



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



## Goals And Purposes

We believe there needs to be discussion among the members of NA with regard the purpose and direction of our fellowship. There are 'service' groups springing up throughout North America; their goals are as many and varied as our members. Our purpose at 'core' is to provide a venue to facilitate open and respectful discussion among the members of the fellowship. We discuss ideas about how to make the NA fellowship more responsive to the still suffering addict. We hold weekly meetings, publish a weekly newsletter, and plan events for the purpose of uniting our fellowship. These are not core meetings, core newsletters, nor core gatherings; they are our gift to the NA fellowship.

<p>We Believe that the Greater the Base (Global NA Society)</p>		<p>The Broader the sides and the Higher the point of freedom.</p>
---	--	---

**Email: [lester7286@gmail.com](mailto:lester7286@gmail.com)**  
**Phone: 321-215-5898**  
**Yours in Loving Service,**  
**Lester O.**  
**Editor of Core Issues**

(A non-profit Newsletter of the Core Group)

### Notes:

This fellowship was built upon the unconditional love of the therapeutic value of one addict helping another. That is our unique way of reaching those who cannot be helped otherwise. That is also the unique process through which our original Basic Text and many other pieces of



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



literature were written in the same manner. That had never been done before, a huge mutual effort through a true group conscience process. That is what brought our fellowship to maturity and made us grow. The irony is that ever since those times we have been fighting a losing battle to retain the integrity we have been continuously losing ever since those first unauthorized changes were made to our literature. The saddest and most painful aspect is that many of our members have no idea that we are slowly losing the spirit this fellowship was built upon a transition from spiritual values to material, stemming that tide is one of the main purposes of this group.

David

## CoreProjects

### *Projects:*

- **NA Views** - video conferencing center in Waynesville is still going forward with Travis bringing in his new developer to set the system up in his new home. They have the software, hardware and access now in new home. Bo and Ed to visit.
- **In the Know** – ‘back burner’ for now. Idea of providing a platform for experienced members to share what they have learned to participants is sound. Lucy O. – Memphis, Allen J MD and a regional person from Louisiana showed interest. Brian - Was to be non-confrontational and open to free sharing of experience. Phone tree to get word out. Myriad topics. Speakers on panel ‘have one dial-up, participants listen on mute, email questions during week to be mentioned at next call. Bruce – could record speakers on good subjects for playback. Brian – keep recordings for future needs. Bruce – wonderful idea to hear from experienced members.
- **Fellowship Gathering** – talked about possibly doing it in Memphis. Bo will call Gene and Lucy about it. Maybe they have a good idea. NA History might be good. Also good site for NA Literature History. Maybe Jim Nichols might be interested in hosting in Lincoln. People who helped write the Basic Text would all show up with their friends.

### **Did You Know:**

1. World services considers themselves exempt from the NA 12 Traditions?



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



2. Homeland Security states that NA receives no direct support from them.
3. NA ought never be organized.
4. What are the three elements of self-determination?
5. Do you think spiritual growth is important?
6. How do you describe spiritual growth?
7. What's the difference between individual opinion and efficiency?
8. Do you believe the spiritual dominates the mental and physical realms?
9. What about body drugs in recovery?
10. Did you know that many members attend big conventions with funds paid by a treatment center?
11. Did you know the 12 Steps and Traditions are spiritual principles whereas the 12 Concepts are corporate principles?
12. (Fill in the blank!

[nacoregroup.org](http://nacoregroup.org) – Made link to youtube.com to make it easier to get to our video clips.

## **Summary of Core Group Project Discussions for the Month of September, 2013**

### **Minutes for Sept. 3, 2013:**

*Attendance:*

*Mitch – David B - Bo*

**Opened at 8:30**

**Mitch and Bo** – went over the sad hate mail Mitch has received from former friends. In particular, these emails contained language of intense hatred and a sense of moral high



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



ground at the same time! We are concerned for this member's recovery. It also indicates there is some element encouraging this kind of mentality.

Lester – could not make the call but is hard at work solving computer problems that have delayed the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of core Issues for September. He expects to get it out this week after unexpected computer crash last week. Travis was able to help him out.

David B – Need to put notice at top of pieces going out for review and input. Our Hope went out with no marks and may have confused some members, especially on secondary Blogs where members email get automatically passed along.

Bo – It is my fault and will be glad to put in notice in the future.

(\*\*\*FOR REVIEW AND INPUT - NOT READY FOR DISTRUBUTION\*\*\*)

Send to [nacoregroup@earthlink.net](mailto:nacoregroup@earthlink.net))

David – Also, move paragraph 11 to between 7 and 8 in Our Hope draft.

We discussed how members seem to differ today from members in late 70's and 80's. Appear to be more focused on money and appearances. How they were 12 Stepped makes a difference.

David – We attract addicts who appear to want to be told what to do.

Bo – the 'average member' has to deal with drug court, Suboxone and a domineering World Office corporation.

Bo – I am getting caught up on setting up my home and will be able to realize some commitments I have made to the core group soon.

David – Billy A. believes by passing out flyers and Baby Blues to the World Board at WCNA he can force them to initiate legal action or let the Basic Text go into public domain.



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



9:45 Mitch came on driving home from a meeting. Saw good friend at Convention Committee Meeting.

Bo – what's name of the guy interviewed in UK about “Abstinence Based Recovery.”

Mitch – UK comedian Russell Brand.

Bo – has a great delivery. He has to know lots about the program.

Bo – what flyers exactly were passed out at WCNA we would want to know about?

Thanks everyone for a great meeting.

“That we can all come together for the good of the Fellowship. “

SOMETHING NEW. ASKING PARTICIPANTS TO MAKE WRITTEN NOTES DURING CALL AND SENDING THEM IN FOR INCLUSION. WE WILL WORK ON BEST WAY TO DO THIS STARTING WITH:

## Jmu's Notes

Core group minutes 09/03

Jim joined Bo after 8:30

Congratulated Bo on trading 1st drafts. Bo wrote Our Hope, I wrote NA\_Convention to report my experience handing out basic texts and other subversive NA literature written by open participation.

David joined us

Bo spoke at length out the 1st lit conf at Wichita that resulted in a “guide to lit comm.” because the minutes were so bad.

Jmu don't understand how the minutes (after the conf) guided the conference.



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



I also suggested whoever was doing something scratchy should mute their phone. And I spoke glowingly of Dale's response to the WSO execs breaking their anonymity to the Philly papers

Mitch came on the call

David spoke about character assassination via his facebook page, Mitch spoke about character assassination by someone who had previously admired his recovery - assassination as a result of speaking well of Bo and Billy.

Bo assured us all that we show our spirituality and the justice of our cause by responding to such attacks spiritually. Most of NA is not informed, but if we can get 1/2 a % this year, 1% next year and so on, we are gaining ground.

I wanted to share Greg P's observation of how we got here - we went to HELL and turned left.

The call dropped (end of Jmu's Notes)

**Closed at 10:15** - Mitch – “Thanks God help us work together as a team.”

**Next meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> of September**

## Minutes for Sept.10, 2013

Discussion and edit of an original piece of Literature called “**Our Hope**”.

Here is the set of paragraphs with a key at end. There are eleven in all. We can discuss order of paragraphs and perhaps rewording to make more effective. Essentially, I am sending you guys a work sheet for our discussion tonight.

At David's suggestion Bo moved last paragraph to between 7 and 8th position. I read through and tried to complete ideas and paragraphs. Please let me know what you think before I send it out to whole core group, which includes Chris K's Blog.

For tonight's edit of “Our Hope” please see Addendum B.



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



**Closed.**

**Next meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> of September**

On Sat, 9/14/13, Travis I

Someone sent me several Baby Blues some years back and thanks to his loving effort and encouragement our group printed and GAVE away our 1000th book this year. When the Fellowship no longer has a voice in these type matters we are discussing it takes a very brave person to risk the scorn of the under informed members and tell what they believe and what works for them.

The term generated out of the original Core Group that best fits so many informed members discontent with NAWS is called the "Disconnect". Since the standing committees were disbanded at the World level the Fellowship has had no meaningful say as to how OUR Services are administered and how our Primary Service center functions. Mismanagement of funds specifically the HUGE losses at San Antonio in the recent past should have resulted in several persons involved in the office responsible for the events being fired and a subsequent criminal investigation being launched.

Instead we got excuses and in the end not even an apology for the enormous loss of OUR money...The denial, rationalization, substitution and general dope fiend behavior at NAWS is becoming more and more apparent as the consequences of their unsolicited PR efforts continue to destroy groups in major and minor populations as they are inundated by attendees from drug courts, Suboxone and methadone programs. It's high time more people stood up for OUR Fellowship...

## **Minutes for Sept. 17, 2013:**

Attendance: Gavin - Mitch – David B - Bo

Bo on Minutes

Opened at 8:30



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



Mary Ellen W. is having biopsy done Thursday night, everybody pray for her. She is dear and has worked hard for the core group many years. Thank you Mary Ellen. Come and visit Jmu and I this weekend if you can. Perhaps we could drive down if that would be better...

Jmu is driving down to go over video equipment with me. Plan visit to Showcase to have a hard drive so our shoots can go straight to digital for editing.

October will celebrate three years of research, discussion and writing in the core group. We are still no big deal but we are learning and passing along ideas to interested members. Thanks everyone...

We will be putting last three years into book form for those who are interested. Also, "The Book" we have worked on – with help from Mary Ellen! All the core group archives will be in the book. Also, the newsletters, many of which layout the future as we saw it and see it now.

Thanks to Travis for emergency help to Lester to get Core Issues out. Great job Lester.

Gavin – been reading minutes and keeping up. Physical copies are a good idea. We can put books and booklets on website.

Gavin – brought up members interested and planning a workshop in Orlando this coming March.

Brian – Not working on Grey Form now but talking about it.

Bo – start by writing essays on good sentences or paragraphs. Get used to praying for selflessness while you write. Figure out a way to protect the work from outsiders. Let the circle be unbroken. Welcome all members.

David B – Don't get side tracked, let go of old bullshit. Lack of surrender, anger, resentments cannot produce good recovery literature.

Bo – support any positive project. Let quality compete for quality.

David B – Links to speakers on web from WCNA. Exp 9.28.13. Mike C will put up





# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



Bo – Sponsorship gathering coming up in Michigan, near Kalamazoo and Battle Creek on 27th. Also plan trip to LA to see sponsor and visit active members in Southern and Northern California, San Jose and Berkley.

David B – Going to Mississippi Regional Convention. Not large but very loving and caring people show up and participate.

Bo – Been thinking lately about how Purist Movement started as a joke: NA meetings, NA literature, NA sponsor, NA spirit. The only people who really got pissed were the people from other Fellowships coming to NA meetings to pick up chicks and espouse how cool other fellowships were. When they became real disruptive, Purists disrupted the disruptors! We need to appreciate how they helped NA grow and spread. Think, think, think.

Mitch – At WCNA it was interesting how WB members made big point of introducing themselves but were cagey about answering direct questions. One outspoken guy asked WB flat out if persons on Suboxone or other DRT

drugs were clean. Lotsa hedging. Vito said, “Answer the question!” Mary B said she was on WB for over thirty years.

David B – whatever happened to principle of rotation?

Gavin – C&P Regional holding bon fire in Frederick, Maryland starting at 7:30 on September 28th at Stone Fence Gardens. (Flyer on request).

Bo – being more careful not to put last names in our minutes or publications. It is more principled to use first names and last initial, perhaps state or city. We wish to address issues, not individuals. This is especially true where our minutes are going out to more people. “Just saying...”

David B – likes “Meditation” piece draft. Can't find will send out separately.

Bo – Steve S attended and mentioned all readings were from Living Clean to push the Office's new book they wrote. Saturday night speakers are all from outside USA. I enjoyed seeing members and old friends.



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



David B – cited Ron H stated group conscience was drag on NA literature process.

Bo – Does everyone know about the new planning for a History Conference in Connecticut? Members have learned much in the last three years. Connecticut spawned history conferences, reading minutes and discussing issues important to the growth and continuance of NA.

From Gandhi - “First they will ignore us. Then they will ridicule us. Then they will attack us. Then we will win.”

Closed at 10:00 - member read prayer, “Thanks God for bringing us together to work for the good of NA.”

Next meeting on 24th of September

“That we can all come together for the good of the Fellowship. “ SOMETHING NEW. ASKING PARTICIPANTS TO MAKE WRITTEN NOTES DURING CALL AND SENDING THEM IN FOR INCLUSION. WE WILL WORK ON BEST WAY TO DO THIS STARTING WITH:

**9.18.13**

## **Meditations**

So, you want to be on the winning side. This article is not addressed to you. The whole paradigm of ‘winning’ is ‘us and them.’ If authority validates truth, then truth no longer lends credence to that authority. Spiritual principles can sound like made-up horse manure to someone who bases their life on cut and run principles. Because of the isolation imposed on us by active addiction, we are resistant to new ideas and feel angry when someone speaks over our head about subjects we don’t know about. Read and study, discuss your beliefs and ideas. Come to your own conclusions and then come back to see us.

As we leave fear and supposition behind and gain in the ability to see, hear and feel, we literally become part of the program of Narcotics Anonymous. The Program is based on certain key principles like total abstinence, open-mindedness, honesty and willingness to try. The word try for instance was taken out in a period of reformation involving our literature. The ‘reforming’ can be dangerous. The difference between ‘willingness’ as a word or subject



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



and the complete idea which is 'willingness to try' is not something most people who are beginning to work the NA 12 Steps are able to see much less appreciate. If you are feeling 'put upon' by this discourse, better keep reading. This subtle change has had repercussions in the Program of Narcotics Anonymous. The simplest way to explain is to lay out an amazing part of our recovery program. When we surrender, come to believe and turn our life and will over, we frequently find ourselves in situations where we are fighting something needlessly. Most of the time we can stop and be willing to do something that seems to be indicated and suddenly we find we don't really have to do it. Just being willing is enough. God or whatever we believe in to get the help we need will take care of it for us. This is exactly where the spiritual nature of NA and recovery becomes really visible, tangible. Taking out the short phrase 'to try' was, I believe, a mistake. Certain words need to be there, whether the bulk of the membership are able to understand them or not. We have all heard people say that re-reading the literature we find things that we didn't really take in before. The real spiritual life is full of discovery. The 'real' program of NA is a bundle of related things that come to addicts seeking recovery in the course of working the 12 Steps. There are lots of things to be discovered. These are the things that make our life different. This is what we call personality change. Take out a few crucial items, and one branch of the process may be harder to find.

Just because a corporation thinks it will be profitable doesn't mean we need to adjust or alter our proven program of recovery. The things the corporation is focused on may indeed be important, but the field of vision may be limited to business matters that can conflict with spiritual principles. For NA to work, we have to have a mechanism to keep our focus on experiencing recovery ourselves and making the opportunity to recover available to others. If the proposals made in the interest of corporate matters are too out of line or improperly made, it puts the whole program at risk. When a few conflicts first became visible over twenty years ago, our concerns seemed to fall on deaf ears. The spiritual strength of NA protected us and yet the crack separating the spiritual Fellowship and the corporate fellowship widened and grew deeper. Feeling their interests were most important and using the options available to a service body every member needed to trust, the corporate NA people can justify almost anything to press their suit. For instance, putting out paperwork in the form of newsletters, service announcements, service guides and steadily encroaching on our recovery material makes it very easy to define the NA Program in a way that suits themselves rather than construct literature that reflects the actual experience, strength and hope of living, breathing NA members sharing from the head and the heart what works for them.



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



Now for those who think this writing goes a bit far into the nuts and bolts of what makes NA effective, the idea may arise that some of these matters are made up and personal observations rather than the expressed feelings and facts from long time members of NA. There are those who would just love to keep any of this information from being written down or put out to the Fellowship in any form. Evidence of this 'thought control' is best exemplified in a current bit of nonsense taken as solid fact by some members who repeat and believe what they are told by their controllers. The line goes like this: "Members with long clean time are stuck in the past and want to impose their ideas on you modern members who are up with the NA that has evolved from a much larger fellowship." Now, as obviously wrong as this statement is in fact, it can be recalled and repeated until a large number of members take it as fact simply because it is heard and not often opposed. Well, well, well. So your life is better because of NA and the loving caring treatment you have enjoyed. Just popped out of thin air didn't it. Members early on in the recovery process have little to base their observations and conclusions on and may buy this lie until they too have some clean time and experience to compare with the misinformation.

So, now try on this idea. You read, hear and study the written materials and get with the program: literature, home group, sponsor, Steps and Traditions, and total abstinence. You believe all trusted servants have your best interests at heart and care about you personally. Time goes by. Do you think you know less as time goes by? All the times you have used information that has come to you from our written, spoken and applied body of experience lose their charm and cease to amaze you while you get busy with house, car, family, job and recreation. Do you really believe that is recovery? The people who do that don't stay clean. They are the ones who miss the boat and may stagger in after a relapse with egg on their face and ears wide open. So, one way or another, some more time goes by. All the while they are thinking about what they saw and experienced in the beginning and how it has worked out for them. Do you really imagine they are stuck in the past and missed out on the wonders of Suboxone and forced attendance? DRT is not clean. It is replacing one mood and perception changing drug for another. And the approval of a doctor or a judge can make it seem ok. But as time goes by, your personality does not change. The enthusiasm and energy of early recovery is replaced by boredom and an undercurrent of despair.



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



And what can you do about it? We have seen members go through this and come back to NA. They surrender, get honest, and pay attention to things they don't know or understand completely and resume the recovery process. Now do you think they are less informed for their experience? And what about the ones who work the Steps all the way through? It took me over thirty years clean to realize obsession was losing control of your thinking processes and that compulsion was losing control of your actions. This was followed by realizing prayer was left lobe and meditation was right lobe. Later, it occurred, at least for me, that prayer dealt with things close to me and the world around me. Meditation deals with the bigger world we experience out in the spiritual universe where thoughts and ideas lead to reality and actions that change what happens in this world. Now, I think this is evolved recovery. What do you think? Does it seem like ideas that are old and worn out to you?

Now, if you are still reading this there is something else you might want to think about. This is for you who are not afraid to step out on faith. You could go to NA events and make noise, pass out leaflets or sit in on 'board' meetings to make your concerns known. Some are doing this and surely it will help. Also, you could start new meetings where you read literature that reflects NA values and experience but exists outside the tightening circle of approved material written under the control of WSO, the corporation. This too will help because it will deepen your recovery experience and make you think. Some members quietly move in on the corporation, probably figuring they will help in some way to keep things from getting too bad as the corporation smugly moves forward. They are secure in the knowledge of their mere fifteen million dollar income and already get a cut of the pie. We, and I surely hope I am not alone, think fifteen mil is pretty embarrassing gross income where we have touched the lives of a half million human beings who are in the recovery process whether they are currently clean or not. Remember, recovery starts when we realize the drugs aren't enough to satisfy our needs. We may have to use some more to start thinking there might be a better way and start looking for something, perhaps NA! And the process continues to deliver bits and pieces of what makes us happy as long as we keep the faith and work the program. At a certain point, you will all reach a point where right and wrong will become clear to you and you will be called on to do your part in helping with the growth and continuance of NA. It is part of a spiritual awakening, practicing spiritual principles and carrying our message of hope and recovery. As you move ahead with your recovery and grow further from your last usage, you will eventually hear someone say you're out of date, living in the past and can't keep up with 'modern' recovery.



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



What you can do is tell the truth as often and to as many people as possible. It may not appear to make much difference but somebody will hear your truth and in the wondrous way this universe is constructed, the truth will gain ground as more people discover it and prevail. Big problems take a while. Half a million people qualified for NA membership will probably take a while. And then there will be even more. Show spirit! At least you'll be good for something and won't have that dead feeling inside when your spirit falls away.

okkk

## Minutes for meeting on 9-24-2013

*Attendance:* Brian – Jmu – David B - Bo

Bo on Minutes

### **Opened at 8:30**

Brian – spoke of Fellowship vs. Program. He quoted piece of literature from Basic Text that equated the Program as equal to and same as the Fellowship. It seemed to contradict our understanding of the two. The Book was written by new comers who seemed not to know the difference.

Bo – which edition are you quoting from? It was very clear in my mind back when the Basic Text was written that the Program was what we agree to in writing and the Fellowship was people living the Program. I know some of the errors made in the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition could have contained what you have read to us. Also, I know the Fellowship did not sufficiently double check to excessive changes from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Revised to the 4<sup>th</sup> to see that the changes were embedded in the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. This is a tragedy for NA, that those entrusted to care for the Fellowship were so focused on themselves that they did not protect us from such oversights.

Brian hung up.

Jmu and I talked for a while. No matter what we find, it is important that we stay together and not get drawn into negativity.



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



Jmu signed off due to distraction in his home at 9:10.

David B – came on at 9:15 – I told him what we have been talking about.

David B – Mentioned post about effort to translate BT into Thai from Dale A. was removed from FB page on NA History. While we were talking, he noticed response said that someone came on bashing NAWS and that is why the thread was removed. (Dale, please re-send the post to me and I will put in next week's minutes.)

Bo – My computer set up is finally getting up to snuff! Thank God. Mary Ellen's biopsy came back positive. Doctor says it is probably treatable. Jim Nichols, WLC-2 host chair diagnosed with serious illness in lungs. We pray for you all...

Bo – took JVC HD camera to company that will check it out and tutor me on operation.

**Closed at 10:30** - "I thanked God for bringing us together to work for the good of NA."

## **Next meeting on 1st of October**

"That we can all come together for the good of the Fellowship. "

SOMETHING NEW. ASKING PARTICIPANTS TO MAKE WRITTEN NOTES DURING CALL AND SENDING THEM IN FOR INCLUSION. WE WILL WORK ON BEST WAY TO DO THIS STARTING WITH:

### **Have you got one yet?**

The fallacy of the excluded middle: an assumed problem with one thing being used to justify some specific preferred alternative rather than a lack of that very thing. Ergo, the open participation model of the Basic Text isn't practical because it produced an inferior product (the book had 5 editions in 10 years). This neglects the facts that the creation of the book spurred an exponential expansion of the program, which stopped with the end of open participation. It also excludes the fact that this 'inferior product' outsells all the 'superior' literature produced by closed committees since.

Jmu





# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



I want to add this;

Jmu finally got an opportunity to respond to Brian, but he had left the call. Jmu wanted to say he feels The Program can be defined as the 12&12, 90 in 90, getting a home group and a sponsor, and reading the literature, and building a relationship with a loving and caring higher power.

Jmu

“A nation of sheep will beget a government of wolves.”

Edward R. Murrow

***We have downloads from all the calls to date. Listing is a chore. Some may not be on our hard drives but no one has asked about them and we go where you direct us with emails or phone calls.***

You can still dial in for recording of last Tuesday night call by using access code. The downloaded calls I can send you if you need them. - Bo

## ***Addendum A: for core group members:***

May include some emails or phone conversations  
from core group members during past week.

### **Other input...**

**Idea - to use these minutes in a way that is little trouble and no extra cost, we could include similar input from say, fifteen or more members and simple reduce the font size to something small, like 6 point. To view one or the other, just select and change point size to something viewable, like 12 or 14 point. It would be like this:**

**Idea - to use these minutes in a way that is little trouble and no extra cost, we could include similar input from say, fifteen or more members and simple reduce the font size to something small, like 6 point. To view on or the other, just select and change point size to something viewable, like 12 or 14 point. If you have trouble with this, another core group member can explain how to do it. Like many things, it's a snap when you know how and confusing right before.**





# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



## Addendum B

\*\*\*FOR REVIEW AND INPUT - NOT READY FOR DISTRIBUTION\*\*\*Send to  
[nacoregroup@earthlink.net](mailto:nacoregroup@earthlink.net)

### Our Hope

We in the core group hope for a restoration of an atmosphere of recovery and service that fully includes the principles of our Traditions rather than only paying lip service to them. People patterning after those who engage in seeking personal gain, notoriety, or manipulation will lose spirit as they gain worldly goods and the other things they seek. Open-mindedness is required for spiritual growth. Not following the 12 Step path will not bring to the surface the good things you seek. Other goals will short circuit the process. Balance is better. Grow in the spirit and you can enjoy all things. Grab and squeeze and what you hold will wither and die. We did not make the principle, we discovered it. **See if you agree. (1) core group view**

From the standpoint of someone who has worked many years in the NA service structure when it was attractive and growing worldwide, I can tell you the ideal is to have as many members inform themselves to whatever degree they wish on a regular basis. Then accurate and effective solutions to be formulated **by** informed members polled as a resource when questions or decisions arise on important issues. These are the people trusted servants are directly responsible to **along with the body of the Fellowship**. Conflicts of interest would short circuit the system. (2) E, S & Hope

What's a conflict of interest? Let's say Fred, a staff member, is delegated buying coffee for an upcoming event, Folgers's or Maxwell House. Fred gets a phone call from Folgers's and received a check for \$100 the same day. The poll was 75 for Maxwell House and 20 for



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



Folgers's. 5 didn't care. Fred reported the poll and ordered Folgers for the event. Attendees weren't too

bothered by this but asked others if they voted for Folgers. It was quickly determined that the majority wanted Maxwell. Fred was kept on but never again allowed to conduct a poll due to conflict of interest. Changing NA structural policy is more important than coffee.

When NA began to grow in the late 1970's, the growth was the result of involving more and more members. Giving members a voice in decisions made in world services at the time gave them a special feeling of earned importance. They studied and showed up for CAR reports for several weeks so their group could have a voice in the affairs of NA. Members at the time believed there was a sort of magic that kicked in when enough informed people knew enough details. It was not just whether they said, as a group, let's turn right. It was also, let's turn right and if that doesn't work, we'll reconsider. It was like group conscience made us one big organism and trusted servants were nerve cells that collected and passed on group deliberations or votes on issues. Having a "say" worked to get us our book *Narcotics Anonymous* and spread the message of hope and recovery worldwide. Since everyone was in on it, members were comfortable surrendering to the process and participate in the exciting process in its entirety. Even if the vote went against their personal preference, they supported the motion because their vote counted. They were not limited to making submissions that were then taken behind closed doors to be re-worked and edited by professional writers who often change the tone, context, and dynamic into something other than the therapeutic value of one addict helping another. (3) NA growth

Once our efforts in the early 1980's resulted in writings that had financial value, which was irrelevant to our aims involving accuracy and faithfulness to the input, members interested in money and business were attracted. This was expected and our creative members were happy to go on working on written materials and saw no immediate conflict. We have learned that after the business types get set up, they want to control both the material, the literature, and also its content since that affects how it will be seen – and purchased – by outside treatment centers, etc.

Also, one good business practice is checking out potential workers for various positions. Resumes involve background and training our Seventh Tradition requires us to pay people when their service becomes full time. It is simply reasonable to recompense workers for their time and labor the idea being an honest day's work should be matched with an honest day's



# Core Issues

## Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4

By: Lester O.



pay. This is not a problem unless some of the workers become jealous or resentful where volunteers are seen as encroaching on their job duties. Unless clearly stated in their job

description regarding the absolute necessity of having input from members, paid staff workers can push out the volunteers resulting in a turf skirmish. These problems led to all sorts of conflicts with many members trying to be open in good faith and the business types trying to justify their position when out of sync with our 12 Traditions. Over a period of time, selling more books, generating more income, was ranked as more important than selfless service. No one actually came out and said this but it was evident in actions and the course of events. Any concerns or complaints from the Fellowship were treated as inappropriate absurdities from malcontents. (4) **History**

Where before we honored our various representatives for staying in touch with the feelings and ideas based on experience in service and recovery, suddenly a certain phrase began to be heard, "Don't give me that God s\*\*t!" As the bureaucracy grew it replaced the loving, caring membership in service. Bad treatment and violations of policies and Traditions sent talented, experienced members out of the service structure and frequently out the doors of NA! By placing the business group in total control, no other viewpoint is allowed. (5) **devolution** Even after twenty years, the power of the recovery process in NA is so strong that it goes on unabated. As the paperwork and publications became more corporate and directive in their tone, the membership generally stopped reading them. Today the Fellowship is almost totally ignorant of what has been taken away from them. And in a convoluted way, they express their loyalty to those who care for them by catering to the 'officials' of NA and discounting the experienced leadership. Still, a few loyal members are willing to study and read documents showing clearly the division between the spiritual NA and the corporate NA. From my experience, the spiritualists are very polite and considerate of those who disagree with them. There are reasons for this. Above all, we work to preserve and extend the recovery process into areas not clearly visible in times gone by. With much longer clean time and recovery experience, we have members interested in and speaking of principles in Steps 10, 11 and 12. What exactly is a spiritual awakening? (6) **spiritual attraction**

Members working to help newcomers of long clean member get past blockage and put spiritual principles to work bring all their attention to bear. This is the all important 'personal service' which is the essence of NA. General support systems owned and directed by group conscience are available to help as needed. It is important to treat our special workers with



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



dignity and respect because the situation requires some sensitivity and understanding to deal with conflicts. Conflicts occur when people have different points of view or objectives in mind.

Special workers love and care as much as anyone. While the membership has one set of goals, methods and values. Special workers have to concern themselves with pay scales and ranking of importance in ways that do not apply to volunteer service workers. If they have spent years earning degrees and acquiring skills it is easy to see where they are concerned with pay scales and benefits that go with employment. They have to concern themselves with their value as employees and productivity. These values and perspectives can conflict with volunteer service workers who do not expect remuneration and may find themselves competing with non-professionals. Since NA has all kinds of members with all kinds of skills and educational levels, this competition can get really dicey. (7) **Service structure must agree with members carrying the message**

If you are tracking the progression of talented members, their success creates not only common welfare but has financial value, attracting people interested in the commercial value. **If you can see how paid workers get** set in opposition to the talented members, you are getting the big picture. Past a certain point the financial value leads the commercial types to road block the creative members. Good manners and optimism allow time to pass and then the creativity breaks out in new areas. Like any broad generalization, it may be hard to put all the pieces together but it can be done. At any rate, we are willing to work hard to increase our common welfare and protect the important basics of total abstinence and enhancing membership. Certainly, we realize that by catering to the commercial interests our basic spiritual message is **first** blunted, and then erased. If we do not respect our members, in a short time we ourselves become unrespectable. (8) **competition**

Because this area of discussion has not been sufficiently addressed in our written service materials, the conflicts are allowed to grow unchecked, often resulting in impasses. Growing in spiritual ability allows us to reach a point of initiating action in a way that will fit in with what has been working and solving problems. To get to the heart of the problems that occur, we first consider the needs we are seeking to address and then consider the needs of the people doing the work. If you have two sets of people with different goals on the same job, you will certainly have a conflict. I know from personal experience that we warned members of the WS Board of Trustees that there was potential for conflict between paid WSO staff and NA service volunteers. One of the earliest examples was the blame placed on the WSC Literature



# Core Issues

Oct., 2013 Vol. 1 Issue 4  
By: Lester O.



Committee for typos in the Basic Text. The ease with which we accepted the blame for making these typos among the literature workers, was eventually countered when we noted that we

did not type set the Basic Text, we wrote it. Blame, if any, is on those who set the type. (9)  
**need for policy**

It is easy enough to leave out examples but the situation has gone so far that thirty years later, there is a pervasive acceptance of "professional" as unflawed and "volunteer" as flawed. While everyone makes mistakes, there is no question that the service volunteers wrote the Basic Text and the Fellowship approved it with no funding or assistance **from outside sources, including our WSO which had no funds to speak of at the time**. The major work took place in the 1980 and 1981. Today's member would do well to dwell on the fact that recovering addicts just like themselves wrote and edited the book. This insured complete creative and spiritual input by addicts, for addicts. Of course, then, as now, the Fellowship was composed of many talented, educated persons. The main element was the willingness to stick their necks out and throw themselves into the work without reservation. **Some could only carry coffee and empty ashtrays but all were important.** (10) **example of conflict**

One other item needs to be addressed. When people are working to help themselves, there is a tendency of criminals to back off. As soon as exploitation and malfeasance enters the picture, all bets are off. The spiritual nature of NA has not only helped us within the Program, it has earned the respect and admiration of outsiders. We used to 12 Step suffering addicts with the words, "Addicts just like you wrote this book." This cannot be said of other works done since the WSO took over control of our literature production as a business item. We members need to wake up to the implications of this and the effect imposed by the officials at WSO wanting to please the treatment industry and tailor the material to suit the preferences of those they target for retail sales. **We want to pass on the hope we experienced when we first began our journey into recovery.** (11) **our message**

\*\*\*FOR REVIEW AND INPUT - NOT READY FOR DISTRUBUTION\*\*\*

Send to [nacoregroup@earthlink.net](mailto:nacoregroup@earthlink.net)