NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

ONE ADDICT'S EXPERIENCE WITH ACCEPTANCE, FAITH AND COMMITMENT

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When I came on the N.A. program I had identified my problem---I had the desire to stop using, but couldn't see how. Due to the nature of addiction my whole personality was geared toward getting, using, and finding ways and means to get more. All of my personality traits reinforced this obsession with self. Totally self-centered, I tried to manage my life by manipulating people and circumstances to my advantage. I had lost all control. Obsession forced me to use drugs repeatedly, against my will, knowing that it was self-destructive, and against my basic instinct for survival. Insane, and feeling hopelessly helpless, I gave up fighting, and accepted that I was an addict---that my life was totally unmanageable, and that I was powerless over the disease. My will power could not change my diseased body that craved drugs compulsively. My self control could not change my diseased mind, obsessed with the idea of using mood changers to escape reality. Nor could my highest ideals change my diseased spirit---cunning, insidious and totally self-centered. As soon as I was able to accept the reality of my powerlessness, I no longer needed to use drugs. This acceptance of my condition----my powerlessness over addiction and the unmanageability of my life was the key to my recovery.

With the help of the recovering addicts at N.A. meetings, I abstained, a minute, an hour, a day at a time. I still wanted to get high. Life felt intolerable without drugs. Giving up left me feeling even more hopeless than before, and to cope, my mind told me to use drugs again. Acceptance of my powerlessness and the unmanageability of my life left me needing a power stronger than my disease to change my self-destructive nature. The people I met at meetings told me they had found a power greater than their addiction in the N.A. program. These people had been clean for months or years and didn't even want to use any more. They told me that I could lose the desire to use drugs by living the N.A. program. I had no choice but to believe them. I had tried doctors, psychiatrists, hospitals, mental institutions, job changes, marriages, divorces; all had failed. It seemed hopeless, but in N.A. I saw hope. I met addicts recovering from their disease. I came to believe I could learn how to live without drugs. In N.A. I found the faith I needed to begin to change.

At this point I had stopped using drugs, and reluctantly believed that I could continue to abstain. I still thought and felt like an addict, I just didn't use drugs. My personality and character were the same as they had always been. Everything about me reinforced my self-destructiveness. I needed to change or I would start to use again. I had accepted my condition, and believed that I could recover. In order to do so, I had to make a total commitment to the spiritual principles of the N.A. program.

With the help of my sponsor, I decided to turn my life and my will over to God as I understand God. For me, this was a turning point. This decision demands continued acceptance, ever increasing faith, and a daily commitment to recovery. The decision to turn my life and will over to God required that I find out about myself and actively try to change my ways of coping with reality. This commitment brought honesty into my life. This is how the N.A. program works for me: I accept my disease, develop a faith that the Program can change me, and make a commitment to the spiritual principles of recovery.

Action is now required. If I don't change, I will be miserable, and return to using drugs. The actions suggested by the N.A. program can change my personality and character. I honestly examine myself, write down what I have done, and how I have felt. I reveal myself completely to my God, and to another human being, telling all of my most secret fears, angers, and resentments. By doing these things, the past no longer has control over my life, and I am freed to live up to my ideals today. I begin to behave differently, and become ready to be changed by my God into the sort of person He wants me to be.

I have begun to develop a reasonable self-image, based in reality, by asking to be relieved of my shortcomings.

By amending the wrongs I have done to other people, I have learned how to forgive myself and others.

I review my behavior regularly and correct my mistakes as soon as possible. I am continually developing and expanding trust and faith in spiritual principles. I give to others, sharing myself, and our program, and try to live the principles that I learned.

These Twelve Steps have allowed me to stop using, taken away the desire to use, and have given me a new way of life.