

THE NA Way MAGAZINE

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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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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 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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From the editor



Puzzled?

We hope you enjoyed our new feature last month—the word search puzzle. This month, we're running another one on page 14. Many of our readers have asked for puzzles over the years, and we've been able to run them from time to time, but we just never got around to doing it on a regular basis.

We're hoping to be able to feature a puzzle each month from now on. We have several "in the hopper," and want to invite you now to submit puzzles you'd like to share with other NA Way readers. Almost any kind of puzzle is acceptable—crosswords, word searches, etc.—but it must be relevant to NA recovery and in good taste, please. For example, a word search puzzle to find a variety of different drug names would probably be a bad idea. Send your puzzles to:

The NA Way Magazine
Attn: Editor
PO Box 9999
Van Nuys, California 91409

Annual index

On page 27, you'll find our annual index of stories. We've found this to be very helpful in the past. For instance, one of our readers will call and say, "I'm looking for a story. It was about recovery and lizards." (Yes, this really happened.) And we'll be able to search the annual indexes and locate the story, titled "Fighting the Gila Monster," featured in the October 1988 issue of *The NA Way*.

I've had several readers tell me they've really found it helpful when all of a sudden they get sick or go through a painful situation with family. They can go through the index, find the topic that's relevant, and read another recovering addict's experience, strength, and hope about just what they're going through.

1996 Home Group Calendar

The all new Home Group Calendar featuring Slugg and his friends is now available. Please use the order form on the last page of the magazine.

CT, Editor

A day in the life of a service junkie

Five AM. Up entirely too early in the morning, I get ready for work, get dressed, grab a cup of coffee my son has made for me, and sit down to write in my journal for fifteen minutes. Then I lock myself in the bathroom with *Just for Today*, my makeup, and hairbrush. Off to work for a new assignment with a temporary service, where I see on the bulletin board a list of local "self-help groups." No number for NA, so I add one.

Four PM. Home to start dinner with the telephone attached to the side of my head until I sit down at the table. One of the calls is from an H&I chair across the state who needs suggestions from a "regional person" about things happening in his area. I do what I can and hook him up with the regional H&I chair who lives in an area right near his.

Six-thirty PM. Off to my home group early because I'm the secretary and have to put out the literature. The area activities chair needs to see me about coordinating the holidays marathon meetings. The area treasurer wants to talk to me about changing the signatures on our checking account after we hold elections. At the group business meet-

ing, I go over the WSO inventory form for groups and get that out of the way. I'll mail it in the morning.

Ten-thirty PM. I'm home, but I still have another hour before I take my husband to work, so I work on some graphics for the area newsletter and send a quick note to my penpal in prison.

Twelve-thirty AM. Bed at last. I'm really tired.

Three-twenty AM. Tonight of all nights, the helpline can't reach anyone else, so my phone rings and I spend an hour with a suffering addict, who agrees to meet me at a meeting tomorrow night. There's still two hours before I have to get up and start all over, so I cuddle back up with my kitten and get some much-needed sleep.

No, this didn't really happen in one day, but it did all happen last week. Sometimes I wonder why I'm doing all of this stuff, then I walk into a meeting and see a face I recognize from detox. Or I get a thank-you from a man I asked to be responsible for the noon meeting when he was only a few months clean and couldn't believe anyone would trust him. Or I get to give a three-year medallion to a woman who got to her first meeting forty-five minutes late, and I was the only one there waiting for the miracle to happen. If service to NA were not so important to me, none of those things could ever have happened.

Too busy? Probably. Service junkie? No question. Grateful? Totally. Thank you, NA, for keeping me clean today. In loving service,

Anonymous

Doing a little footwork

Hello, family. I've wanted to write this letter for some time now, but my own fear has stopped me. I celebrated seven years clean this summer, and for that I am truly grateful.

When I cleaned up, NA was unavailable in my town (population 5,000). I came in through another twelve-step group, applied the principles to the best of my ability, and stayed clean. About two years ago, a fellow addict brought me into NA. I went to support this small group that met once a week. I loved NA, and like so many others, felt I was home for the first time in years. The need for more meetings was urgent, so we began a second meeting. Our meetings are small, but the core membership is devoted and things are beginning to happen. We joined an area and became active there.

I have noticed that there is a reluctance to get more meetings going. Most of us did at one time, or still do, belong to another twelve-step group. Rather than do the footwork to start new NA meetings, we search for an easier, softer way. The other twelve-step groups are already solid and formed, so we continue to support them. At first this angered me, until

I realized I could make a small difference by being an example, not by controlling.

Today I work the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions the NA way, with an NA sponsor. She lives two hundred miles from me, but the telephone always works and we manage to connect for supper at least once a month. I will be helping to start a third meeting as soon as we find a hall.

You see, the message I want to carry today is that there is hope: hope that we can recover in Narcotics Anonymous. I feel strongly about this, strongly enough to get me off my own butt and do a little footwork. Sometimes we feel like pioneers here, but we love the adventure. This spring, a couple of us are attending our first NA conference. We are truly excited. God is good, if you work with Him.

GL, Ontario



Made whole through NA

I'm an addict named Tami. Lately, I have been saying I'm an addict first, then my name. It's something I realized is important at a meeting the other day. The fact of the matter is, being an addict with obsessive and compulsive behavior has colored my entire existence. So today, I consider myself an addict who made a choice three-and-a-half years ago to get to know a person called Tami.

Tami, and the addict I was when practicing, were worlds apart. Tami got the bills in the mail, and was known by family and co-workers as a nice person. Then there was the addict, the me whose life took place in bars and bathrooms. You see, at the end of my active addiction, I not only had a drug of choice, but a room of choice: the bathroom.

I'm sure you all know where a life of active addiction takes you. I robbed my family, used my friends, and came close to death.

But not until 13 October 1990 did I know that there was a way to live my life without drugs. After all, I had

some kind of drug in me every day for seventeen years. At the end of my active addiction, I believed I was going to die. But I thought if I went away to treatment, I would get a break from all the insanity; then I could come home and use on weekends. But at this treatment center, I heard a lot of things that made me think about how I came to be there.

It was at this place that I was introduced to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. We had a meeting on Saturday night that two women conducted. At this meeting I heard someone stand up and tell her story. So many parts of it matched my own story, I decided to give this program a try. And for the first time in my life, I started to listen to what people told me.

I was really scared to go home from that treatment center, because I lived with a man who was still using. But I got honest and told people at the meetings what was going on at my house. They told me things like, "It's good you're telling us what's going on. Don't pick up the first one, and call me if you feel like using." I listened, and I did what they said.

I got a sponsor who had stayed clean through a similar situation, and she was a great help to me. She told me to stay in the center of recovery. She also explained that service work helps you to do that. So I took on a secretary's position at my home group. I was at that group without fail for fifty-two weeks in a row! That was the first time in my life I had seen any commitment through to the end. And at the end of that year my boyfriend entered recovery. His jour-

ney has been very different than mine, but one thing my recovery has taught me is to stay out of his recovery.

I'm happy to say that today my daughter lives in a drug-free home with both of us. No story about my recovery would be complete without telling you about my daughter. When I hit bottom, I got truly honest with her and explained what her mother had been up to all these years. She understood as best she could, considering she was only eight years old at the time.

When I came home from treatment, I explained to her that I needed to go to meetings every night. She decided that she would come along also. She was a great motivator in the beginning of my recovery. I would come home from work and she would say, "Let's go to a meeting." And we would go and after the meeting she would say, "Mom, is it okay that I sneaked a listen?" And I told her that was okay. When I started working my steps and got a little crazy, she would say, "Mom, call your sponsor!"

When I began working my Second Step, I started to understand what my Higher Power is and how He works in my life. I choose to call my Higher Power God. That's what's best for me. You see, God planted a seed in me, and for a time my daughter tended that seed. Now I've come to understand how the Twelve Steps and the people in the rooms of NA are tending that seed. And believe me, it has grown since the day I arrived. One of the most important things I've come to understand over the short

time I've been in NA is that I can't stay clean by myself, but we can stay clean together.

Through belonging to this fellowship, I have learned by practical application the meaning of the Twelve Traditions of NA and how they help our fellowship grow and stay strong. When I say practical application, I mean making mistakes and having people point out that what I was doing wasn't in the best interest of NA. Believe me, I've done this a few times, and nobody ever kicked me out. They just hugged me and told me to keep coming back. And I kept coming, and learned how to accept that I can be wrong from time to time.

The service work I do today has given me the avenue to give back what was given to me three-and-a-half years ago. I am still involved in my home group as a GSR-alternate, and will always support my home group somehow. But what is really meaningful to me right now is my commitment to be H&I chairperson for our area. This position has taught me a lot about taking the message of recovery to the institutions in our area.

The wonderful experiences I have had doing H&I work are so numerous that I can't possibly write about them all. But the one thing that stands out in my mind is when someone comes to my home group who first heard the message of recovery at an H&I meeting that I chaired, and then tells me that he or she has a year clean. That is truly a message from my Higher Power.

TS, Pennsylvania

Belonging

I'm seventeen years old and have been clean a little over eighteen months. I'm living proof that just because you're young, that doesn't mean you can't stay clean. NA has saved my life, or rather, given me a new and better life.

When I was at a meeting the other night, the topic happened to be family. I heard a lot of people talking about their biological families. When I think of family, it is the people around these tables in the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous, that come to mind.

I often hear people say that NA is their home. There's a reason for that. For a long time I felt like I didn't belong to anyone, or anything. I felt unloved, unwanted, not cared about. Then I came to NA, and I was welcomed. No one was better or worse than anyone else. For the first time in a long time, I belonged.

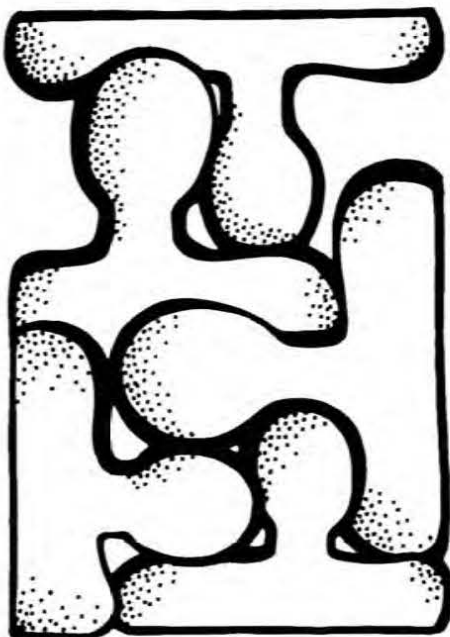
I have developed a strong network of friends in NA. We can rely on one another, and that's what it's all about—recovering; sharing our experience, strength, and hope; and carrying the message to the addict who still suffers. NA is where I can cry, laugh, and shout and it's okay, because I can just keep coming back.

I bounced in and out of NA for two-and-a-half years before I got the mes-

sage and accepted it. After each relapse, people were supportive and told me to keep coming back. I expected everyone to look down on me and say, "Oh, Gwyn, you'll never make it. You've relapsed too many times." But no one ever did. I got hugs and reassurance.

No matter where I go, NA is there. Whenever I walk into a meeting of Narcotics Anonymous, regardless of where it is, I'm home, because there is always the same message—the message I need to hear to stay clean. NA is where I'm loved, trusted, and cared about. No one looks down on me because I'm young. They all love me just the same. They love me for who I am today, not what I was, or even what I will be. For me, NA is where it's all at. And I'll continue to care and share with others the NA way.

GS, Washington



A just-for-today Third Step

I have seen and been the recipient of too many miracles not to believe they exist. And I know it's a loving God working. Of all the gifts I've received in NA, having a personal and loving God is the greatest gift—the one I'm most grateful for. When I am saying thank you, it is what I say thank you for most often. And when I feel lost and alone and I take an honest look, God is always there. My fear lessens, and I realize again what is really important. It's the love in my life, love from God in all the people God sends, and all the love I am capable of feeling today.

I strive for surrender, for faith, and for a closer connection to God. But oh, do I ever have to practice that. I have so many character defects struggling for attention. This is the way I work the Third Step that keeps it simple for me:

If for some reason God showed up at the front door and said, "Hey! I don't usually do this, but I decided to give you a break. Today is your last day on this earth."

Knowing that, how would I choose to live my last day? First, I would thank God that I had one more day, and I'd ask for help to stay clean. I would live as I believe God would have me live. Worry and fear would have no place; money and material things, no meaning; anger, resentment, and remorse, no purpose.

I would make sure those I loved knew how much I loved and appreciated them. I would forgive those who have hurt me, because not to do so would take up space better filled with loving, forgiving, and *living* my last day. I would give of my time, my attention, and my thoughts to those God put into my life that day. I would treat everyone with kindness. I would forgive myself, because not to do so would prevent my joy in living my last day. I'd thank God for the gift of life. I would cherish my time with my children and my husband. And I would know I could go, because I did the best I could that day. Everything would turn out okay, because there's a loving God in charge.

The prayer I say each morning is a lot simpler, but these are the thoughts and feelings behind my just-for-today, God's-in-charge Third Step.

MBL, Connecticut

A newcomer once again

I recently moved from one part of the country to another—more than 2,000 miles—and it has been difficult adjusting to the changes. With nine years clean, I am a newcomer once again, and I really don't like it.

I have moved before in my recovery, and with each relocation I have been challenged with new meetings, new members, and new formats. At the same time, with each move I have become separated from all that was familiar and comfortable.

My goal has been to either find or create meetings where I felt at home. In some areas those meetings were there to be found. In others I had to work with other members to create an atmosphere that was clearly Narcotics Anonymous. That is really what I am after when I attend a meeting: a sense that I am definitely in the right place.

I came here on a scouting trip earlier this year, to look for job opportunities and to check out the local fellowship. The first meeting I attended was one of the worst I have ever attended, and it scared me. I didn't like the format; most of the participants seemed disinterested in recovery; and there were no hugs. At

the end of the meeting, we closed in a circle and then everyone just walked away. For someone who has thrived on the human contact hugs provide, this was not good news. Instead of continuing my search, I withdrew until I returned to the safety of my old area. The reason all of this was so frightening was that I knew I was definitely going to be making the move, as my new bride was attending the university here. This was going to be my new home—like it or not.

When we made the actual move three weeks ago, I resolved to find meetings I would want to attend regularly. It took a few tries, but I began identifying meetings that had step study formats. Although the format was still a bit alien, the steps were not. The focus on the steps of Narcotics Anonymous gave the discussion direction.

This desire to attend step study meetings, however, required some work on my part. First, I had to identify groups that did step studies. Some were listed in the meeting list, but others were discovered by talking to fellow addicts about the meetings in the area. Second, I had to be willing to travel. This is a large city, and step meetings are as far as forty-five minutes away. I drive thirty minutes to my home group. I am beginning to get to know folks who attend regularly, and I have identified a few who like to hug at the end of the meeting.

I also attended the group's monthly business meeting and the area service committee meeting. I discovered that there are some really committed members in the area.

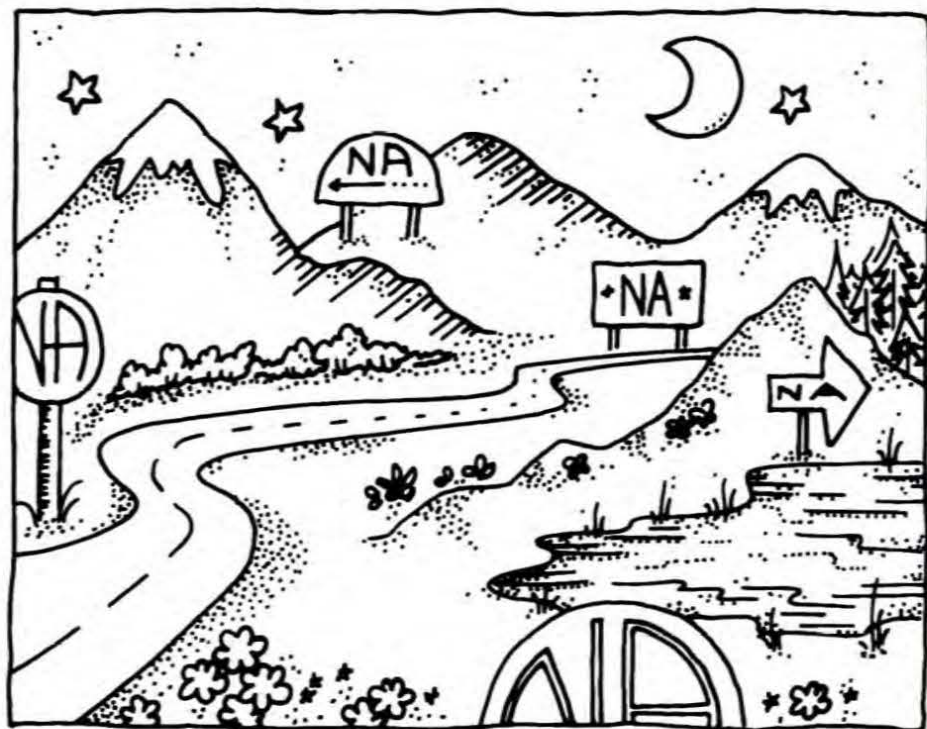
Twenty-six out of twenty-eight groups were represented at the meeting, and some of the groups have as many as seven meetings each. It was great to observe the willingness and to see the same old kinds of issues debated and resolved. I felt more at home after that meeting.

Telephone contact has been important. I have used the phone to connect with members from my old area to provide support as I make the adjustment. One friend from there had also moved earlier this year and is in the same time zone (which is helpful). Both of us have experienced difficulties adjusting to our new locations, but I have been able to benefit from his experience. Each of us had

to search out meetings where we were comfortable. Each of us found some.

This move has brought a variety of fears. The most difficult has been the fear of not feeling connected to NA. I felt like I was in a new world here—an unfamiliar world filled with dangers and strangers. Today I know that is not true. Narcotics Anonymous is thriving here and is providing me with all the support I need to continue to face my challenges. But I had to reach out to other members, seek out meetings that I enjoyed, and embrace the local Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship as my new home. I feel “a part of” once again.

Anonymous



Time to clean house

Sometime in June of 1994, I found myself in a place I had never been before. I was suicidal. I had absolutely no desire to continue with life on earth. I hadn't felt like this since before I got clean.

At that time, I had finished up graduate school somehow, and was anxious about finding a job that would fix me. The catch was that I could not produce a clean urine test. My job was on the rocks, as were most of my relationships and financial matters. I lived to use and used to live. For the first time in fifteen years (or so I thought, anyway), my drug addiction had me in a dark, dark corner and I couldn't get out. I was definitely powerless, and my life was more than unmanageable.

Coincidences began to happen and before I knew it, my recovery began. I was introduced to NA. At first, I went to another place, but I did not feel very comfortable. I can't tell you why; it's just so. I can say that today, because when I walked into the rooms of NA, something happened. I can't tell you exactly what it was, but I'm alive as a result.

I could relate to what I heard and saw. I heard the desperation, feelings, and situations I had experienced, sometimes in the past, sometimes right at that moment. I wasn't quite sure that I needed to be clean as long as some of you had been, but I did what you said. I kept coming back. I took your suggestions about going to any lengths to stay clean.

After all, I had no other choice. Nothing else had ever worked. I slept on your couches, ate your food, listened to your stories, went with you to shop, and got involved when you told me to. Thank you, by the way, for not merely suggesting, but telling me, insisting.

Unfortunately, when I thought I had been clean long enough—a whopping fifty-nine days—I used just a “little.” Once again, you were right. I went right back to where I came from, and the corner was even darker, and death was even closer. But I did what you told me. I kept coming back.

It's been six years now since that day in September of 1988 when I tried to prove you wrong. A lot has changed since then—me most of all. Nothing on the outside has changed a great deal; my family is pretty much the same. My life is different, really different, but it still goes up and down like a roller coaster, just as it always has. I'm convinced it always will. But the way I handle it has changed a great deal.

My first three years were just about staying clean. Not by choice; that was just all I could handle. I went to seven to ten meetings a week,

did service, stayed away from family and friends who could jeopardize my recovery. I worked with a sponsor and read the text daily. You helped me admit I was powerless. I had no problem admitting that my life was unmanageable. With nowhere else to go, I worked the Second and Third Steps. I had no choice, really. I had to believe that I was going to be okay, and I knew that I did not have the answers. No one did; the answers were in the steps.

I was scared—well, petrified is more like it. My body and soul felt different the day I truly turned my will and life over for the first time. By this time, I knew that I never wanted to go back to that dark corner. That was not my path.

NA put me on a new path and you people showed me the way to live. Before I knew it, I had a good job and was a responsible member of society again. I had some money in my pocket, a nice place to live, people in my life, and, yes, a relationship—a romantic relationship.

I fell in love with a man in the program. You told me that was okay, too. Then came the house, marriage, nice cars, and more things. I wasn't really trying to get all that stuff, but it just kept happening. I knew deep down that it was quick, but I didn't do anything to try to slow it down. I didn't stop going to meetings or trying to work a program, but I did stop feeling.

Before I knew it, not long before my sixth NA birthday, I felt like I was back in the corner—the dark one. I didn't feel good, not spiritually, mentally, or physically. I realized that I

had crashed, and upon impact, reality set in. It wasn't pleasant.

Perhaps my reason for writing was so I could see it. It's real, and more work needs to be done. But I don't dread the work, or think it too hard to do. Instead, I look forward to it. I love the work I have done in my recovery. It has given me back myself. It may be a day at a time, but recovery is a lifetime commitment for me.

I'm thrilled to feel the surrender. Right now, I don't care so much about what *you* are doing, *your* wrong decisions. I only care about mine. Once again, I find myself truly praying for the courage and wisdom and willingness to do what I must to continue on my path. The tears come freely these days, not like six years ago. So do the words when I try to express them. Even though I feel like I have just awakened from a dream, and don't really remember much of the last three years, the nice thing is that it's not a nightmare. It's just time to clean house. It's dusty in here.

Don't get me wrong. I love my life today. It's not like those dark days when I was new. But I've never really come to that self-love place either. I get close, and then run. I have made a commitment to live the steps so I can love myself the way some of you love yourselves. And by the way, all those distractions—the people, the controversies—those are behind me today. My ego has been calmed by my higher power's love. The love of my higher power is the only thing that can calm the diseased thinking in my head.



A lot of you have come and gone since I've been here. Some are dead; some using; some alive and happy, but just not around; and some are still right by my side. The fellowship has grown a lot: new areas, new regions, new policies, new faces. I still see some dysfunction from time to time, but NA as a whole—it's just the same. I know that, because when I walk into an NA meeting, the same things happen that happened when I first walked in. I walk into a meeting and I feel those incredible feelings.

I never stopped going to meetings; I guess that is why I've stayed clean in spite of distractions. I stopped feeling because it seemed too painful. Today I know that I have to go to meetings regularly, reach out, reach in, and feel and live those spiritual principles in the steps and traditions. By doing that, I have a chance to live with this powerful disease from which there is no known cure. Fortunately, thanks to NA, it can be arrested and recovery is then possible. That is why I call myself a

recovering addict. I need to remind myself that it's not just about staying clean; it's about recovering.

Thanks so much to those of you who have helped me. Some of you I know and some I don't. Thanks to those of you who annoyed me, scared me, and reminded me just how much work I need to do to stay clean and recover. Thanks to those of you who showed me what I can have if I don't do the work. Thanks to NA for the six best years of my life. I don't know what tomorrow will bring, but at least I had a chance to truly live today.

It's true; you don't always get what you want. And yes, I also believe it's true that you don't always get what you need. But thanks to NA, I have a program that teaches me to accept that I get what I get. And what I've got today is myself and another day clean. So, if you are clean and experiencing a "mid-life recovery crisis," I suggest that you get back to basics and never leave them again.

Anonymous

WORDSEARCH

Our Basic Text tells us that it's difficult for us to find our assets because for most of us it's hard to accept that we have good qualities. Well, that may be, but one thing we can accept with no trouble is that this puzzle is full of good qualities. They run horizontally, vertically, and diagonally, both backwards and forwards. Maybe, just maybe, you'll find some here that are also in you.

A	C	V	I	G	I	L	A	N	K	G	K	M	I	T	T	E	D	K
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N	N	L	T	T	A	C	O	N	C	O	M	M	I	T	T	E	D	U
E	O	E	R	E	C	N	I	S	L	E	L	B	N	A	E	T	O	S
H	I	U	M	G	H	L	T	Y	O	H	O	L	L	E	J	I	G	P
T	S	L	N	R	L	O	S	H	T	I	L	L	I	W	P	U	A	H
I	S	U	N	G	I	E	D	U	T	I	E	A	R	G	W	U	O	S
T	A	F	W	T	N	M	J	A	D	E	S	P	K	I	H	P	N	D
A	P	T	A	Y	I	E	I	P	F	N	G	S	O	H	O	G	P	F
R	M	C	R	L	O	N	A	M	L	L	I	W	D	H	O	O	G	P
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C	Y	S	S	A	P	M	O	C	C	I	R	E	S	S	A	T	H	I
E	E	T	A	R	E	D	I	S	N	O	C	O	N	C	E	E	R	A
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ASSERTIVE
COMMITTED
COMPASSIONATE
CONSIDERATE
COURAGE
EMPATHY
FAITH
FORGIVING
GENEROSITY
GOD CENTERED

GOODWILL
GRATITUDE
HELPFUL
HONESTY
HOPE
HUMILITY
INTEGRITY
JUST
KIND
OPENMINDEDNESS

PERSEVERANCE
PRUDENT
PURPOSE
SINCERE
TACTFUL
TEACHABLE
TOLERANT
VIGILANT
WILLINGNESS
WISDOM

answers on page 23

Home Group

Gosh-what an incredible meeting tonight. I can't stop thinking about it...it was great!



I feel so inspired-my spirit feels rejuvinated!-I was so tired when I got there-now I feel alive and aware-I can't even sleep-my brain is buzzing with all the great recovery I heard!



Or maybe it was the twelve cups of coffee I drank.





Newsletters

Hey! Get a home group!

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

In May of 1986, after waffling around the fellowship for some time, I was introduced to my first business meeting. An acquaintance in the rooms (I had no friends, only acquaintances) asked me to hang out with him since his sponsor suggested that he stay for the business meeting. I resisted the suggestion, letting him know that I wasn't dressed for a business meeting and didn't even have my briefcase with me, but I moved too slowly and wasn't able to flee in time.

The next thing I knew, I was being cheered and applauded as the new assistant coffee maker. "What on earth does that mean, and what's this assistant bulls___, anyway?" I thought.

The next week I was faced with this choice: get high or make the coffee. Fearing the consequences—the group members coming after me, or, at the very least, the meeting's topic being the jerk who didn't show up to make the coffee—I showed up early to fulfill my commitment. Since I was there anyway, I also set up chairs.

Soon, people began coming in to sit on my chairs and drink my coffee—almost as if they were visiting at my house. For the first time since I was a small child, I felt at home. That group became my home group, and I haven't had to use since.

A home group is just that: home, a place to know and be known, a place you can relax and feel comfortable. It is through my home group that I make my strongest commitment to NA unity and to carrying the message. It is where I get my strongest feeling of a loving God expressing himself through our group conscience.

Through the years, I have seen those who are strongly committed to a home group stay clean and flourish.

I also believe that as we move farther away from the group level in our service to the NA fellowship, the farther away we can get from a loving God. Only by maintaining strong

roots in my home group am I able to bring that feeling of group conscience with me to all my service commitments.

If you're new, please get a home group. Nothing enhances your feeling of belonging more than having a home group. If you already have one, please support it. Our lives depend on the atmosphere of recovery in the meetings. If our groups are strong, all is well.

Anonymous

Non-professional?

From the *Inside Connection*, the American River, California area newsletter:

Non-professional! Just what the hell does that mean? I was a professional addict. I made a damned good living (or was it dying) in the dope business. For the first two years I was clean, all I did was recovery, the NA way. Did that make recovery my profession?

Not really. What "non-professional" means in the Eighth Tradition is that we, as NA members, don't diagnose anyone's condition or track anyone's recovery. There are no doctors or patients. If we had professional therapeutic, medical, legal, or psychiatric staff, we would need clients for these people. Wouldn't it

make two classes of addicts? That wouldn't work for me.

What I have found in NA is a home, a fellowship of recovering addicts who meet regularly. When I got here, I didn't ask, "What makes you people qualified to help me?" I didn't see any credentials on the walls. No one had a shingle out. No one who shared did so after first adding lots of letters after his or her name. Can you imagine? "My name is so-and-so Ph.D, MFCC, SJ, Esq. and I'm an addict."

What I heard people talking about instead was how they felt, where the drugs had taken them, where they were at today, and where they wanted to go. I understood because I'd been there, felt what they had, and ended up in the same places. I heard hope in the change they'd experienced and in their desires for the future. I knew I could share in their hope. All I had to do was the same as they had done.

Why did you people care about me? Because of a fat salary? Bonuses? The possibility of saving someone from the hell of addiction that you knew only through a medical text? No! It was because you too had lived in the hell of my understanding.

So does this mean we are all bums with no profession, credentials, or special training? No! Many of our members have many of these things in their personal lives, but these things don't matter in our meetings. All that matters in our meetings and in helping each other is our personal experience, strength, and hope in recovery.

The Eighth Tradition qualifies its specification that NA be non-professional with something else: Namely, that "our service centers may employ special workers." I'm surprised to hear that some people don't understand this. Would you hire a mechanic to fill a tooth? Or a dentist to paint your house? Just because a good accountant was "good" at being an addict doesn't mean that someone who's a "good" addict will make a good accountant. This means that if we need a lawyer, we should hire a lawyer. If we need a good office manager, we should hire one who has the education and experience needed. Addict or not, a specialized job requires a specialized skill.

Anonymous

Relapse: not a requirement

**From, *Clean Times*,
the Funcoast, Florida Area
Newsletter:**

Someone made a comment to me many years ago that has helped me stay clean since that first and only white keytag. They told me that starting that day I would never have to use again. I was told that I now had a choice and a solution.

Before coming to NA, I had only

heard that addicts never recover. Yes, I am still an addict. That does not mean, however, that I have to be a sick or practicing addict. Today, Narcotics Anonymous has given me the tools to stay away from mood- and mind-altering chemicals, one day at a time. It has also provided me with twelve simple steps to live a clean and serene life.

I almost get the impression sometimes that relapse is a part of our program. I sit in the meetings and hear people speak of relapse as if it is something that everyone does. Relapse is not part of our program. That's not to say we would ever kick out someone who does relapse. It simply means that there is a solution, and NA does not have relapse as one of its Twelve Traditions.

I realized after coming to NA that there were no good reasons to go out and use. There were only poor excuses. If I choose to go out and use, I am being dishonest with myself and the First Step. I am also giving up my membership in NA. "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using."

Today, I must remember to utilize the tools that my Higher Power has provided for me. When cravings or urges to act out come, that is when I need to get off my lazy behind and use the program. I know today that I must stay close to the program and the people in it, because I won't make it back if I use again. All I can say to those of you who ignore the suggestions and go out to try the insanity again is that I hope you make it back.

KM

Viewpoint



How we got our priorities in order

I just got off the phone with a woman I sponsor. She was positively jubilant and filled with the wonder and spirit this fellowship has to offer. It's a special miracle, because lately she's been downright miserable while working on a Seventh Step.

Because of that call, along with NA Way articles like "Taking Back our Twelfth Step" and "Staying Clean Has to Come First," and your request for area news, I was prompted to write.

For years, our area has been struggling with our participation in a regional helpline. Politics, personalities, lack of commitment, money problems due to convention thefts, and the logistics of providing service to a large, diverse, urban, and suburban region have delayed the planned toll-free number for several years.

Horror stories of addicts calling for help and finding none, and institutions seeking information and getting none, were the norm rather than the exception.

Each month at ASC we fought over sending money for a service we weren't receiving. Some felt it was like paying your neighbor's phone bill. Service meetings were full of frustration. Throughout our area and region, convention committees were the happening place to be and primary services just weren't happening. We were so intent on throwing a big party for ourselves that the addict not here yet wasn't getting the message.

Our area took a stand. No conventions! We wanted all service positions filled and we wanted fully functional service committees. It took about a year. The area is growing and growing up. People are staying and getting involved, and some of our members with time are back as a result. Our H&I commitments are full and we have people on a waiting list for the next opening. Our PI committee is kicking! We've done mailouts to schools and institutions, donated Basic Texts to libraries, have booths and presentations planned, and best of all, we've started an area helpline.

The reason for my sponsee's joy and phone call was that she has the

phoneline beeper this week. Two people she spoke to were at the meeting tonight and had come out to the diner afterward. She was feeling the joy of selfless service, and of being an instrument of the message, and she called to share it with me.

I have served all over this fellowship, from coffee person to area chair and regional subcommittee chair. Nothing is better than the feeling I get from helping another human being one-on-one. Getting high *never* felt this good. The experience I share with sponsees is that steps and home group service have to come first.

The humility needed in Steps Six and Seven, and the indirect amends called for in Steps Eight and Nine, are best found and expressed by serving the still sick and suffering addicts we haven't met yet. Service-oriented recovery is a disservice to everyone, but recovery-oriented service is a blessing to us all.

BC, Pennsylvania

Get ready!

I was recently at a workshop concerning the God and gender discussion. I heard many good points made, and most of the pros and cons were backed up by quotes from our literature.

However, I have several concerns: One is the self-righteousness ex-

pressed by many. Sure, we need to have beliefs and opinions, but is it right to push them onto others and be condescending when they don't agree? Also, how about the way we talk to each other, without listening? It would appear that the person sharing believes, "I am right, so just line up behind me!"

My fear is that our fellowship as a whole won't be able to accept the final decision. Even if we don't agree with the decision, will we be able to accept it anyway, without causing disunity?

All right, I have taken a lot of inventories, now let me try to get into the solution. The First Tradition says to do what is good for the group instead of me. The Second Tradition says I am not capable of making consistently correct decisions, so I need to have faith in God. If I am open-minded, I can listen to what other people are saying. I need to have the willingness to make a commitment to this fellowship, even when I don't get my way.

Most of us know these things about the traditions, and understand that we need to apply spiritual principles in our lives. But will we practice what we preach? Can we admit we're powerless in this area? Can we stop trying to control people, places, and things? Can we accept that all of our thinking isn't rational? Can we remember that we made a decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of our Higher Power? Can we remember that a loving God may express Himself—if we ask Him to—in our group conscience? Can we treat others as equals, and not put any

conditions on our unconditional love? Can we remember to ask ourselves if we are doing our fair share, or sitting back and complaining?

We all have many thoughts on this issue. If we approach it with a caring and loving attitude, we will be able to evaluate our steps, traditions, and spiritual values.

We as a fellowship need to be able to honestly and openly discuss any issues. We will be faced with many in the future. We need to be spiritually ready.

Anonymous

Principles not broken, but need new expression

I'm really glad to be clean and able to write this or anything else. I was dying when I came to NA, and my life and some sanity have been restored through a Higher Power that I've acquired in this program.

When I first read about Motion 39, I was so glad that other addicts had found the courage to speak up and put my feelings and thoughts into a motion. I realize that not everyone

will agree with me, but it is important for me to remember that just because we recover doesn't mean we will agree on everything. It was the diversity of the members in our rooms that first attracted me to NA. Thankfully, that hasn't changed.

I've been reading a lot of articles that seem to be written by people who have the attitude that, "If only you worked the steps like I have, you'd know I'm right." And that simply isn't true. We have each come from our own experiences and have our own perspectives on this issue and many more. I won't try to discredit your recovery just because you disagree with me.

I was just reading the chapter on the First Tradition in *It Works: How and Why*. What an amazing piece of literature we have here! In that chapter it speaks of unity not being the same as uniformity; of the importance of seeking to understand other perspectives with an open mind; of listening and looking for a better understanding of the needs and problems of our own group, without losing sight of the bigger picture of what is good for NA as a whole, and of those who are yet to join us.

I am asking for those who are opposed to Motion 39 to simply consider the possibility that for many in our fellowship, myself included, the repeated reference to a Higher Power as masculine is a problem. Language is powerful, and research has shown that the word "he" no more includes the feminine than does the word "policeman" or "fireman." Sexism permeates our society, and I have become acutely aware of the second-

class status that women have in society. I hope we take the steps necessary to see that this doesn't continue to carry over into our fellowship.

On 14 July, I celebrated seven years clean. Narcotics Anonymous is the foundation of my recovery. I'll keep coming back no matter what. I am not afraid of change in NA. It has been NA that has taught me how positive change can be. It has been my resistance to change that has caused me the most pain, and I believe that resistance to change by the fellowship will cause much more disunity than the change itself.

The words we choose to use are important. One very small word we chose to add to each of our steps, when they were first adapted many years ago, may have seemed to some to be picky or unnecessary, but we as a fellowship decided that it would better promote unity and express our need for each other. That small two-letter word had a significant impact on our identity as a fellowship. That word was "we."

Now another small word is having an impact on our fellowship, but this word is divisive in nature rather than unifying. The word "he" implies a religious affiliation and suggests that our common belief is that a Higher Power is masculine, with masculine characteristics. Both of these point out our differences—religious beliefs and gender—rather than our similarities.

Our steps and the principles in them are not broken, but some of the words no longer adequately express the principles. Language changes, just as our society does and we as

individuals do. In my recovery, issues are revealed to me as I have grown sufficiently to deal with them. Perhaps our fellowship has grown enough to deal with this issue now. It's here!

NA has saved my life, and I have an interest in its continued growth and direction. I am grateful for this forum so I can express my ideas. Thanks, family, for listening.

DM, Texas



God makes it all possible

I am writing this letter to stand strong with those who believe in this program the way it is. We need to remember to keep it simple. Don't fix it if it's not broken. Hear, hear! Is the program still saving lives, still keeping us clean, still bringing the suffering addict back? Of course it is!

Then what's the problem? I, too, along with countless others, had a problem with God when I first came to the rooms of NA, but given time I learned to listen and relate. It was then I learned that I was the problem, not drugs, not God, and certainly not the way our literature reads. It was my ego and self-centeredness—the core of my disease.

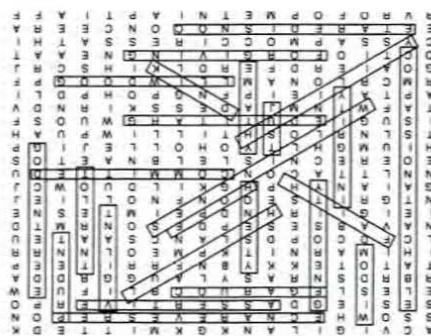
I accepted this program and the God written about therein because my life was at stake, and furthermore, I was accepted by the fellowship just as I was then and as I am now.

We all have a choice about how we understand our God. Personally, I think referring to God as an "it" or "a" God sounds pretty insignificant, like we're talking about a wall, a shoe, a box, etc. God is anything but insignificant. God is the power that sus-

tains my recovery and gives me hope and courage to share with others the love I have found in NA.

I have gotten past my problem with God, and yes, it took time. I know addicts are generally in a hurry to fix or change the things we don't like. But the longer I've been around, I've found the way I think things should be are not necessarily good for me or others. We need to accept NA as a new way of life, and get on with living and learning about solutions to our problems. Our way doesn't work, remember? NA works! The power greater than you and I makes it all possible. And that power made it all possible long before you and I were here to complain about how we refer to him.

VB, Alabama



From our readers



Wrapped around my heart

Like many addicts today, I was introduced to NA through an H&I meeting. The only thing I remember about that very first H&I meeting was the chairperson talking about total abstinence from all drugs, and saying that NA was about recovery from the disease of addiction.

I had never considered total abstinence. I had spent the previous ten years in a drug-specific program, trying not to use a specific drug. I used every other drug I could get my hands on, however and my disease progressed rapidly.

I got to know the chairperson of the H&I meeting pretty well while I was in treatment. Later, he would become my first sponsor. Besides teaching me the things necessary to stay clean, including working the steps, my first sponsor showed me just how effective H&I can be in carrying out NA's primary purpose.

It is difficult for me to express what it's like when a newcomer sees you at a meeting and says he remembers when you shared at a hospital or institution he was in. It is a feeling that makes those of us who do H&I service keep doing H&I service.

There is another reason I continue to do H&I service. It is in memory of my first sponsor, B. B and I went our separate ways around my first NA

birthday, when he moved several hundred miles away. Two years later, B met a violent, premature death at the hands of another addict. Until the day he died, B was an active member of NA, and deeply committed to H&I. It is for these reasons that I feel as committed to H&I service after five years as I did during those first few months.

Currently, I am our area's H&I chair, and I enjoy it very much. It's very easy to chair a committee whose members are motivated, committed members of Narcotics Anonymous, and who constantly amaze me in their ability to get the job done and to do it well.

Still, as always, we need help. I don't exaggerate when I say there is an endless list of jails, prisons, hospitals, and treatment centers asking for H&I meetings. Our committee frequently has to turn down such requests for lack of people. So please, consider this an open invitation to check out H&I. If you like what you see, I promise we will find something for you to do. However, be forewarned, there is no such thing as a being sort of an H&I member. A little taste of H&I and it gets under your skin, wraps around your heart, and then touches your soul.

HW, Arizona

Comin' up

Calendar											
	1	2	3	4	5						
6	7	8	9	10	11	12					
13	14	15	16	17	18	19					
20	21	22	23	24	25	26					
27	28	29	30	31							

CANADA

British Columbia: 31 Dec. 1995; Lower Mainland Multi-Area Presents "The Traditions Continue" New Year's Eve Dinner & Dance; info: (604) 522-6561 or (604) 271-8034 or (604) 294-3458; FVASC, PO Box 576, Surrey, British Columbia, Canada V3T 5B7

2) 22-24 Mar. 1996; South Vancouver Island Area Convention; Victoria; info: (604) 479-1682; SVIACNA, PO Box 8284, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 3R9

INDIA

West Bengal: 12-14 Jan. 1996; First Calcutta Area Convention; Kishore Bharati Krirangen, 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

PHILIPPINES

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

California: 31 Dec. 1995; Southern California Regional New Year's Eve Extravaganza; Burbank Hilton, Burbank; rsvns: (800) HILTONS; info: (818) 242-9127 or (310) 928-6361; 1935 South Myrtle, Monrovia, CA 91016

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

3) 9-11 Feb. 1996; 4th Central California Regional Convention; Doubletree Inn, Ventura; rsvns: (805) 643-6000; info: (805) 486-3373; CCRCA, PO Box 281, Somis, CA 93066

4) 5-7 Apr. 1996; 5th Southern California Regional Spring Gathering; Manhattan Beach Radisson Hotel; rsvns: (800) 333-3333; info: (310) 693-5110 or (714) 638-5898; SCR Spring Gathering, PO Box 2543, Orange, CA 92669

Connecticut: 5-7 Jan. 1996; 11th Connecticut Regional Convention; Stamford Sheraton, info: CRCNA, PO Box 6462, Hamden, CT 06517

Florida: 31 Dec. 1995; South Dade Area New Year's Eve Dance; info: (305) 826-0674

2) 29-31 Mar. 1996; Florida Spring Service Break; info: (407) 735-0601

3) 25-28 Apr. 1996; North Atlanta Area 20th Annual Reunion and Fun in the Sun Convention; Panama City Beach, Florida; rsvns: (800) 224-4853 info: (404) 248-9155; Fun in the Sun, 2480 Briarcliff Road, Box 243, Atlanta, GA 30329

Georgia: 12-14 Jan. 1996; 8th Central Savannah River Area Convention; Augusta; info: (706) 796-2964 or (706) 733-2383; Peace in Recovery 8, 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 or (912) 953-7906; GRCNA, PO Box 1653, Monroe, CA 30655

Idaho: 12-14 Apr. 1996; 7th Southern Idaho Regional Convention; Holiday Inn, Pocatello; rsvns: (800) 465-4329 or (208) 237-1400; info: (208) 236-8954; SIRCNA, PO Box 4342, Pocatello, ID 83201

Illinois: 2-4 Feb. 1996; Greater Illinois Region Presents Rock River Convention; Holiday Inn, South Beloit; rsvns: (815) 389-3481; info: (815) 332-4130 or (815) 963-2454 or (815) 626-6654; RRCNA, Box 1891, Rockford, IL 61110

2) 23-25 Feb. 1996; 8th Chicagoland Regional Convention; Sheraton Chicago; info: From 9 am to 5 pm CST call: (708) 848-2211, 7 pm to midnight CST call: (708) 891-0759; Regional Convention, 212 S Marion, Oak Park, IL 60304

3) 7-9 June 1996; Show-Me Regional Convention; Cape Girardeau; speaker tapes requested, before 31 Dec. send to: SMRCNA, PO Box 1226, Cape Girardeau, MO 63702

Indiana: 29-31 Mar. 1996; Indiana State NA Conv.; Fort Wayne Hilton, Fort Wayne; info: ISNAC, Box 12047, Fort Wayne, IN 46802

Kansas: 30 Dec. 1995 - 1 Jan. 1996; 2nd United Kansas City Area New Year's Convention; Lenexa Holiday Inn, Lenexa, Kansas; rsvns: (800) 465-4329; info: (816) 363-5368 or (913) 384-0772; UKCANA, PO Box 45105, Kansas City, MO 64171

2) 5-7 Apr. 1996; 13th Mid-America Regional Convention; Ramada Inn, Hutchinson; rsvns: (800) 362-5018; info: (316) 241-6230; MARCNA, PO Box 3926, Topeka, KS 66604

3) 26-28 Apr. 1996; Living Miracles Convention; Mount St. Scholastica Convention Center, Atchison; info: (913) 367-1197 or (913) 367-3867; 714 N 3rd, Atchison, KS 66002

Kentucky: 19-21 Jan. 1996; Louisville Area Convention; The Galt House, Louisville; rsvns: in KY (800) 962-0150, out of KY (800) 626-1814; info: (812) 280-0523; LACNA, Box 4111, Jeffersonville, IN 47131

2) 4-7 Apr. 1996; Kentuckiana Regional Convention; University Plaza Hotel; rsvns: (502) 745-0088; info: (502) 745-7631; KRCNA, PO Box 556, Bowling Green, KY 42102

Maryland: 29-31 Mar. 1995; Chesapeake/Potomac Reg. Convention; rsvns: (800) 654-5440; info: (301) 515-9484; CPRCNA, Box 8006, Silver Spring, MD 20907

Mississippi: 12-14 Apr. 1996; 14th Mississippi Regional Convention; Lake Tiak-O'Khata, Louisville; rsvns: (601) 773-7853; info: Spirit of Change, PO Box 5660, Brandon, MS 39047

Missouri: 16-18 Feb. 1996; Cabin Fever Prevention Convention; Lodge of the Four Seasons, Lake of the Ozarks; info: (314) 581-5771; Cabin Fever, PO Box 7114, Jefferson City, MO 65109

Nevada: 14-17 Mar. 1996; Las Vegas Convention; Sahara Hotel, Las Vegas; rsvns: (800) 634-6666; info: (702) 656-7909; SNCC, 4542 East Tropicana, Suite 101, Las Vegas, NV 89121

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

2) 23-25 Feb. 1996; 6th Cape/Atlantic Area Conv.; Seaview Marriott Country Club; rsvns: (800) 432-8000; info: (609) 863-9156 or (609) 889-2375; Box 7386, Atlantic City, NJ 08404

3) 29-31 Mar. 1996; Capital Area Convention; East Windsor; rsvns: (609) 443-8000; info: (609) 882-5692; CASC, PO Box 741, Trenton, NJ 08604

4) 24-26 May 1996; 11th New Jersey Reg. Conv.; Berkeley Carteret, Asbury Park; rsvns: (800) 776-6011 or (908) 776-6700; info: (908) 826-2148; send speaker tapes before 31 Dec. to: NJRCNA, Box 576, Keyport, NJ 07735

New York: 8-10 Mar. 1995; 2nd Rochester Area Convention; Holiday Inn Airport, Rochester; rsvns: (800) 465-4329; info: (716) 467-1234; Box 458, Rochester, NY 14603

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

2) 16-18 Feb. 1996; Central Carolina Area Convention; Hilton Head Island; info: (803) 798-5408

3) 26 May - 1 June 1996; World Service Conference; Greensboro; info: (818) 773-9999; WSC, Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409

Oklahoma: 19-21 Jan. 1996; 6th Norman Winter Convention; Norman; info: (405) 366-1807; NWC, PO Box 1455, Norman, OK 73070

Pennsylvania: 9-11 Feb. 1996; Mid-Atlantic Regional Learning Conference; Ramada Inn, Harrisburg; rsvns: (717) 234-5021; info: (717) 236-1288 or (717) 561-2065; MARCNA, Box 523, Camp Hill, PA 17001

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

Texas: 23-25 Feb. 1996; TACNA; send speaker tapes asap; info: (903) 547-3092 or (903) 793-3421

2) 5-7 Apr. 1996; Lone Star Regional Convention; Dallas/Ft. Worth Airport Hyatt; rsvns: (214) 453-1234; info: (214) 245-8972 or (800) 747-8972; RSO, 1510 Randolph #205, Carrollton, TX 75006

Utah: 31 Dec. 1995; United Wasatch Area Presents Utah Regional New Year's Eve Bash; info: (801) 265-0856

2) 8-10 Mar. 1996; 3rd Northern Utah Area Convention; Holiday Inn, Ogden; info: Box 242, Ogden, UT 84401

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

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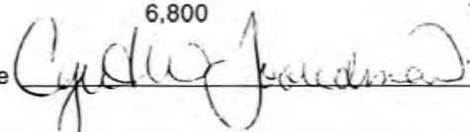
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The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

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.

