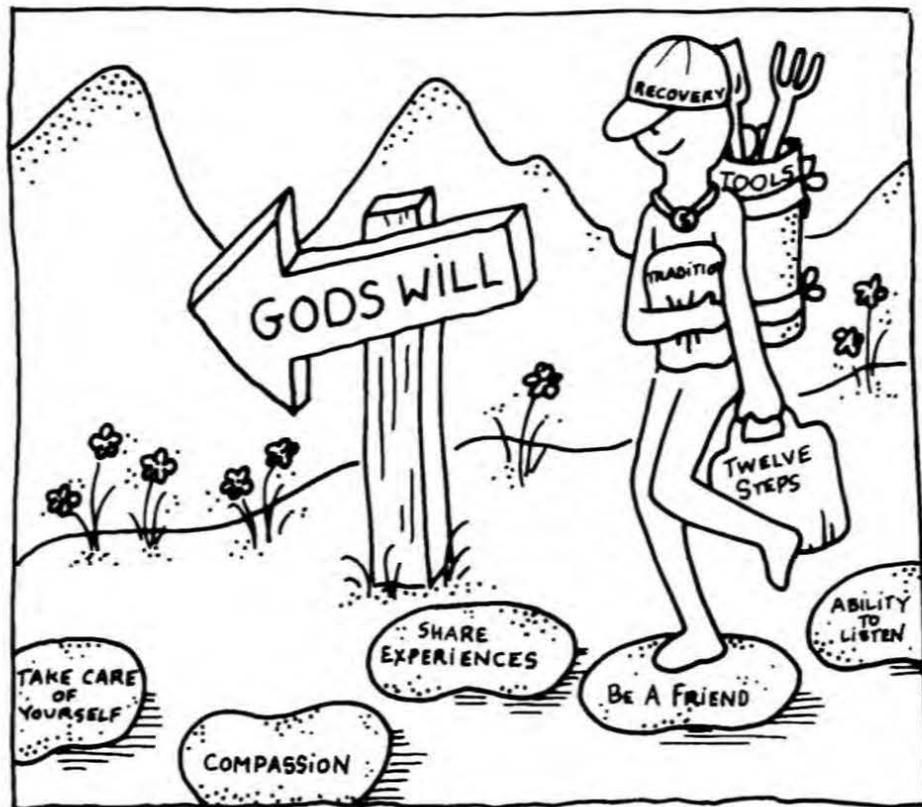
I don't want to use. When I look at the current situations of those who have relapsed, it is very easy for me to confirm my belief that using won't help any situation. I knew when I found Narcotics Anonymous that I had hurt enough, that I never wanted to feel that alone ever again. I don't consider using an option.

In my five years clean, I have learned a great deal from those who relapsed and returned to the program. The ability to learn from the mistakes of others is something I regard as a very useful recovery tool. I appreciate that ability in myself because I don't have to experience the pain of using again to learn.

What has frightened me most are the justifications for going back out. Perhaps the most frightening was from a person I respected and who had ten years clean, who justified her relapse with, "I just use a little: a joint and a glass of wine. I don't misuse it." I know that time doesn't mean much; in fact, I have met some with more than ten years who are not yet on Step Two, but I was surprised and saddened.

I wonder a lot what my Higher Power is trying to teach me. I have thoughts like, "Why does God want me in these people's lives, and why does God continue to bring these people back into my life, even when I make no effort?" My Higher Power has taught me many things, such as the skills I need to protect myself from the not-so-healthy. I have learned to walk away (even run) when the situation gets too much for me. God has taught me how to be a friend, not a codependent. I really want to know God's plan for me; however, I know that were I privy to that information, I would probably just try to change it.

I am grateful for my ability to listen, hearing not only what's said but sometimes what's not said. I listen to hurts, wants, and expectations. What I seldom hear from those who relapse is anything about God's will or direction from a Higher Power. I understand relapse to be about my will and recovery to be about God's will.



The work I have done in this program, to grow and become the person God wants me to be, makes me think relapse will always be an issue in my life. The closer I get to God, the more compassion I have for those who relapse, and the more confident I become of my ability to refrain from relapse and share my experience, strength, and hope.

The program teaches me that my job as an addict is to help the still-suffering addict. The traditions remind me that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. My medallion reminds me to share what I have so gratefully been given. I am so grateful to Narcotics

Anonymous for helping me to find a God of my understanding and the real person I kept hidden inside.

Today I am more assured than ever that the path my life is heading down is directed by God and requires no intervention on my part. This is what Narcotics Anonymous has done for me. All I've done is get out of God's way by working the steps and traditions to the best of my ability.

I love each and every one of you in this program. Even if I never get to meet you, you are important to me. Thank you for being a part of my recovery by being a part of NA. Keep coming back, it works.

AH, Wisconsin

Participating, not spectating

My relapse came to an end as the handcuffs tightened down around my wrists. So began my journey back from a spiritual wasteland, one that I had existed in for far more years than I care to remember. Awaiting arraignment, a thousand images and thoughts ran through my mind.

Underneath the anger and fear, I felt a curious sense of relief... it was over. I silently thanked my HP and uttered that short prayer that a thousand addicts have said in a thousand courtrooms the world over: Help me. A calm sense of peace came over me, and suddenly, it didn't matter what the sentence would be this time. The outcome of this latest debacle was squarely in the hands of my Higher Power. I resolved then and there to follow where my HP led me and try to do the best I could on a daily basis.

Upon my arrival in prison, I immediately sought out the NA group on the unit. As our Third Tradition states, "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using." I stated my desire, and pro-

ceeded to start acting like a member. Along with starting over at the First Step, I started helping clean up after the meetings and arriving early in case I could lend a helping hand with making the coffee and setting out the literature. In short, I started participating instead of spectating. What a difference it has made in my recovery!

Three years have passed now and my love for our program grows daily. Due to the program of Narcotics Anonymous, the wonderful fellowship of one addict helping another, and my HP's care, I am clean today.

Last night I was sitting out on the yard, the chaos of the convicted felons' social club in full swing around me, yet I was alone with my HP watching the sun slowly sink in the sky. A feeling of total peace came over me, a profound inner knowing that, just for today, I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be, and everything is happening just as it's supposed to. I felt pressure behind my eyes, my eyes misted up, and I felt as though I might cry.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you, Narcotics Anonymous and HP, for giving me back my life.

SD, Texas

Home Group



Resolution of the world services inventory

As you are probably aware, our NA World Service Office, Conference, and Board of Trustees have been conducting a world services inventory for the last couple of years as the single most important project of world services. This year a "Resolution Group" was formed by the conference to study the results of the inventory and make some recommendations to begin the process of implementing solutions.

This article was written by the Resolution Group for *The NA Way* in an effort to communicate about

our work to as many members of the fellowship as possible. Because of the production schedule of the magazine, we are writing this article in mid-August for publication in October. By the time you read this, our final recommendations will have been prepared for the November World Services meeting. We have solicited direct input throughout this process via regular reports and an article in the *Newsline*. Our intent here is to raise as much consciousness as possible about the process itself, and to encourage you to engage in these discussions as they make their way through your local service structure.

History of the inventory process

The *NA Tree*, the first service manual for NA, was published in 1976. It contained a description of the service structure or really a vision for a service structure that might develop. The first World Service Conference was held that year in conjunction with the World Convention in Ventura, California. Over the next several years, other efforts to describe the developing service structure were undertaken in the form of a couple of service

manuals, but any agreement on these was short-lived. Things were changing so rapidly in that era of phenomenal growth that any success in definitively nailing down a worldwide structure simply eluded us.

In 1983, one year after the publication of the Basic Text, the conference developed a document called the *Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure*. As the name implied, this was intended to carry us over until we could agree upon a more permanent document. Today, some twelve years later, that *Temporary Working Guide*, or *TWGSS*, as we commonly refer to it, is still the service manual we go by.

A Select Committee was formed in 1983 in conjunction with the printing of the *TWGSS*. This group's charter was to put together a more permanent service manual. This process continued for several years. Other groups were formed as this effort evolved. Finally, a product was delivered to the WSC in 1993 called *A Guide to Service in Narcotics Anonymous*.

The model for world services described in the *TWGSS* had by that time become deeply entrenched. There was general agreement among the world services participants that serious structural and communications problems existed, but there was not general agreement about their cause or about any proposed solutions. Frustration was running high, and so was

a deep and heartfelt commitment on the part of everyone involved to pull together and resolve these problems.

Rather than simply attempt to adopt the *Guide to Service* in 1993 without substantial consensus regarding the nature of our service structure's problems, the participants in that conference took a very dramatic action. They agreed that the world services inventory was going to be the single primary project of world services. This was extended for another year again in 1994. During this two-year period, a "Composite Group" made up of world-level trusted servants surveyed the fellowship regarding the effectiveness of world services. They developed inventory tools for use by various boards and committees in performing their own self-assessment. They then compiled this information and conducted small group sessions at WSC'94 so that the conference could assess its own effectiveness. These results were compiled and turned over to a consulting firm hired to analyze all of the inventory material and make recommendations.

The results of all this were published in a couple of reports totaling several hundred pages. The material was very revealing, if somewhat overwhelming to absorb. The 1995 World Service Conference distilled from this material a prioritized list of key problems. World service leadership developed and WSC approved a "Resolu-

tion Plan," which called for the formation of this Resolution Group to study the inventory material and make recommendations.

So that's what we're doing this year. Between May and October, the Resolution Group's charter is to make proposals to be considered at the 1996 World Service Conference. Of course, six people over the course of five months cannot do much to solve these long-standing problems. We have been keenly aware of that stark fact from the very beginning. To keep our task more manageable, we have identified some very specific goals that we feel we can accomplish in this timeframe. Our best hope is that our work will serve to focus this process and nudge it along to the next step. We are committed to working very hard for five months toward that end, asking for guidance from you and from a Higher Power every step of the way.

The problems

The following problems were identified in the inventory process and prioritized by the 1995 World Service Conference:

- Lack of vision for WSO, WCC, and WSC
- Lack of a strategic plan
- Right-sizing of committees and boards
- Integration of management techniques to world services
- Bringing the message of hope to the suffering addict more effectively

The Resolution Group goals

We developed the following four goals which we believe, if accomplished, would make a significant contribution toward developing and implementing specific solutions to these problems:

- To write a vision statement for NA world services
- To write a mission statement for the World Service Conference
- To create proposals for structural change of NA world services
- To create proposals for future work

Progress so far

As of October, the Resolution Group will have held five weekend meetings. We have invited experienced world service participants from around the world to some of these. With much help from these invitees, we have produced drafts of a vision statement for world services and a mission statement for the World Service Conference. At this writing, the drafts are in a formative state and being circulated for input. By the time this is published, they will likely have changed. So rather than print them here, we will describe some key themes that we agree should be included in the vision and mission statements.

Some key themes regarding vision and mission

The primary purpose of the groups is the foundation for any vision of world services. While any given entity within the service structure may not be directly involved in carrying the message, everything we do is inspired by the vision of addicts helping addicts recover. Our vision must also reflect the international nature and scope of our fellowship: that our message will be available to addicts everywhere, regardless of culture, language, or isolation.

The mission of the World Service Conference is to bring all elements of NA world services together to further the common welfare of NA. The WSC expresses in a very tangible way the worldwide unity and common purpose of NA. It gives the groups the vehicle to guide and direct world services efforts and provides a forum for exchanging experience, strength, and hope among NA communities worldwide. The WSC is a place to develop consensus for proposed initiatives, and assure accountability for expectations previously set.

Some key themes regarding the world service structure

Here are some of the themes we've discussed, and about which we intend to formulate recommendations. Where we've already arrived at some degree of consensus, we'll indicate that as well. We wish to particularly thank the members

we had invited to our meetings and the many others who offered us their written input. All of these were instrumental in developing these themes.

Tactical vs. strategic focus

We have attempted to introduce this distinction into the discussion of structure, though some have told us that these words aren't too familiar or friendly to the NA ear. Business and other enterprises of our size frequently use these words to distinguish between long-term, big-picture planning (strategic) and short-term planning and execution (tactical).

The Resolution Group is in agreement that our world service structure has not done well to understand this distinction and function accordingly. The WSC, for example, often attempts to directly involve itself too deeply in tactical matters. We agree, and our recommendations will reflect, that the conference needs to focus on the "big picture," or the strategic view, rather than on the details of implementation, or the tactical view.

World services and national services

World services need to be focused on the world level. This seems obvious on the surface, but there are several issues which make it difficult to put this into practice. For one thing, the fellowship is still heavily concentrated in North America, though there are

several other places which are now quite well developed. Because the WSC is still composed mostly of North Americans, representatives from other places are frequently left feeling that international concerns are lost amid the concerns of the fellowship in the US. This is getting better, but continues to be voiced frequently.

The RG is convinced that some degree of autonomy is desirable for national services. This issue will require much study and careful planning, and the details are beyond the scope of our group. Any plan of this nature must balance the needs of stronger NA communities, which may have little need for direct services from the world level, against the needs of newly emerging NA communities, which have a much greater need for direct support from the world level.

Too much autonomy could lead not only to national isolation, but it could also lead to the development of a different NA message in different parts of the world. While it seems appropriate to direct and focus the NA message with literature and support materials that match local language, customs, and culture, care must be given to ensure that the NA message itself is true and consistent across cultural and linguistic lines. This will call for a delicate balance between the role of world services in ensuring consistency, and the role of national fellowships in providing that culturally specific focus.

A single board

At this writing, we have not arrived at consensus as to whether world services should be administered by a single board or more than one board as is the case today. Today we have both a Board of Directors for the WSO and a World Service Board of Trustees in addition to the committees of the World Service Conference. Concerns about a single board seem to be primarily about accountability, and about the appropriateness of such a small group having so much sway in managing world services. Support for a single board seems to be about efficiency in delivering badly-needed services, reduction in the duplication of efforts, and clarity in identifying the single point of responsibility and authority for any given world service effort.

Any single board model that we might propose would need to include sufficient broad-based involvement from the fellowship to ensure accountability to the groups. The role of the World Service Conference and the role of the RSR would be key to this. We have discussed these issues at some length, but were not ready at this writing to make specific proposals.

The Twelve Concepts

We are committed to drawing on the Twelve Concepts for the proposals we make. The concepts give the groups final authority over world services, for example, so mechanisms must exist for the

groups to exercise this authority as they see fit. The concepts also highly value trust and effective delegation, so there must also be mechanisms whereby the groups delegate responsibility and authority throughout the service structure as they deem appropriate. The concepts envision a service structure in which clear, thorough communication and strong, effective leadership inspire substantial delegation and trust, but expect a thorough accounting and clear lines of accountability. The Resolution Group envisions a structure in which the basic framework and direction of all world service initiatives are set at the World Service Conference each year, and the details of planning and implementation are delegated to the appropriate board, committee, or staff team.

More to come

This article attempts to raise as much consciousness as possible about the inventory and resolution process itself, and to encourage you to engage fully in these discussions as they make their way through your local service structure. We are continuing to discuss the above issues as well as several others. We hope to close these discussions during our August and September meetings and present the results at the World Services Meeting in Manhattan Beach in November. Some other issues include:

- Increasing and simplifying communication
- Providing more effective direct support to local services
- Improving the ability of world services to navigate and manage change
- Better understanding and supporting the symbiotic relationship between structure and process

The Resolution Group looks forward to our presentation at the World Services Meeting in Manhattan Beach the weekend of November 10, 1995. We also hope to see broad involvement in these discussions at the local level throughout the fellowship. The way we see it, with the world services inventory complete, it's now time for a collective Six and Seventh Step. With hearts and minds open to real and meaningful change, we now humbly ask a Higher Power to inspire the kind of change that roots out the defects and paves the way to a more spiritual and healthy world services community.

Newsletters



From platitudes to gratitude

From The Bottom Line, the Gold Coast, Florida area newsletter:

As I sat down to write something about the Tenth Step, I decided that I would try to relate to you where this step fits into my life today, rather than give platitudes and pat phrases about it.

We have literature that provides us with an appreciation of what Step Ten is about and some guidance on how to approach it. Our Basic Text, *Narcotics Anonymous*, and *It Works: How and Why* offer chapters devoted to all of the steps. This is where we can find the foundation of our recovery program.

What I know about the steps comes from reading our literature, from listening to other addicts share their experience, from the relationship I have with the God of my understanding, and most of all, from *working* the steps.

I am not formally "on" the Tenth Step at this time. I am working with a group that is going through the steps together, and we are currently studying Step Four. I have worked all Twelve Steps in order in the past and have reaped great rewards for having done so. Working the steps in the order that they are written is important; it ensures that we gain the maximum benefit. However, I firmly believe that each step has specific value for us. This is available when needed, and not only when we are "on" a specific step. So, as I go through my daily life, I live Step Ten as part of my ongoing recovery.

One firm belief I have about this step is that I can do it at any time, and in a variety of ways. There are times when I am constantly going over what I did, what my motives were for my behavior, and what the results of my actions were for me and others. On the other hand, there are times when I find myself in the midst of something and I wonder how I got there. Fortunately for me, these times are becoming rarer. On the one hand, when I am so "careful" and calculating, I find that I may stifle myself, not risking vulnerability, in the name of doing the "right" thing. On the other hand, my track record shows me that I need to listen to that voice inside that knows better than I do what my path should be.

Vigilance and willingness are key elements to my working the Tenth Step. I also need to remember that a Tenth Step is more than discovering those things I did wrong. This step provides me with the opportunity to take a look at where I am, explore where I want to go, and figure out if what I am doing is moving me along the path I wish to take.

This step only works if I work it. Sounds familiar, doesn't it. It is rare that I am called upon to make important decisions about my life. Most of the time I seem to be just following the path I find myself on. The Tenth Step allows me to see if I am on track and to alter the course if appropriate.

There is also the aspect of the Tenth Step that shows me my shortcomings. At times they can be rampant. The act of promptly admitting when we are wrong does a number of things. Through this act we increase our humility and our level of acceptance of ourselves. I have also learned about self-restraint as a result of working Step Ten. You see, I know that I don't have a choice about eventually having to make amends when I am wrong. And because this is often humiliating, I sometimes manage to restrain myself from acting in a way that will make amends necessary.

Step Ten allows me to keep tabs on myself. I often have the opportunity (and sometimes the willingness) to reflect at the end of a day how it went. To the extent I am working the other steps in my life, what I see in my Tenth Step fills my heart with gratitude for my recovery.

Anonymous

The smile that launched a thousand recoveries

From The Recoverer, the Washington/Northern Idaho regional newsletter:

I'll never forget that first meeting in the place that would become my home group. The chair, his toothy grin, and eyes smiling so that they were squinted, half-closed like a Cheshire cat. That beaming smile accompanied the simplest, warmest greeting I'd received in years.

"Welcome," he said.

I still see him. At conventions, dances, and area events I find him there and my heart soars. I greet him and give him a hug akin to a headlock and I enthusiastically say the words that don't touch anywhere near how full of joy I am just to be standing in his presence. "Good to see you," I say. My eyes always fill with tears as we hug. It really is good to see him. We chat, then talk, then share what is really going on in our lives. Maybe we have a dance or two. We laugh. And then we say good-bye, until the next time we meet.

I carry a piece of him in my heart wherever I go. Whenever I greet a newcomer with a genuine smile and a warm hug, his smile is carried on, and on, and on. In the first few moments we met, he taught me a lesson that has lasted through the years I've been here. When we occasionally meet up, I am reminded again how really connected I am to this family I have in the fellowship.

Since that first meeting, I have connected with other men and women in the same warm and wonderful way. Conventions, dances, and events often feel like family reunions as we stand on common ground with the warm light of the fellowship all around us, doing life clean with our brothers and sisters in recovery.

I have been given so much more than clean time by this fellowship. I've been given the recovering family that keeps me connected around here—and it all started with one addict and a warm welcome.

Vicaroo, Washington



A social disease?

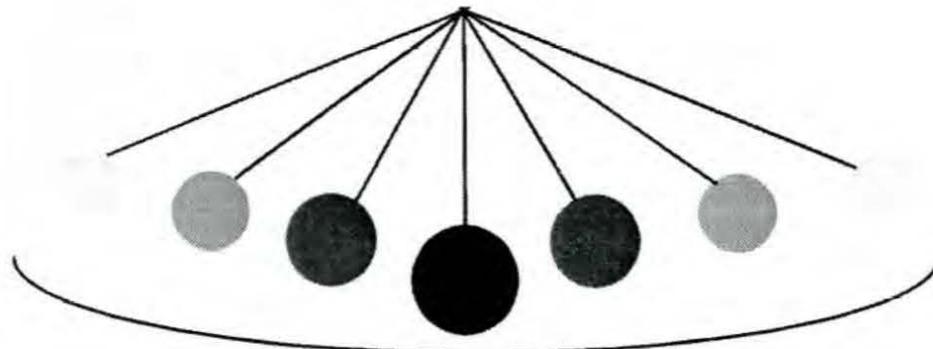
From In Step, the Bay Cities, California area newsletter:

Recently I was at a meeting of about fifty people where I hardly knew anyone—maybe one or two people, but that was it. I kind of enjoy it being like this once in a while because it makes it easier to listen to the message without the distraction of saying hello to friends and the like. It's not that I don't like to fellowship; but sometimes it is nice to be anonymous and know I can just listen without being called on to share.

Anyway, this was a great NA meeting, filled with people new to recovery. It reminded me of what NA meetings were like fifteen or twenty years ago, with ninety percent of the members having just a few days or months clean and maybe a couple of people with a year or more.

The leader began the meeting, and after a couple of people had shared, a man who was new in recovery took his turn. This was the kind of newcomer that you would welcome the opportunity to sponsor, because he was obviously hungry for recovery.

He spoke about what his using was like: the nightmarish things he had to do so he could buy drugs. He



talked about how grateful he was that the nightmare was over. As he continued, he shared that as a result of his addiction, he was now HIV-positive. He went on to talk about finding a sponsor and working the steps with his sponsor. You could just hear the admiration and love he had for his sponsor as he shared.

And something else.

After a hesitation, he went on to say that, although his sponsor had been a long time in recovery, he was from another fellowship. The room became very quiet, and the silence was one of discomfort, not respectful attention.

Here was a newcomer suffering from two deadly diseases, one of which, HIV, carries probably the worst social stigma in society today, but he seemed more fearful about disclosing the fact that his sponsor was from another fellowship.

This really hit me like a slap in the face. It made my heart ache, and gave me much to reflect upon as I drove home from the meeting. Please understand that I'm "straight NA," but I wonder if maybe the NA identity pendulum has swung in too extreme an arc. It seems to me that if anyone wants a sense of what it was

like to have a social disease in the early fifties, he or she could just share about having a sponsor from another fellowship.

The principles of humility and open-mindedness have taught me that my way is not always the way of others. There is no such thing as the only way to stay clean. Staying clean and recovering is the goal and whatever works, works. If a member voices something that may be unpopular, should this be tantamount to committing NA social suicide? Have we become so intolerant that if someone expresses something that deviates from the party line, he or she will be ostracized? Is this not the reason that our founders felt compelled to start Narcotics Anonymous some forty years ago?

I'm putting this out there not to sway anyone to my way of thinking. After all, too much agreement kills interesting conversation. I feel the above questions raise important issues, so I put it out there just as a starting point for discussion.

I pray that the newcomer whose words touched me that night will stay clean and find a safe place for himself in Narcotics Anonymous.

Sadiq

Viewpoint



How the steps killed the Green-Eyed Monster

Hello! I have read our magazine for quite some time now, and you all have helped to educate me and refine my beliefs about a variety of subjects, ranging from how to conduct myself at one of our conventions to whether or not we should leave masculine pronouns out of our steps.

Something is missing, though. I do not recall ever reading any letters about the subject of jealousy. Yes, the Green-Eyed Monster that lurks among our character defects!

I recently attended a women's meeting in our home group in which a member shared about being snubbed by a newcomer who had, just a few moments before, followed the woman's significant other into

the coffee room, hugging him and chatting all the while.

The woman shared about screaming at the newcomer, "You know who you are, so chill out and leave my man alone!"

Is persecution alive and well in our fellowship? Are we justified in making such statements in the middle of a meeting? Will we start rounding up all the hussies and hustlers in NA and throwing them out? Could be some empty rooms before long!

Yes, it struck a nerve! Yes, I looked at myself, and yes, I called my sponsor, and yes, I am writing to try to share some experience, strength, and hope for all of us that come through the doors with lots of sexual escapades behind and in front of us.

I came to NA with a long history of abusive relationships that started with a rape at a very young age. My first sponsor listened to my Fifth Step and announced that I had *used* the opposite sex for sexual, emotional, and financial security!

What? You mean to tell *me*, the victim, that I had actually been using the opposite sex all along?!

Never mind the fact that I wouldn't go out with you unless you had lots of chemicals to offer, unless you were good in bed, unless I could try to fix you, and unless you had that

cold, mean look in your eyes that said, "I will abuse you!" The people I picked to hang out with were people who would perpetuate my low self-esteem. That allowed me to use more in order to numb the pain and to keep the "poor, poor, pitiful me" syndrome going.

While that Fourth and Fifth Step were very enlightening, I skipped over two very, very important steps: the "change steps," I call them. I was not willing to have these defects of character removed, and I did not ask God for any help in the area of relationships or sex. It took me almost three years before I could hug a member of the opposite sex without getting sexually excited! I thought sex equaled love, and it's difficult to reverse this train of thought in a matter of a few months. Thank God this program is a process of change, not a course in perfection.

At four years clean I met a person who is not an addict, and we began a relationship. Although we had a slightly rocky start, we have developed a relationship that is based on trust, honesty, and respect. There are no worries about either one of us stepping outside this relationship, and complete personal and spiritual freedom is given to each other. I had no idea when I first got to this program that relationships like this one existed. All my relationships prior to recovery were based on using and abusing, property, territory, jealousy, blame, distrust, and hatred. These negative behaviors diminished in me as I worked with my sponsor on the steps, as I shared my goals and asked questions about how

to change, and as God's will was done, whether I liked it or not!

So next time you feel that you need to chastise a hussy or hustler in a meeting, please don't do it! People like me need sponsors, we need friends of the same sex, we need to be told that if we have very abusive backgrounds, it is okay to seek professional help. We need to be told we are loved, and we need to be told to keep coming back! With God's plan, our steps, and our fellowship, people like me can actually recover and become a responsible, productive part of a healthy relationship and of society.

Anonymous, Arkansas

More than just a public relations policy

The other day I heard someone on a television talk show describing his life. From his mouth came the words, "You know, it's an inside job." My ears pricked up immediately. Program, I thought.

My first reaction was feelings of both familiarity and wariness. The first reaction I understood, but I wondered about the second.

After some thought, I figured it out. The program of NA is sacred to me. I feel protective toward it be-

cause I know where my life was headed before I found it.

Being in the media/entertainment field, I understand the importance of maintaining our anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films. Having access to the media machine can be tempting for someone on a "pink cloud."

As it happened, the person's words did not break his anonymity or anyone else's, but this experience clarified the meaning and importance of the traditions for me. I am grateful for this awareness. I believe that if the person had said he was a member of NA, it would have broken the Eleventh Tradition by tying the fellowship to the person's name, and to the show he was on. We as members carry the message of NA, but publicly we cannot personify it!

The fellowship is a group of individuals who work together to form a greater whole. In order for NA to keep working as it has for forty-plus years, we must all be mindful of our traditions. The idea of "attraction, not promotion" is one of the things that NA's survival hinges on. It is very important that NA does not become commercialized. If NA becomes so public that people can't be confident their anonymity won't be broken, NA won't work. Addicts won't recover.

When I first came around, I was scared and untrusting. I felt that my addiction was very private and personal. I would have been turned off by a message of recovery from a movie star on a TV talk show. Going to meetings is what saved my life. I was able to anonymously identify with other recovering addicts.

LF, New York

GSRs in chains

It was more than just a coincidence that I read the article, "Group Business: Not Something to be Ignored," when I first opened up the October 1994 issue of *The NA Way*. It was a God-thing. I usually start reading the magazine at the beginning, going methodically page by page, not wanting to miss anything. But this time the magazine fell open to page 24 and something caught my eye; it said, "a GSR is the first in line of communication between a group and Narcotics Anonymous as a whole. (GSRs) are the links that bind the groups together in the performance of our primary purpose. . . ."

Finding this in the magazine was a God-thing to me because it clearly said something I feel strongly about. These are the exact words I've been paraphrasing from the *Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure* in my report at the area service committee meeting for the last four months.

Why do I keep repeating the same words each month? So that people will hear them and take their message to heart. It's kind of like hearing a person's name at a meeting. If you hear it enough times, you might remember the name.

I also keep repeating myself because so many GSRs come and go; there's at least one new face each month. Someone coming in may

never have heard this message before.

GSRs need to know what it means to be a GSR, and they need to understand that their position should never be taken lightly. So many GSRs come in not really knowing what their position entails or why they're there. So many GSRs think their only responsibility is to buy keytags and literature.

But there's so much more. Being a GSR is to be the eyes, ears, and voice of your group. It's about being the link in a chain, in one direction representing your group and in the other informing your group about the rest of the chain—NA as a whole.

I would even go so far as to say that the entire service structure depends on GSRs to link it together. I bet that almost everyone currently serving the fellowship, from area to world service, has been a GSR at some point.

Most of us don't realize the awesome responsibility we take on when we first agree to be a GSR. I went to my first ASC meeting with a list of supplies to get and a donation to give. What was the big deal about a prudent reserve? What was a prudent reserve, anyway? I didn't even know what GSR stood for. There was so much going on. I was too proud to ask questions, and too new to know what to ask anyway.

What do I do at area service now? I try to keep the GSRs informed. Since I am policy chair, when issues come up, I try to resolve them according to our area's policy, *TWGSS*, and *Robert's Rules of Order*. I update area policy and guidelines and give them to all interested persons. Also,

I make available the notorious Fund Flow Chart, a list of acronyms (so that you, too, can know what ASC, WSC, *TWGSS*, WSB, GSR, etc. stand for), and excerpts from the *TWGSS* that define everything from what a member is to what the ASC does.

In my monthly report, I first thank everyone for attending the ASC. I express how important GSRs are and talk about what they're supposed to do. I advise them that to be thoroughly informed, they need to stay for the entire ASC meeting so that they in turn are able to pass the information on to their groups.

I also try to look for the "lost souls." You know, the new GSRs, the people looking dazed and confused. I take them aside and show them where to pick up flyers and forms and how to fill them out. I show them where they pick up their literature and where to give their donation. Most importantly, I thank them for coming and introduce them to other GSRs and ask if "old-timer GSRs" can answer any questions the "newcomer GSRs" might have during area service.

My first ASC meeting seems like such a long time ago. I've been attending area service now for almost five years. I started off as a GSR, then became area secretary, then treasurer, and now I'm policy chair. I was also a liaison to a neighboring area for nearly four years (did you know there's no mention in *TWGSS* of how long liaison positions are held?).

I was once asked rather sarcastically if I was an area service "junkie," and at first I took offense to that term, but if that's what I am, so be it. It's kept me clean.

AH, Maryland

From our readers



The light in a pitch-dark room

Although I tend to deny it, the truth about who I am still stands even after two years clean: I'm just a dramatic kind of guy. I always have been.

Two years ago, if you had told me I'd be living in Southern California, supporting myself, and staying clean, I would have asked you to show me the movie script you were writing, perhaps titled, "Modern-Day Dreamer."

So, here I am two years later, and it sure is real. Really happening. I truly feel as though I've come to a milestone in my recovery. I feel as though I've accomplished something in life, a commitment that I've kept—the first ever.

Nevertheless, the only way I can keep this priceless gift called recovery is by showing others how it works in my life. Honestly, I believe I have an understanding of the first three steps. I sometimes wonder why I had such a hard time letting down my wall of fear. If I had known then of the freedom I'm feeling now, I think I would have worked toward an understanding of truth sooner. Nevertheless, it happened the way it did for a reason.

Having admitted powerlessness and knowing I couldn't do this alone gave me the ability to turn to the group for help. I believe now that

reaching out to the group that way was truly the first step to a new way of life for me. Believing that a Power greater than myself could help restore me to sanity helped me to develop faith. Completely turning over my will and life to God as I understand Him gave me the strength to trust blindly. I knew that if it had worked for others who had felt at one time like me, then maybe if I was willing it would work for me, too. And it has.

In practicing these spiritual principles on a day-at-a-time basis, I have come across many spiritual occurrences. No matter who is put in my life and who is taken away, it is all for the sake of growing and learning. I have accepted that both good and bad situations give me new and helpful insights to live and learn by, and are revealed to me when my Higher Power feels that I am ready to incorporate them into my recovery.

I have also learned in my recovery that even gloomy days are okay because I'm clean. Gloomy days always pass. No longer do I have bad weeks and months. No more do I believe that my life sucks, and make excuses about why it sucks, searching for a cure and fooling myself into believing that the problem was someone or something else. Deep inside, I know the problem is me.

The bottom line is that I don't have to use. One day at a time, I have come to the realization that I am somebody. I can be anything on this earth that I choose to be, as long as I am willing to change and remain humble through both positive and negative experiences.

Today, I do believe I have something to share with other recovering addicts. I have a message. My nature is to use, but I am clean.

Today, I do have feelings and I am allowed to feel them. Honestly, I can open my heart to others without beating myself or getting high over the fact that I'm someone who feels. I am a man who has a willingness to learn to love and care about others, the kind of person who can be of service and give back happily what was so freely given to me.

I'm not afraid anymore to stand tall in a room full of people and share honest gratitude about something so

meaningful that only another recovering addict can honestly say, "I understand." Sharing about my experience and my hope, praying to God at night that maybe someone, just one newcomer sitting in the back of a meeting, feeling hopeless and lost, might hear the message and stay clean for just one more day.

When I first came around, I had no idea how much this program had to offer. All they told me was that if I stayed clean, I would change, one day at a time. I just kept coming back even on the days when I felt that I would never be anything but a hopeless dope fiend. Then, the miracle that they told me not to "leave five minutes before" happened. I heard the message of recovery. It just clicked on like a light in a pitch-dark room. Today, my world is full of light. I am a proud member of Narcotics Anonymous. I am clean, and I can honestly say I am finally free.

DW, California

COMPARISON SHOPPING

Annual average cost of:

Maintaining an active addiction	\$3,650-\$109,500
Video rentals	\$264
Seventh Tradition donations	\$192
NA dances	\$35
A large soft drink and bag of chips for snacking at a meeting	\$1,040
Convention merchandise (three conventions)	\$157
The service charge on your checking account	\$96
Photocopying for your service committee	\$252
Coffee after a meeting	\$2,432

**A one-year subscription to
The NA Way Magazine
\$15**

Comin'up

Calendar						
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BAHAMAS

Nassau: 2-5 Nov. 1995; 8th Bahamas Celebration; rsvns: (809) 363-8100; info: (809) 326-1428

BRAZIL

Rio de Janeiro: 26-29 Oct. 1995; Latin American Conference and Convention; City Park Hotel, Rio de Janeiro; info: (021) 533-5015; ACS: Rua Sao Jose, 90/sala 2205 Centro, Rio de Janeiro RJ CEP, Brazil 20.101-020

GERMANY

Lower Saxony: 24-26 Nov. 1995; 10 Years in Bremen Convention; info: 0421/50 39 49; 10 Jahre, Burgerzentrum, Am Nonnenberg, 28 239 Bremen/Oslebshause, Germany

INDIA

West Bengal: 12-14 Jan. 1996; First Calcutta Area Convention; Kishore Bharati Krirangan, Jadavpur, Santoshpur, Calcutta; info: please address fax to Sunil J. 0091-033-294948; NA Calcutta, PO Box 16105, Calcutta 700 017 India

Maharashtra: 26-28 Jan. 1996; 4th Bombay Area Convention; St. Xavier's Villa, Khandala; info: (0091) 22-627-1904 or (0091) 22-642-6520; fax: (0091) 22-605-0460; BACNA, PO Box 16489, Mahim, Bombay 400 016 India

IRELAND

Galway: 3-5 Nov. 1995; 11th Irish Convention; Galway; info: 8300911, ext. 486; Common Bond, 4/5 Eustace Street, Dublin 2, Ireland

MEXICO

Baja California Norte: 20-22 Oct. 1995; 3rd Baja California Convention; rsvns: US 800-GRAND-TJ; info: (011) 526-681-5248; CBCNA-3, 1329 Third Ave #116, Chula Vista, CA 91911

PHILIPPINES

Manila: 12-14 Jan. 1996; 1st Philippines Regional Convention; Manila; info: please address fax to Tata 632-8100279; Convention, PO Box 8535, Dasmariñas Village, Makati, Metro Manila, Philippines

UNITED KINGDOM

Greater London: 12-14 Apr. 1996; 7th Annual London Convention; London, England; info: 0171-538-0422; fax: 0171-515-5300

UNITED STATES

Alabama: 24-26 Nov. 1995; Greater Birmingham Area Conv.; Birmingham; rsvns: (205) 324-5000; info: (205) 925-0388; GBASC, PO Box 110805, Birmingham, AL 35211

California: 14 Oct. 1995; 6th Southern California Regional H&I Learning Day; Stanton; info: (310) 324-1547 or (909) 735-3041

2) 26-28 Jan. 1996; 1st San Fernando Valley Area Conv.; Burbank; rsvns: (800) 840-6540; info: (818) 753-5395

Florida: 5-8 Oct. 1995; South Florida Regional Conv.; Ft. Lauderdale; rsvns: (800) 426-8578; info: (305) 979-8998; Box 70155, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307

2) 23-26, Nov. 1995; Palm Coast Area Convention; rsvns: (407) 547-0590; info: (407) 471-5993; Serenity in the Sun, PO Box 3151, West Palm Beach, FL 33402

Georgia: 12-14 Jan. 1996; 8th Central Savannah River Area Convention; Augusta; info: (706) 796-2964 or (706) 733-2383; Peace in Recovery 8, PO Box 15863, Augusta, GA 30914

2) 15-18 Feb. 1996; 15th Georgia Regional Convention; Crowne Plaza Ravinia Hotel, Atlanta; rsvns: (770) 395-7700 or (800) HOLIDAY; info: (770) 787-7834 or (770) 267-5546; GRCNA-15, PO Box 1653, Monroe, GA 30655

Hawaii: 19-22 Oct. 1995; 4th Hawaii Regional Conv.; Turtle Bay Hilton, Oahu; rsvns: (800) HILTONS; info: (808) 236-3408; Convention, 98-456 Hoomailani Place, Pearl City, HI 96782

Illinois: 11-12 Nov. 1995; Greater Illinois Regional Mini-Convention; Holiday Inn, Gurney; rsvns: (708) 336-6300; info: (815) 637-2824; Greater Illinois Region, PO Box 6326, Peoria, IL 61601

2) 23-25 Feb 1996; 8th Chicagoland Regional Convention; Chicago; rsvns: (312) 464-1000; info: (708) 622-9664 or (708) 891-0759; Convention, 212 S Marion, Oak Park, IL 60304

Louisiana: 13-15 Oct. 1995; Bayou Recovery Area 14th Annual Moonlight Madness; Hidden Oaks Campground, Robert, Louisiana; Campground: (504) 345-9244; info: (504) 262-1664

2) 3-5 Nov. 1995; 3rd New Orleans Area Convention; New Orleans; rsvns: (800) 824-3359; info: (504) 948-4289 or (504) 365-1161; NOACNA III, PO Box 3928, New Orleans, LA 70117

3) 3-5 Nov. 1995; 14th Camp Recovery; Lake Bistineau; info: (504) 262-1664; North LA ASC, PO Box 44162, Shreveport, LA 71104

Michigan: 27-29 Oct. 1995; 4th Annual Kalamazoo Area Conv.; Kalamazoo; info: (616) 649-4738; KACNA, Box 50822, Kalamazoo, MI 49005

Mississippi: 13-15 Oct. 1995; 16th Mid-Mississippi Area Campout; Roosevelt State Park, Morton

Nebraska: 13-15 Oct. 1995; 12th Nebraska Regional Conv.; Hastings; rsvns: (402) 463-6721; info: (402) 462-4852; Box 684, Hastings, NE 68902

New Jersey: 27-29 Oct. 1995; 1st Northeast New Jersey Area Conv.; Elizabeth; info: (908) 382-5075; NENJAC, Box 409, Roselle, NJ 07203

2) 30 Dec. - 1 Jan. 1996; 3rd Bergen County Area Convention; Saddle Brook; rsvns: (800) 228-9290; info: (201) 791-7984; BASCNA, Box 864, Lodi, NJ 07644

3) 23-25 Feb. 1996; 6th Cape/Atlantic Area Convention; Seaview Marriott Country Club; rsvns: (800) 432-8000; info: (609) 863-9156; Convention, Box 231, Ocean City, NJ 08226

North Carolina: 12-14 Jan. 1996; Western North Carolina Area Convention; Asheville; rsvns: (704) 667-4501; info: (704) 253-8789; WNCANA, 59 Pleasant Ridge Drive, Asheville, NC 28805

Ohio: 13-15 Oct. 1995; 8th Ohio Regional Twelve-Step Retreat; Tar Hollow State Park, Chillicothe; info: (614) 539-9614 or (419) 342-4003

2) 24-26, Nov. 1995; 5th Greater Cincinnati Area Convention; rsvns: (513) 931-5712; info: (513) 542-5195; Box 24443, Cincinnati, OH 45224

Oregon: 24-26 Nov. 1995; Mid-Williamette Area Conv.; Wilsonville; info: (503) 390-1457; Committee, 5279 Pleasant Court, Keizer, OR 97303

Pennsylvania: 13 Oct. 1995; 20th Anniversary Harrisburg NA; 8 pm; Holy Spirit Hospital, Camp Hill

2) 27-29 Oct. 1995; Tri-State Regional Conv.; Pittsburgh; rsvns: (412) 281-3700; info: (412) 486-4372; TSRSO, Box 110217, Pittsburgh, PA 15224

South Carolina: 16-18 Feb. 1996; 7th Central Carolina Area Conv.; Hilton Head Island; rsvns: (800) ISLAND1 or (803) 842-4402; info: (803) 798-5408 or (803) 699-0717; CCACNA, Box 23534, Columbia, SC 29224

Tennessee: 6-8 Oct. 1995; Surrender Under the Stars Campout; Chattanooga; info: (615) 622-1939; Box 23024, Chattanooga, TN 37422

2) 22-26 Nov. 1995; Volunteer Regional Conv.; Memphis; rsvns: (800) 228-9290; VRC, Box 242135, Memphis, TN 38111

Texas: 6-8 Oct. 1995; 8th Best Little Regional Conv.; Abilene; info: (915) 368-5663; 1957 Vogel, Abilene, TX 79603

2) 8 Nov. 1995; 16th Dallas Area Anniversary; info: (214) 240-7890

3) 23-25 Feb 1996; Texarkana Area Convention; info: (903) 547-3092 or (903) 793-3421

Vermont: 3-5 Nov. 1995; Champlain Valley Area Conv.; Burlington; rsvns: (802) 658-6500; info: (802) 864-9119; Box 64714, Burlington, VT 05406

Virginia: 13-15 Oct. 1995; 3rd Outer Limits Area Unityfest; Williamsburg; rsvns: (800) 446-6001; info: (804) 583-5676; Unityfest, PO Box 8828, Norfolk, VA 23503

2) 5-7 Jan. 1996; 14th Annual Virginia Convention; Holiday Inn, Hampton; rsvns: (800) 842-9370 or (804) 838-0200; info: (804) 877-4921; AVCNA-14, PO Box 1449, Hampton, VA 23661

West Virginia: 3-5 Nov. 1995; Mountaineer Regional Fall Convention; Cedar Lakes, Ripley; rsvns: (304) 372-7860; info: (304) 727-9230; MRSC, PO Box 2381, Morgantown, WV 26502

Wisconsin: 27-29 Oct. 1995; 12th Wisconsin State Conv.; Wisconsin Dells; rsvns: (800) 388-4782 or (608) 254-8366; info: (608) 788-0447; WSNAC-2, Box 652, Sauk City, WI 53583

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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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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.



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