

SECOND ANNUAL WORLD LITERATURE CONFERENCE

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

SEPT. 8-14, 1980

HISTORY

Although relatively few of the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous stood in the Lincoln Federal Building in September, 1980, the spirits of our contributors and of those still suffering addicts were all around us, encouraging us, sharing with us their hope and pain. Those who enjoyed the actual effort were but servants of a larger whole.

From the moment that the early arrivals gazed into the empty hall in the Federal Building, it was apparent that this was the time and the place for the fulfillment of a dream. Men and women, who had had little or no previous acquaintance of one another, embraced each other readily, eager to enjoy what each had to share.

During that first day, there was a pervasive sense of awe. The impact of what we could accomplish sank into the group conscience and we were excited.

Although few individuals had had much experience and the group had had none, there was divine co-operation throughout the conference. The subject matter was so large; yet our outline work proceeded along a natural course. Our outline and the material fell together uncanonically. Much of the time, the thoughts most appropriate fairly leaped from a page. From the hundreds of pages of collected material, we sorted, compiled, and read; and we read, the ties that bind us were strengthened. We were made whole by our work.

As could be expected, there were problems with weariness, impatience and ego. We all wanted so much and had come so far. We all had to deal with the frustration of working with others on a common goal, perhaps for the first time. Yet, we were able to overcome these very human obstacles and to offer encouragement to our fellow addicts. Our successes tempered our despair, and we reassured one another.

As long days grew into longer nights, we gave each other back-rubs and hugs; pausing often for meditation and prayer. We found need strength in maintaining contact with our Higher Power, and we endured long hours, personalities and problems.

As a result of addicts meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska, in September, 1980, a book - a dream - will be realized; but it would be inaccurate to say that we have written a book. We all came from many parts of the country and many walks of life. We have all, by the grace of our Higher Power and the help of our fellow addicts, survived a killing disease. In an effort to continue to survive, we have met here to share our experience, strength, and hope. The book is just a reflection of this effort. It is in this spirit that our book will come forth. Addicts all over the world will have the Narcotics Anonymous book for comfort and for study. When we find ourselves by ourselves, we need not be alone. We will have our book; and we will have each other.

WORK IN PROGRESS

CHAPTER ONE: WHO IS AN ADDICT?

NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

Most of us do not have to think twice about this question. WE KNOW. Our whole life and thinking is centered in drugs in one form or another, the getting and using and finding ways and means to get more. We use to live and live to use. Very simply an addict is a man or woman whose life is controlled by drugs. We are people in the grip of a continuing and progressive illness whose ends are always the same: jails, institutions and death.

As addicts we have a common bond. We have all felt pain. We have all felt the numbness, knowing inadequacy, aching loneliness, separateness from our fellows and feelings of uselessness and self-pity. We have surely had enough of self-destruction.

Somehow, in a moment of clarity, we were able to look at the whole scene in all it's insanity. We stopped fighting and something inside said, "No more."

We lacked real information on what addiction is and what recovery could mean to us. We were in a poor position to judge whether or not we were addicts. Each of us faced this dilemma. We remember going through a lot of pain and despair before considering the possible connection between drugs and misery.

Eventually, drugs ceased to make us feel good. We tottered on the brink of self-destruction. All of our attempts to stay clean had failed. In isolation we had lost the things in our lives that were the most important to us. We lost all hope and freedom.

We were sick and tired of being sick and tired.

From the start, the theme of the N.A. meetings was recovery. We all knew how to use drugs; we knew the effect they had on us. The primary thing we were interested in was how to stay clean, how to cope with life without drugs, how to handle unpleasant feelings and emotions; in other words, how to recover. This is