

CHAPTER FOUR

HOW IT WORKS

If what you want what we have to offer, and are willing to make the effort to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps. These are suggested only, but they are the principles that made our recovering possible.

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 inure 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 those steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

This sounds like a big order, and we can't do it all at once, we didn't become addicted in one day, so remember --EASY DOES IT.

There is one thing more than anything else that will defeat us in our recovery, this an attitude of indifference or intolerance toward spiritual principles. Although there are no musts in N.A., there are three things that seem indispensable. These are Honesty, Openmindedness, and Willingness to try. With these we are well on our way.

We feel that our approach to the problem of addiction is completely realistic, for the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel. We feel that our way is practical, for one addict can best understand and help another addict. We believe that the sooner we face our problems within our society, in everyday living, just that much faster do we become acceptable, responsible, and productive members of that society.

The only way to keep from getting or continuing a habit is not to take that first fix, pill or drink. If you are like us you know that one is too many and a thousand never enough. We put great emphasis on this for we know that when we use drugs in any form, or substitute one for another, we release our addiction all over again or create a new one.

The substitution of alcohol has caused a great many addicts to form a new addiction pattern, which in its progression brings as many problems as before. We seem to forget that alcohol is one of the oldest known drugs. It would appear that we are people with addictive personalities who are strongly susceptible to alcoholic addiction.

Are we sure we want to stop using? Do we understand and
believe that we have no real control over drugs? Do we recog-
nize that in the long run, we don't use drugs--they use us?
Do we fully accept the fact that our every attempt to stop
using or control our using failed? Do we know that drugs
have the power to change us into liars, thieves, and schemers?
Do we know in our guts, that as successful drug users, we
have failed? We admit to ourselves that everytime we hurt
someone, we were loaded, or trying to get loaded.

When we came to N.A., we were physically, mentally and
spiritually bankrupt. We hurt long enough and badly enough
that we were willing to go to any lengths to stay clean.
To live by the example of those who had faced our dilemma,
and had found a way out, seemed to be our only hope.

1 When we first came into the Fellowship of N.A., we were
2 often resentful at the suggestions some of the members made
3 to us. Regardless of who we are, where we have come from, or
4 what we have done, we are accepted in N.A. Our addiction
5 gives us all a common ground for understanding one another.

6 When we were using, reality became so painful that obli-
7 vion was preferable. We had to keep other people from know-
8 ing about our pain. We isolated ourselves, and lived in
9 prisons built out of our own loneliness. Through this des-
10 peration, we sought out Narcotics Anonymous.

11 After attending a few meetings, we began to feel like we
12 finally belonged somewhere. It was in these meetings that we
13 were first introduced to the Twelve Steps of N.A. We work
14 them in the order they were written, and we use them on a daily
15 basis. They are our solutions. They have become our survi-
16 val kit, for addiction is a deadly disease. Our Steps are
17 suggested only, but they are the principles that make our
18 recovering possible.

STEP ONE

We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction,
that our lives had become unmanageable.

19 1 The bottom line of Narcotics Anonymous is staying clean.
20 We realize that we cannot use drugs and live. 2 When we admit
21 our powerlessness and inability to manage our own lives, we
22 open the door to a power greater than ourselves.

23 3 We have an incurable, progressive, terminal disease called
24 addiction. 4 It doesn't matter whether we just take a few pills,
25 fix eight times a day, suck on a pipe, drink bottles of cough
26 remedy behind drug stores, or have one tranquilizer with our
27 first martini each day--we have certain things in common, no
28 matter to what degree or what kind of addict we are.

29 5 When we hit bottom, we were searching for an answer--look-
30 ing for a way out. We reached out and there was an answer.
31 Until we took Step One, we were full of reservations. We felt

different.⁶ Upon working Step One, we affirmed our surrender to the principles of N.A., and only then did we overcome the alienation of being a drug addict. We became a part of society.

⁷ Where is help? How did we get it? What was it? We went to a meeting of Narcotics Anonymous. We are inclined to be skeptical. We needed proof. In that N.A. meeting was our proof.⁸ There we found people like ourselves with the same, or worse, patterns of drug dependency and failure, yet they were clean. They smiled. Their eyes were clear. They cared for each other. They introduced themselves to the newcomer and made them feel welcome.⁹ During the meeting, we heard a little bit about ourselves. We understood and believed that we had no real control over drugs. We accepted the fact that every attempt we had made to control our using had failed.¹⁰ We knew in our hearts that drugs have the power to change us into something we didn't want to be, and we of all people had surely had enough of self-destruction.¹¹ We wanted first to learn, then to do the things that would help us become self-affirming people.

¹² We had to take Step One. We had to admit that we are powerless and we had to continue going to meetings to hear other addicts talk about this powerlessness.¹³ Do we understand and believe that we have no real, long term control over drugs? Do we fully accept the fact that every attempt on our part to taper off, or stop using, or to control our using had failed?¹⁴ Do we know in our hearts that drugs have the power to change us into something that we don't want to be: liars, thieves, schemers?

¹⁵ Step One means that we don't have to make excuses for the way we are, and that is a great freedom.¹⁶ Surrender means not having to fight anymore.¹⁷ It took a while, for some of us, to realize how unmanageable our lives had become; for others, this was about the only thing of which we could be sure.¹⁸ In a way, we were like gamblers, and we didn't like the odds against us. This is the way we recover when we

1 hit bottom; it's like the slide has stopped. With the ad-
2 mission of complete defeat, we stopped it right there.

3 19 After struggling through the daily burden with the monkey
4 on our backs, we reached despair. When we were beaten, we
5 became willing. 20 The pain of working the program did not seem
6 as great as the pain of addiction, so we surrendered. 21 The
7 hole in our gut was filled with a new understanding of our
8 place in the world and love for others. As we got clean and
9 worked this Step, we were released from our chains. We are
10 now free people. 22 None of the Steps work by magic. We do not
11 just say the words of the Steps; we live them.

12 23 Some of us found getting clean a battle. The program is
13 simple. No one ever said it was easy. 24 Recovery is a contact
14 process. We don't have to hug each other but it helps. 25 We
15 read this book and attend N.A. meetings. We see for ourselves
16 if the Fellowship has something to offer us. 26 It is not where
17 we are that counts, but where we are going!

18 27 None of us stumbled into this Fellowship brimming with love,
19 honesty or open-minded willingness. 28 We have all reacted the
20 point where it seemed we could not longer continue because of
21 intense pain: physical, mental and spiritual. 29 However, life
22 was not unbearable; it only seemed unbearable because of our
23 old familiar ways and our thinking. We found that we had no
24 choice but to change, or go back to using. 30 All that was re-
25 quired was willingness. When we gave it our best go, it
26 worked for us as it has worked for others. 31 When we could stand
27 our old ways no longer, we began to change. All that was re-
28 quired is that we try. 32 Only under attack by severe and un-
29 yielding pain did the walls begin to crumble.

30 33 We began to see where we had rationalized the most errant
31 sort of nonsense in order to justify the mess we had made of
32 our lives. 34 We could admit that we were truly powerless over
33 our addiction and that our lives were unmanageable. We could
34 admit complete defeat, and the help came.

35 35 This was a great paradox for us--we who were so proud of
36 our self-sufficiency and will power. But life had brought us

little happiness. We had used our will power a lot. The more
we exerted our will, the worse things got. Often, when things
got really bad, we had said, "This time, I have got to get my
act together." By Sheer will power we had gotten clean, temp-
orarily. When we began to see that will power alone wasn't
going to pull us through anymore, we tried countless other
remedies--counselors, psychiatrists, hospitals, lovers, new
towns, new jobs--everything we tried, failed. We quit for a
day, a week or a month perhaps, but sooner or later we took
that first pill, fix, drink or toke and we were gone again--
worse than ever. None of our best efforts got us anywhere in
the long run. Our unaided will was not enough.

37 We had nothing left to lose. We gave up--quit struggling--
surrendered, completely and unconditionally. Then and only
then did we begin to recover from the disease of addiction.
40 Recovery begins with the first admission of powerlessness.
From that point forward, we can see that every clean day is
a successful day, and that any seeming failure is only a temp-
orary setback.

41 We quit fighting. We accept our addiction and life the
way it is. We became willing to do whatever was necessary to
stay clean, even those things we didn't like doing. We had
been beaten by our addictions, and left miserable and desper-
ate. We were addicts. Drugs would no longer do for us what
they had once done.

43 We had been beaten into a corner by our own actions, and
we were in the grip of an overwhelming addiction. We had
found hope. We began to see that the Steps of the program
would be our source of strength and that the obsession for
drugs will eventually disappear. We saw that we could learn
to function in the world we live in, that we, too could find
meaning and purpose in life, and that we could be rescued from
insanity, depravity and death.

STEP TWO

We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

1 1 We have a disease: progressive, incurable and terminal.
2 2 The most amazing single fact about the disease is that we went
3 out and bought it on the time plan! That is insane. Think
4 about that--you, me, everyone we meet in N.A.; the junkie
5 snatching purses on the street, and the sweet ladies hitting
6 two or three doctors for their perfectly legal prescriptions.
7 3 All of us have this one thing in common--we buy the disease
8 that kills us and, one way or another, we usually pay for it,
9 a bag at a time, a few pills at a time, or a bottle at a time
10 until we die. 4 That is at least part of the insanity of addic-
11 tion. The price may seem higher for the girl who prostitutes
12 herself for her fix than it is for the woman who merely lies
13 to her doctor; but ultimately, both pay with their lives. Ask
14 yourself this question: 5 Do I believe it would be insane to
15 walk up to someone and say, "Would you please sell me my own
16 death--on the time plan?" or "May I please have a heart attack
17 or a fatal accident?" 6 If you can agree that this would be an
18 insane thing comparable to giving yourself an injection of
19 deadly poison, only slower, you should have no trouble with
20 the Second Step.
21 7 The Second Step is the most important thing that must hap-
22 pen for us to achieve any sort of ongoing recovery. 8 The First
23 Step leaves us where we need to come to believe in something
24 that can help us with our powerlessness and sense of helpless-
25 ness. 9 Belief became the most imporrant thing for us to work
26 on. We have some type of belief and unless we examine it and
27 seek to improve it, it may be insufficient to give us recovery.
28 10 Certainly our belief didn't help us with our active addiction.
29 We now have a workable idea of a Higher Power.
30 11 You may be one of us who says, "I need help with my drug
31 problem and I can see that N.A. has that alright, but the
32 Second Step says this Power greater than ourselves will restore

us to sanity and I'm not crazy. I just can't handle drugs." 1
Many of us started out with that attitude. Our first instinct 2
is to say "no way." 12 But when we approach it with an open mind, 3
and talk and listen to others, we begin to see evidence of 4
some power that cannot be fully explained. 13 Confronted with 5
this, most of us will at least admit to the possibility of a 6
greater power. Eventually, we will come to some kind of per- 7
sonal understanding we can use.

14 Belief is the beginning. It is helpful to stop at this 8
point to review our thinking in this respect. We should not 9
take the chance that our understanding of a Power greater than 10
ourselves is sufficient. 15 The Power can be the group itself or 11
it can follow a religious tradition. The only thing we want 12
to emphasize is that you should feel comfortable with your 13
Higher Power and be able to make the statement that your Power 14
cares about you. 16 If you can accept the fact that a large num- 15
ber of addicts like yourself, have found a way, in the program 16
of Narcotics Anonymous, to live clean, then you only have to 17
believe what you see in order to experience Step Two. 18

17 N.A. has many members. This collective Spiritual Power 19
is certainly greater than that of any individual member. What 20
is impossible for one alone is often light work for many, be- 21
cause the many are a greater power than the one alone. 18 You 22
don't have to be religious to accept the idea of a power 23
greater than yourself! Just look around with an open mind 24
and you will see a positive Power all around N.A. 19 You can 25
call it love, or harmony, or peace, or cleanness, or good, 26
or you can call it God. It doesn't matter, and by looking 27
and listening as openly as you can, you find that N.A. has 28
the Power to help addicts. 29

20 The Higher Power we use in N.A. is a lot like this: We 30
begin by simply admitting to the possibility of a power greater 31
than ourselves. 21 From the very beginning, we discover that 32
power in our lives, and that Power lives in the Fellowship. 33

22 We had no trouble admitting that addiction had become a 34
destructive power greater than ourselves. It logically follows 35
that there can also be a constructive power greater than our- 36

1 selves. ² When drugs are washed from our bodies through daily
2 abstinence and our minds begin to clear from the effects, a
3 miracle takes place. Many fortunate things occur mysteriously,
4 but there are no accidents. We come to understand that our
5 recoveries are a gift from a Power greater than ourselves.

6 ⁷ There is a spirit that is guiding all living things. Call it
7 Higher Power or whatever you like. If you choose, call it
8 nothing at all, but find it, and learn to benefit from its
9 power. You will gain a new life--free from drugs and the pain
10 they have caused.

11 ²⁵ We have begun to see only recently how much a Higher Power
12 has to offer. Clean living is only the beginning of a new life.
13 Life without fear is a gift we receive for the price of accept-
14 ance.

15 ²⁶ We gradually begin to find some order in the universe, and
16 accept that "some power" was supplying us with a conscience we
17 had never had before, and was somehow giving us the power to
18 overcome the compulsion to use. ²⁷ It certainly wasn't us, indi-
19 vidually. Many of us have come to believe that the forces of
20 life know what our real needs are and will take care of us when
21 undisturbed by self-will.

22 ²⁸ We learn to keep a watchful eye on our daily H.A.L.T.S.
23 maintenance: We eat when Hungry; we talk with a recovering
24 addict when Angry or Lonely; we rest when Tired; and when we
25 begin to take ourselves Seriously, we get to an N.A. meeting
26 and share. ²⁹ Sanity is having our priorities in order. We don't
27 use drugs; we go to meetings; and through the N.A. program, we
28 learn to rely on God to provide what we need on a daily basis.
29 We have been restored to sanity as far as the obsession to
30 use is concerned.

31 ³⁰ The important thing to remember as the urge to use occurs
32 is that just because the mind is asking for drugs, doesn't mean
33 the body is. ³¹ We are so into denial and over-controlling our
34 emotions that the occasional thought of drugs may be the only way
35 our mind knows to get our attention. ³² The mind signals drugs
36 when the body may actually be asking for vitamins, food, rest or

companionship. So we need daily H.A.L.T.S. maintenance. 1
33 Most addicts have strong feelings about their Higher Power 2
and vigorously defend their right to their own understanding 3
of Higher Power. 34 The strength to move into action comes from 4
our Higher Power. 5
35 Asking for help in specific terms usually precedes getting 6
that help. By opening the gates of our hearts, we become ready 7
to receive the help we need. 8
36 We need to accept this step to start our road to recovery. 9
When our belief has grown to some point of comfort, we are 10
ready for Step Three.

STEP THREE

We made a decision to turn our will and our lives
over to the care of God, as we understood Him.

1 As practicing addicts, our will and our lives we're con- 11
trolled by drugs. Our choices were determined by drugs. 2 We 12
were trapped by our need for connections and cash. Then, when 13
we got the drugs, the search was over for a few hours or maybe 14
a few days. 3 During that time our total being, the mind, body, 15
the soul was dominated by the drug. 16
4 For a time it was pleasurable, at least in the early stages 17
of addiction. 5 Ultimately, the effect began to wear off and 18
then the drug showed its ugly side. Often we found that the 19
higher our drugs took us, the lower they brought us. 6 When our 20
nerves were jangling like a fire alarm, we faced two choices. 21
Either we suffered withdrawal, or we took more drugs. 7 For all 22
addicts, the day comes when there is no longer a choice. We 23
must have more drugs. Whether we are under the influence or 24
not, our will, our lives and every single action is directly 25
controlled by drugs. 26
8 Obviously, our way did not work. In utter desperation, 27
we looked for another way. 9 In Narcotics Anonymous, we are 28
told that we can turn our will and our lives over to the care 29
of a God of our own understanding. 10 This is a giant step, 30

1 anyone can take it. We don't have to be religious.11 All that
2 is required is a willingness to believe. We had to be will-
3 ing to do anything to get that next fix. What have we got to
4 lose?
5 12 We have only to believe what we see with our own eyes in
6 the transformed lives of other N.A. members. That's all it
7 takes--an open mind.13 If the word God bothers you, as it did
8 many of us in the beginning, substitute Recovery, Good, Love,
9 N.A., Peace or anything positive, just so you mean it.
10 14 None of these Steps of N.A. work by magic. They work when
11 they are lived.15 The Steps of N.A. are easier to live by than
12 the law of the needle, bottle, pill or joint.16 If you want to
13 stay clean and are willing to do a few simple things and are
14 honest with yourself, we guarantee that you can recover.
15 17 We found that all we needed to do was try.18 When we gave
16 our best effort to the program, it worked for us as it has
17 worked for countless others.19 The Third Step does not say "We
18 turned our will and our lives over to the care of God." It
19 says, "We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over
20 to the care of God, as we understood Him."20 We made the de-
21 cision; it was not made for us by the drugs, our families, a
22 probation officer, judge, therapist or doctor. We did.21 For
23 the first time since that first high, we have made a decision
24 for ourselves.22 If you understand God to be simply whatever
25 keeps the rest of us clean, that's fine.23 Ask that Power to
26 take care of you as it takes care of us--even if it makes you
27 feel stupid! Go off by yourself and say silently, "God, I've
28 made a mess of my life. I can't solve my problems and I ask
29 you to take care of me and show me how to live."
30 24 When you honestly try, it will work.25 Many of us start our
31 day with that prayer or a similar plea: "Thy will be done."
32 26 The release by letting go and letting God helps us develop
33 what works here and now. We can experience this release daily
34 by using the N.A. program.
35 27 In the Third Step, we simply recognize that there is a
36 force for good in the world and we cooperate with that force.

We let good things happen to us.²⁸ Every action we took in regard to drugs was an effort to get comfortable. It did not work, or we wouldn't be where we are today.²⁹ When we turn to the God of our own understanding for care and direction and guidance, we learn the real meaning of comfort.

³⁰ If we have come this far in the N.A. program, we have already noticed some change in our lives. However, the change may not be as fast nor as dramatic as we wish.³¹ We turned to drugs because we are people who demand instant gratification and drugs gave us that instant satisfaction.³² We are impatient people. It is one of life's great problems for us. Just because we stop taking drugs, the problem doesn't immediately go away.

³³ We find that we will continue to have living problems. There are bills to be paid. We still have to function in society. Most of us still have families. We still have many of the same fears, doubts and insecurities.³⁴ In fact, because we are now facing life without anesthesia, these problems appear to be more difficult and painful than ever.³⁵ Do not lose heart. At these times in our recovery, the Third Step is our greatest source of strength and courage.³⁶ We are no longer bogged down by addiction. We have surrendered our will and our lives to the care of a power greater than ourselves.

³⁷ We are now a part of the Ultimate Reality which has brought Order out of Chaos.³⁸ We are no longer fighting fear, anger, guilt, remorse, self-pity, anxiety, depression and a thousand other ills.

³⁹ Day by day, we discover the magnitude of the Third Step. This is the Step where we come into contact with sanity we are promised in Step Two.⁴⁰ Reliance on a spiritual way of life is now possible for us. Our addiction is no longer a road-block to God-consciousness.⁴¹ We are slowly beginning to lose those paralyzing feelings of hopelessness. We who have lived in darkness and horror for so long begin to walk freely in the sunlight of reality.

1 42 We find that our mood-swings are less dramatic. We have
2 natural highs followed by occasional lows. We are beginning
3 to gain balance and harmony.43 We have learned to stop fight-
4 ing and are learning to live. The only price is to quit
5 fighting, surrender quietly and let the God of our own under-
6 standing take care of us.
7 44 We have come to enjoy clean living and want more of the
8 good things that the N.A. Fellowship holds for us.45 We know
9 now that we cannot pause in our spiritual program; we want
10 all we can get. We are now ready for our first honest self-
11 appraisal, and we begin with Step Four.

STEP FOUR

We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

12 1 Step Four helps us see exactly what our problems are and
13 shows us our strengths.
14 Let's face it, when we were using, we weren't very honest
15 with ourselves.2 We are finally beginning to become honest when
16 we admit our addiction has whipped us and that we need help.
17 It took a long time to get where we could admit we were beaten.
18 3 We are probably not going to recover--physically, mentally or
19 emotionally--overnight.4 Step Four is going to help us toward
20 recovery more than we can imagine. Most of us were surprised
21 to find that we had many good points in our inventory.5 Ask
22 anyone who has some time on the program and who has the kind
23 of life you want for yourself, they will tell you that the
24 Fourth Step was a turning point in their lives.
25 6 Some people make the mistake of approaching the Fourth Step
26 as if it were a confession of how horrible they are--what a
27 bad person they had been. This is not the purpose of the
28 Fourth Step.7 We are trying to free ourselves of living in old,
29 useless patterns. We take the Fourth Step to gain the neces-
30 sary strength and insight to enable us to grow in this new way

of life.⁸ A binge of emotional sorrow over real or imagined wrongs will not help us. In fact, it can be quite harmful.

⁹ Our purpose is to be rid of guilt--not wallow in it! We must be done with the past, not cling to it. We want to look our past in the face and see it for what it was--and then to release it so that we can live today.¹⁰ The past, for most of us, has been a ghost in the closet. We have been afraid to open that closet for fear of what that ghost may do to us.

¹¹ You don't have to do this alone. Your will and your life are now in the hands of the Source of all strength--tap into the Source!¹² Writing a thorough and honest inventory looks impossible to most of us. It is--if we are operating under our own "power."¹³ Take a few quiet moments before writing and pray for "the power to carry it out."

¹⁴ Don't write the inventory with any particular person in mind. If you do that, you may wind up "slanting" what you write in order to please them.¹⁵ Only time will tell, and the Fifth Step will take care of itself. Stay here in the Now--you are on Step Four. We cannot do Step Five until we have completed Step Four.

¹⁶ You may approach the Fourth Step in a number of ways. It is advisable that before you start, go over the first Three Steps with your sponsor. Be comfortable with your understanding of these steps.¹⁷ Allow yourself the privilege of feeling good about what you are doing. Don't be driven as you were so long driven by drugs.¹⁸ We have been trashing about for a long time and have gotten nowhere. Now, we are going to take it easy and not let things frighten us.

¹⁹ With pen and paper, we begin the moral inventory. If the word moral bothers us, we call it a positive/negative inventory, or a good/bad inventory.²⁰ The way to write an inventory is to write it! Thinking about an inventory, talking about it, theorizing the inventory will not get it written. Sit down with a notebook, pray, pick up your pen and start writing!

²¹ All we seek to do is find out which things about ourselves need changing. If we were grocers we would not hesitate to

1 separate the rotten fruit from the good and throw out the
2 rotten fruit. The N.A. program has the Fourth Step with which
3 we examine ourselves.

4 22 It is important to remember where we came from so that we
5 don;t return. We had to go through what we did to get to where
6 we are now.

7 23 A basic rule of thumb is that we can write too little, but
8 we never write too much. The inventory will fit the indivi-
9 dual, we simply write until the brain is emptied. 24 Anything we
10 we think about is possibly inventory material. We realize how
11 little we have to lose and how much we have to gain. We plunge
12 into this step without reservation.

13 25 We remove these thorns in the side by listing them on paper.
14 As recovering addicts we sit down with paper and pen and pray
15 for God's help in revealing the defects that are causing pain
16 and suffering. 26 We pray for the courage to be fearless and
17 thorough so that this inventory may help us put our lives in
18 order. When we pray and take action it always goes better for
19 us.

20 27 As using addicts, we lived under a regime of fear. 28 In
21 attaining our new life, we want it free of unreasonable fear.

22 29 A lot of times we try to look good in front of other people,
23 but deep down inside we are really afraid of who we are and
24 where we came from.

25 30 We write down our fears, our resentments and our guilts.
26 We examine in depth our relationships with people, places and
27 situations asking ourselves what we have demanded of these re-
28 lationships. 31 Often the answers will show that we are placing
29 unreasonable demands on reality. We find that we are demanding
30 other people to stop being who they are.

31 32 Most of us have found that we were neither so terrible nor
32 so wonderful as we supposed. Ultimately, we are just human,
33 with the same fears, longings and troubles as everyone else.

34 33 One of the greatest benefits of the N.A. program is discovering
35 that we need never be alone again. Others have felt as we feel.
36 Others have failed where we failed. They are here now in the

strength of the Fellowship, ready and eager to help us. 1
34 This Fourth Step can be a wonderful adventure, reviewing 2
our past performance and our present behavior to see what we 3
want to keep and what we want to be rid of. 35 This Step has 4
the reputation of being difficult. In reality, it's quite 5
simple. 6
36 As recovering addicts, we now have the right to reach for 7
levels of greater comfort and we can reach them, when we get 8
a handle on what we've been doing wrong. 37 If we want to feel 9
good, we have to stop doing the things that make us feel bad. 10
38 We are not going to be perfect. If we were perfect, we 11
would not be human. The important thing is that we do our 12
best. 39 We use the tools available to us, and because we do 13
not want to lose any of what we have gained, we will want to 14
continue in the program. 40 It is our experience that no matter 15
how searching and thorough, no inventory is of any lasting 16
effect, unless it is promptly followed by an equally thorough 17
Step Five. 18

STEP FIVE

We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another
human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

1 After taking a thorough Fourth Step, we have to deal with 19
what we have found in our inventory. 2 We have decided what 20
our defects are, but we still don't know how to deal with them. 21
We are told that if we keep these defects inside us, they could 22
lead us to using again. 3 We have to beware of half-measures 23
on this Step. Holding on to our own "garbage" would even- 24
tually sicken us and hold us back from really taking part in 25
this new way of life. 4 If we take a Fifth Step, but we really 26
don't get honest, we will have the same negative results that 27
dishonesty brought us in the past. 28

5 Our Higher Power will be with us when we do this, and 29
will help to free the fear of facing ourselves and another 30
human being. 6 Many of us, before we take Step Five, fear that 31

1 God will turn away from us, when we reveal ourselves to Him.
2 7 It seemed unnecessary to some of us to admit the exact nature
3 of our wrongs to God. "God already knows all that stuff", we
4 rationalized. 8 True, God does already know all that stuff, but
5 until we face God with it, we will never really believe that
6 He does. The admission must come from our own lips to be truly
7 effective for us.

8 9 For years, we have avoided seeing ourselves as we really
9 are. We were ashamed of ourselves and felt isolated from the
10 rest of the world. 10 Now, we've got this shameful past trapped
11 on paper. We can sweep it out of our lives, if we face it and
12 admit it. 11 It would be tragic mistake to have it all written
13 down and then just shove it into a drawer.

14 12 We have feared that if we ever revealed ourselves as we
15 really were, we would surely be rejected. Maybe this was be-
16 cause we had already rejected ourselves. 13 We were so self-
17 centered that we didn't realize just how much we had in com-
18 mon with our fellow addicts. 14 Before coming to Narcotics
19 Anonymous, we had felt that no one could ever relate to us
20 or understand the reasons behind the things we had done. 15 We
21 quickly realized that we had been unrealistic in feeling that
22 way. N.A. people did understand us.

23 16 We must carefully choose the person who is to hear our Fifth
24 Step. Although there is no hard rule about what kind of per-
25 son we should choose, it is important that we trust that per-
26 son. 17 Only complete confidence in the person's integrity and
27 closed mouth can make us willing to be thorough in this Step.

28 18 Some of us take our Fifth Step with a total stranger, but
29 most of us feel most comfortable choosing a fellow member of
30 N.A. We know that a fellow addict would be less likely to
31 judge us with malice. 19 People often select clergymen, or mem-
32 bers of the medical profession, because these people are
33 accustomed to keeping confidences in their work. 20 Whoever we
34 select, we make certain that they know what we are attempting
35 to do and why we are doing it. 21 We are often amazed at how
36 willing most people are to help us. We never knew that people

actually cared enough about us to want to help in our recovery. 1 2

22 Once we make up our minds and are actually alone with the 3
person we have chosen to accept our confidence, we proceed 4
with enthusiasm. We want to be very definite and thorough. 5
We realize that this is a life and death matter. 6

23 There is a danger that we will exaggerate our wrongs, and 7
an equal danger that we will minimize or rationalize away our 8
part in situations. 24 If we are anything like we were when we 9
first entered the N.A. Fellowship, we will still tend to want 10
to "sound good". This is a luxury we can't afford. 25 This Step 11
must cut into our character defects and expose our motives and 12
our actions for what they really were. We have no right to 13
expect these things to reveal themselves. 26 It isn't easy, 14
but it is simple. We want to tell the truth, cut and dry, 15
as quickly as possible. We do not procrastinate. 16

27 We will never be able to name all of our past mistakes, 17
so we need not expect our first spoken inventory to be per- 18
fect. 28 If we choose, we will be continuing the process of 19
self-assessment for the rest of our lives. For now, we will 20
try to get most of the "garbage" out in the first session. 21

29 For many years, we have covered up our low self-esteem 22
by hiding behind phony images that we hoped would fool people. 23
Unfortunately, we ended up fooling ourselves more than anyone. 24

30 Although we often appeared attractive and confident on the 25
outside, we were really hiding a shaky, insecure person on 26
the inside. "One thing you can't hide, is when you're 27
crippled inside." The masks have to go. 28

31 Once we had taken this Step, we felt lightened and re- 29
freshed. We were finally free to be ourselves, because we 30
were not trying to cover anything up. 32 It was a great relief 31
to be rid of all our secrets, to share the burden of past 32
guilts. 33 Usually, as we share this Step, the listener will 33
share some of his story too, and we will find out that the 34
things about ourselves that we thought were so awful or dif- 35
ferent weren't all that unusual. 34 We see, by the acceptance 36

1 in the eyes of our confident, that we can be forgiven, even
2 loved, just the way we are.³⁵ Even though our examination of
3 ourselves usually reveals some things about ourselves that
4 we don't particularly like, facing these things and bringing
5 them out in the open makes it possible for us to deal with
6 them constructively.³⁴ And, now that they are out of the closet,
7 ready to be faced and dealt with, we realize that these things
8 about ourselves can be changed.³¹ We cannot make these changes
9 alone. We need our Higher Power's help, and the help of the
10 Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship.

STEP SIX

We were entirely ready to have God remove these
defects of character.

11 | Let us go back to the First Step for a minute. Remember
12 that we had to surrender completely to obtain relief. We had
13 to admit we were whipped.² In examining ourselves as honestly
14 as possible it is probable that we have discovered some things
15 about ourselves that we don't like.³ Perhaps we call them de-
16 fects. Whatever we call them, we recognize that we must change
17 if we are to -row.⁴ The Sixth Step is the same situation; we
18 can't do it ourselves; but we know that God as we understand
19 Him can do it for us.

20 ⁵ Do we really want to be rid of our resentments, our angers,
21 our fears? Do we really understand that they are a deadly
22 poison in the heart of an addict?⁶ Many of us cling to our
23 fears, doubts, and self-loathing or hatred of others, because
24 there is a certain distorted security in familiar pain. It
25 seems safer to hold on to the old familiar pain than to let go
26 of it for the unknown.⁷ Letting go of character defects should
27 be done with love. Fear and hate cannot give us new lives.⁸ We
28 should approach old defects with patience and understanding,
29 for they have served us well in days past. They have kept us
30 from situations we couldn't handle before we found the program
31 and a source of power.⁹ We should be more grateful that our

- defects are not more pronounced or of a more harmful nature. 1
- 10 When we see how our defects exist in our lives and accept 2
them, we can let go of them and get on with our new life. 3
- 11 We look to the Fellowship for the kind of life we want for 4
ourselves. We ask our friends, "Did you let go?" Without 5
exception the answer is, "Yes, to the best of our ability." 6
- 12 When we are working Step Six, it is important to remember 7
that we are human and should not place great expectations on 8
ourselves. 13 We should be serious when we say "entirely ready 9
to have all these defects removed." This is a step of willing- 10
ness. That is the spiritual principle of Step Six. 14 It is 11
as if to say that we are now willing to move along spiritual 12
lines toward a destination we couldn't imagine. Being human 13
we will of course fall short. 14
- 15 We will still get mad and still feel hurt, especially if 15
we are too hungry, angry, lonely, tired, or too serious 16
(H.A.L.T.S.). 16 We are trying to achieve adequacy, not perfec- 17
tion. Adequacy can be achieved, but perfection cannot. 17 We 18
can reach and awaken the force of life within ourselves; it 19
can do anything, even give us a new life. 18 The breakdown of 20
old ideas and old ways seems to be beyond our conscious con- 21
trol. The only control of the situation we seem to have is 22
a choice of acceptance. 19 What areas we can change in, how fast 23
we change, and in what order all seem to be predetermined by 24
our very nature. 20 If we accept God's will, we will be able to 25
follow the necessary path to a better life. 26
- 21 Willingness is what we strive for in Step Six. The tools 27
we use to maintain our willingness are practice and prayer. 28
- 22 How sincerely we work Step Six will be proportionate to our 29
desire for change. 23 We often feel that we will never be ready 30
to have all our defects removed, but we should remember that 31
the main point is that we are on a journey, and the destina- 32
tion isn't what matters. Willingness to serve God is what we 33
strive for. 34
- 24 Without these defects, life is ever sensational and deeply 35
wonderful. 25 We learn that we are growing when we make new 36

1 mistakes instead of repeating old ones. Life with these de-
2 fects may cause perpetual frustration, tension, and relapse.
3 27 We decide what our priorities are and envision life free
4 from defects. 28 We recognize our defects and surrender to the
5 simple suggestions that the program offers us.
6 29 We feel that the Sixth Step is the honest willingness to
7 let go of those shortcomings about ourselves. 30 We become ready
8 to part with the fears and doubts of that other life.
9 31 We continue to attempt to manage our lives and will need to
10 go back to Step Six to renew our readiness to have our defects
11 removed.

STEP SEVEN

We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

12 1 Having decided we want God, as we understood Him, to relieve
13 us of the useless or destructive aspects of our personalities,
14 we have arrived at the Seventh Step.
15 2 We have all spent much of our lives being anything but
16 humble. 3 We have been humiliated by many of the things that
17 happened to us while using, but most of us avoided true humility
18 until we worked the First Step. 4 Then again, in the Third Step,
19 we asked God to direct our will and our lives. 5 Now, in the
20 Seventh Step, we humbly ask Him to remove our shortcomings.
21 6 The key to this Step is an understanding of the humility.
22 Humility is a part of staying clean, as food and water are to
23 staying alive. 7 As we struggled along in our addiction, we
24 devoted our energy towards satisfying our material needs. We
25 always had to have a satisfaction of our basic desires, such
26 as power and prestige. 8 We never thought of spiritual growth
27 or asking a Higher Power for direction. Drugs were our Higher
28 Power.
29 9 We couldn't handle the trials and tribulations of life all
30 by ourselves. It wasn't until we made a real mess of our lives
31 that we realized that we couldn't do it alone. 10 By admitting

that we achieved our first glimpse of humility.

11 If the defects we have discovered are real and we have a chance to be rid of them, we would surely experience a sense of well being when we rid ourselves of them. 12 Some will want to get on their knees for this Step. Some will be very quiet or put forth a great mental effort to show intense willingness.

13 The word humble applies because we approach this Power greater than ourselves to ask for the most wonderful gift of the program; the freedom to live without the limitations of our past ways. However we want to handle it, we go all the way.

14 Think of what we have to lose! As soon as we feel ourselves willing, we should go ahead and ask God to remove our shortcomings.

15 When we were using, our spiritual and emotional growth came to a halt. We did not mature and grow like a normal person. 16 Now that we are clean, there are many situations in our daily lives that are difficult to understand. 17 By practicing the virtue of humility and asking for help, we can get through even the toughest times. "I can't, we can!" It is a sign of growth.

18 We have to realize that people can give us direction and that our way of thinking is not the only way. We must puncture our egos and realize that we have much more work to do.

19 When someone points out a shortcoming, our first reaction is one of defensiveness. 20 If we truly want to grow, we will take a good look at what is pointed out. We must realize we are not perfect and there are things we must change.

21 We have noticed that humility plays a big part in this program and our new way of life. 22 We take our inventory; we become ready to let God remove our defects of character; we humbly ask Him to remove our shortcomings. 23 This is our road to spiritual growth, to change our character, day by day, to gradually, carefully and simply pull ourselves out of the isolation and loneliness of addiction into this mainstream of useful Fellowship. 24 This comes not from wishing, but from action and prayer. 25 The main objective of Step Seven is to

1 get out of ourselves and strive for achieving the will of our
2 Higher Power.²⁶ Our will didn't work.
3 ²⁷ If we are careless and fail to grasp the spiritual meaning
4 of this Step, it will seem an unbearable chore, impossible to
5 complete and unlikely to do anything but stir up old troubles.
6²⁸ Like all the Steps, the point of this one is freedom.²⁹ None of
7 these Steps work by magic. They work when they are lived.³⁰ We
8 are trying to achieve adequacy, not perfection; for perfection
9 is a divine quality.

STEP EIGHT

We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and
became willing to make amends to them all.

10 ¹ The last five Steps of Narcotics Anonymous, the Eighth
11 through the Twelfth, are the "get out and live" Steps.² Just
12 as the First, Second, and Third Steps give us the necessary
13 tools to begin a clean life, and the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and
14 Seventh Steps complete the process of self-forgiveness and
15 the beginning of new attitudes.³ The Eighth Step starts the
16 procedure of forgiving other people, being forgiven by them,
17 and learning how to live in the world as a drug-free human
18 being.

19 ⁴ The point of the Eighth Step is willingness. Are we will-
20 ing, if it is possible and practical, to make amends; once,
21 and for all, clear away the shadows of fear that our past
22 holds for us?

23 ⁵ The preceding Seven Steps looked pretty rough until we
24 took the plunge and go into them. This one is no different.
25⁶ It seems hard now, but once we've done it, we'll wonder why
26 we didn't do it long ago.

27 ⁷ The Eighth Step is not easy; it demands a new kind of
28 honesty about our relations with other people.⁸ We had to feel
29 better internally before we could even bear to think about
30 whom we had harmed and how we had harmed them, and exactly
31 what was the way we perceived ourselves.

9 This Step is a good test of our new found humility, we 1
consult with our sponsors in this matter. 10 Again, as in the 2
Fourth Step, we do not want to become entangled in useless 3
and dangerous self-loathing. Our purpose is to achieve free- 4
dom from the guilt we have carried so far, with so much pain, 5
so that we can look the world in the eye with neither aggres- 6
siveness nor fear. 7

11 We admit we are at fault regardless of what the other per- 8
son did to arouse our hostility. 12 We admit that we hurt them, 9
directly or indirectly, through some action, some lie, some 10
broken promise, neglect or whatever. 11

13 It will not make better persons to judge the faults of 12
another. The thing that will make us better is to clean up 13
our lives by relieving ourselves of guilt. 14 The Eighth Step 14
is a mighty stride away from a lie dominated by guilt and 15
remorse. 16

15 We need some real honesty before we can make an accurate 17
list. 16 In preparing to make the Eight Step list, it is help- 18
ful to define harm. One definition of harm is physical or 19
mental damage. Another definition is inflicting pain, suf- 20
fering or loss.

17 The damage may be caused by something that is said or 21
done, and the harm resulting from these words or actions may 22
be either intentional or unintentional on the part of the 23
person who is inflicting the harm. 18 The degrees of harm can 24
run from making someone feel mentally uncomfortable to in- 25
flicting bodily injury or even death. 26

19 We make our list, or take it from our Fourth Step and 27
add to it any more people we can think of and we face that 28
list honestly and openly and examine our fault. 20 Are we will- 29
ing to make amends? In many cases we cannot do it, it is not 30
possible nor practical in some instances. We may not know 31
who it was we wronged. In other instances we might run the 32
risk of involving a third person, some companions of our days 33
of using who do not wish to be exposed. 21 We do not have the 34
right nor do we need, for any moral reason, to endanger that 35
person. 36

1 22 Just about anyone that comes into contact with an active
2 addict risks being harmed. 23 Many members mention their parents,
3 spouses, children, boyfriends, girlfriends, other addicts,
4 casual acquaintances, co-workers, employers, teachers, land-
5 lords, and total strangers.

6 24 A problem many of us seem to have with the Eighth Step and
7 the admission of the harm we did is the belief we were victims,
8 not victimizers in our addiction. Avoiding this rationaliza-
9 tion is crucial to the Eighth Step.

10 25 We had to think of disassociating what had been done to us
11 and what we had done. We were forced to cut away all our jus-
12 tifications and all our ideas of being a victim.

13 26 The final difficulty in working the Eighth Step is separat-
14 ing it from the Ninth Step. 27 Projecting about the Ninth Step
15 can be a major obstacle both in making the list and in becoming
16 willing. 28 We do not even think about making amends, but just
17 concentrate on exactly what the Eighth Step says which is to
18 make a list and to become willing.

19 29 "We try and work this Step as if there were no Ninth Step."
20 The Eighth Step is actually an action Step. 30 And like all the
21 action Steps it offers immediate benefits. 31 "The main thing
22 this Step does for us is to build awareness that, little by
23 little, we are gaining new attitudes about ourselves, and how
24 we deal with other people."

STEP NINE

We made direct amends to such people wherever possible,
except when to do so would injure them or others.

25 1 We want to get free of our fear, but we don't wish to do so
26 at the price of anyone. It is very important that we take
27 guidance from our sponsors or spiritual advisors in this
28 matter.

29 2 We recommend turning over our legal problems to lawyers.
30 Professional help is available to help us with our financial
31 and medical problems. 3 Part of learning to live is not to take on
32 problems and responsibilities that we are not equipped to handle.

- 4 In some cases we may be beyond our means. If it is, we can only proceed with direction. 1 2
- 5 Timing is an essential part of this Step. We should make amends when the opportunity presents itself, as long as to do so will not cause more harm. 6 When it gets to the point that we cannot hold the hurt any longer, amends will be made. 6
- 7 In some old relationships an unresolved conflict exists. We enter the old conflict and resolve it by making our amends, and step back from future antagonisms and ongoing resentments. 7 8 9
- 8 In many instances of past wrongs we will need to go somewhere and humbly ask forgiveness. These are the old tapes that would keep playing back as long as we live. 9 Sometimes, this will be a joyous occasion when some old friend or relative proves very willing to let by-gones be by-gones and welcome us back to the land of the living. 10 However, some people are not so willing to let go of their bitterness. We can only make our amends to the best of our ability and they can either accept it or deny it. 11 We feel relieved, instead of feeling knocked down and drained in our lives. 12 Our addiction put a negative attitude about us in others. Step Nine helps us with our guilt and others with their anger. 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
- 13 This Step should not be avoided. If we avoid this Step we are simply reserving a place in our program to get loaded. 22 23
- 14 Pride, fear, and procrastination often seem an impossible barrier and stand in our way of progress and growth through the Ninth Step. 15 The important thing is to take action and be ready to accept the reactions of those persons we have harmed. We have made amends as best we could. 24 25 26 27 28
- 16 There are some things we can make direct amends for; some we can only make partial amends for; and some that we remember nothing about. 29 30 31
- 17 We can make amends by our actions. They don't always have to be verbal. 18 Staying clean is also an amend because we're no longer part of the problem. Now we're part of the solution. 32 33 34 35

1 19 When it came to making amends for all the things we did
2 there was a lot to be done.20 In the progress of our recovery
3 we were restored to sanity and part of sanity is effectively
4 relating to others.21 We will less often view people as a
5 threat to our security. Real security in our gut and in our
6 recovery will replace the physical ache and mental confusion.
722 We will want to address ourselves to these people with love
8 and patience.23 Fear of relapse will make many of our most sin-
9 cere well-wishers reluctant to accept our recovery as real.
1024 We must remember the pain they have known. In time, many
11 seeming miracles will occur. Many of us that were separated
12 from our children succeed in re-establishing deep emotional
13 bonds.25 However, estranged mates can be dangerous to our re-
14 covery if they don't learn some of our program. If the re-
15 lationship is real, it will survive.26 Re-acceptance into the
16 family of our birth, is eventual for most.27 Clean time speaks
17 for itself. Patience is the great method of the Fellowship.
1828 The unconditional love we experience will rejuvenate our will
19 to live and each positive move on our part will be matched by
20 an unexpected opportunity.
21 29 The benefit of this Step is to be able to face people we
22 have harmed with a clear conscience. By discovering and ad-
23 mitting our faults, we experience a miracle.

STEP TEN

We continued to take personal inventory, and when
we were wrong promptly admitted it.

24 1 We as addicts, suffer from a problem deeper than the drugs
25 we took. Because of this, we must live by spiritual principles.
26 Step Ten and all the Steps are to be applied to every area of
27 our lives.
28 2 There is no area of our lives that the disease does not
29 affect. The truth is that fear is present in every area of
30 our lives.3 So, in our experience, the program can and must be

worked continuously in every area of our lives. If this were not so, then the disease could not creep into an "unrelated" area of our lives and kill us.

4 Step Ten is a continuation of a fearless and searching look within ourselves in order to repair disorders that fear, pride, jealousy, and other ruinous defects can cause. 5 It helps us avoid the occurrence of relapse due to other areas which we may be reluctant to look. 6 "If you take the drugs away from a drug-crazed maniac, you still have a maniac." 7 Since our problems entail much more than using, we cannot recover until we recognize the need for taking a good look at our attitudes and motives.

8 Now that we are clean, we have recognized the advantage of getting our own house in order. We can recognize ourselves as the heart of the problem. 9 Negativity has been our way for many years and we are not able to change into complete saints. Any thought that we are going to be perfect has to be smashed. 10 We must remain teachable if we are going to stay clean in this program. 11 The smart ones who argue a lot usually die. The open-minded ones get to live. 12 We do not entertain the thought of ever achieving perfection. However, we must strive for stability in our lives so that we can live happily and be at peace with ourselves.

13 Step Ten helps us to do this. The process of inventory, the good and the bad about ourselves, is essential. 14 As addicts, we are prone to fear, anger, vanity, complacency, and doing the wrong thing at the wrong time. 15 Many forms of the disease manifested in self-centeredness, fear, resentment, and so on can drive us into a place that we feel we cannot get out of clean.

16 Are we doing our best? Are we staying honest? Are we still growing, or are we slipping back into the old fears and resentments? It is the purpose of the Tenth Step to answer these and similar questions. 17 Those defects of character which we found in the Fourth Step are deeply ingrained in us. The thing we do is check for the surfacing of defects early on by working Step Ten daily.

1 **18** How to take inventory that is effective will depend on the
2 severity of the particular trouble we are having. **19** We look at
3 our actions during the day and we practice the art of looking
4 at where we were wrong, considering what we could have done
5 differently, and the amends we need to make. **20** We find it help-
6 ful and humbling to admit to another human being where we were
7 wrong.

8 **21** These are practical applications and theory has no place
9 here. We work it or we will die.

10 **22** There is the inventory we can pause and make when we run
11 into trouble during the course of the day. **23** Stopping, thinking
12 and remembering that by the grace of God we are clean is a
13 basic. **24** Often, when we get home, write out a resentment, ex-
14 plaining how we feel and how we became angry, and the part we
15 played. **25** We find out how to restrain ourselves later so we
16 don't repeat that action.

17 **26** We do, however, remember that God, not us, is responsible
18 for our change. The line between where God does or does not
19 help us is absolutely irrelevant. **27** All glory to God as we
20 understand Him is our attitude here. **28** We find when we have
21 practiced this, we benefit; for pride can creep in and we
22 addicts cannot handle success very well. **29** We usually fall into
23 the mode of the hero, and when this happens, our self-center-
24 edness eats us alive and we can die.

25 **30** In Step Ten we strive for genuine humility. In this
26 humility we can better interact with others. **31** We are not
27 readily angered, frightened, or maddened by greed or lust.
28 We remember our part in the divine partnership with God and
29 we are more tolerant and patient with other people.

30 **32** Step Ten is worked while the day's ups and downs are fresh
31 in our heads. We list wrongs we have done. We do not ration-
32 alize our actions. We honestly chalk up our achievements.
33 Thus, we get our own house in order. **33** We feel more room to
34 grow. The mess is cleaned up. We know ourselves better and
35 there is strength.

34 A warning about rationalization is that it has killed more 1
of us than anything else. 35 At times, our motives will be ob- 2
scured by clouded thinking. We can pray for humility and use 3
it as a light to examine our real motives. 36 Did we act out of 4
negative emotion? If so, then we can work the program on it. 5
37 If we want to share it at once with another person, we do. 6
Others can help us see our clouded thinking for what it is. 7
Love and pain will keep us in the middle of the road. 38 We have 8
defects, but a willingness to live as our Higher Power would 9
have us is freedom. In life we will be tested in patience and 10
tolerance. 39 We must keep spiritually fit to act in a spirit of 11
love and helpfulness. When we are willing to grow toward 12
these ends, wonderful things are ahead. 13
40 Continuing to take personal inventory means that we form 14
a habit of looking at ourselves, our actions, our attitudes, 15
and our relationships on a regular basis. 41 We try to come up 16
with honest evaluations and to put out more or less energy 17
in certain areas we are concerned with. 18
42 It is very important to keep sharing with other people so 19
that when we come up with a rationalization for negative be- 20
havior, we can be told about it. This highlights the preven- 21
tative part of the Tenth Step. 43 You ask yourself as you go 22
through the day, "Am I being drawn in by some old pattern of 23
fear or resentment?", "Am I too tired?", "Am I too hungry?", 24
"Is my thinking getting cloudy?" It's a vaccination against 25
insanity on a continuing basis. 26
44 We have discussed the preventative side of the Tenth Step. 27
The love was there all the time, waiting for us to accept it. 28
Though we still face human pain, life finally begins to get 29
meaningful. 45 Clean living is possible when we rely on a 30
Higher Power daily to provide us with spiritual progress, 31
establishing us in useful living. — Step Eleven 32
| In the Third Step we made a decision to turn our will 33
and our lives over to God as we understand Him. We renew 34
this effort daily in the Eleventh Step. 46 Most of us rebelled 35
against this in the beginning, as if on a self-willed trip. 36

1 3 The first time we hear someone say, "Let go and let God," it
2 sound idiotic. 4 "No," we said, "If I let go I'll disappear or
3 get taken advantage of." 5 What happens instead is, the more we
4 improve our conscious contact with God through prayer and medi-
5 tation, the more often we pause when doubtful and say, "God, I
6 don't know what to do. Please teach me." 6 It's a fact. When
7 we finally get our own selfish motives out of the way, we begin
8 to find a peace unmatched to a drug-induced high. 7 We begin
9 to experience an awareness and an empathy with other people.

10 8 The Eleventh Step helps us, in the face of a problem, to
11 be aware of God. 9 The underlying principle of this Step is God-
12 consciousness. 10 We try to avoid asking for specific things. It's
13 hard because we're so sure that we know what's right for us.

14 11 We now know if we pray to do God's will, we will receive what's
15 best for us. 12 A person who has realized their powerlessness
16 and seen the vision the Higher Power has for them will see why
17 we pray only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to
18 carry it out. 13 Our deepest longings and recurring images of the
19 kind of people we'd like to be are only glimpses of God's will
20 for us. 14 Our outlooks are so limited we can only see our imme-
21 diate wants and needs through a loving God. 15 It is our own real
22 dreams that come true.

23 1 When we pray a remarkable thing happens; we find the means,
24 the ways, and energies, to perform tasks far beyond our capa-
25 bilities. 17 By the surrender of our own power, we gain a far
26 greater power that will see us through. 18 It is important we
27 keep faith and renew it through daily prayer.

28 19 It is easy to slip back into our old ways. 20 We have to
29 learn to maintain our new lives on a spiritually sound basis
30 to insure our continued growth and recovery. 21 God will not
31 force his goodness on us, but we will receive it if we ask.

32 22 This is not cruelty. Enforced morality lacks the force that
33 comes from our own choice.

34 23 Many times, our efforts have produced in us feelings of
35 peace and serenity that we have never known before. We know
36 that in doing God's will, our lives will be fulfilled.

STEP TWELVE

Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we sought to carry the message to addicts and to practice these principles in all of our affairs.

1 The idea of a spiritual awakening takes many different 1
forms in the many different personalities we find the Fellow- 2
ship. 2 This awakening does have some things in common through- 3
out the Fellowship. 3 Life takes on a new meaning, a new joy, 4
and a quality of being and feeling worthwhile. 4 We become 5
spiritually refreshed and are glad to be alive. 5 Our suffer- 6
ing has cleansed us of some of our illusions. 6 In time we have 7
been guided to a new life and place in the world and in our 8
hearts. 9

7 This great Step is to be proceeded by the working of 10
Steps One through Eleven. 8 There are those of us who tried to 11
stay clean without the benefit of "having had a spiritual 12
awakening as a result of those steps," and they are no longer 13
with us. 9 The ones who continue to "practice these principles 14
in all their affairs," tell us that this is the most wonder- 15
ful thing one can know. The journey is a feeling of grati- 16
tude. 17

10 Usually, by the time we achieve this state of mind, no 18
one has to tell us to share our new life with the still- 19
suffering addict; we are more than eager to help that person 20
because by this time we recognize that by helping others-- 21
giving away that which has been given to us--is our best 22
possible insurance against relapse to the vague, torturous 23
existence of a practicing addict. 11 We call it "carrying the 24
message" and we do it in a number of ways. 25

12 The first way in which we carry the message is by stay- 26
ing clean with the help of God and the Fellowship. 13 Our new 27
way of living speaks for itself better than our words ever 28
could. 14 People see us on the street and remember us as fur- 29
tive, frightened loners. They notice the grayness and fear 30
leaving our faces. They see us gradually come alive. A 31

1 spring comes into our step and a twinkle into our eyes.¹⁵ The
2 message is meaningless unless we live it. If we do live it,
3 we give it more meaning with our lives than any words can
4 express.

5 ¹⁶ Learning the art of helping others when it is appropriate,
6 without creating resentments, is a marvelous benefit of the
7 N.A. program.¹⁷ Remarkably, the Twelve Steps guide us from a
8 state of humiliation and despair to a state wherein we are able
9 to act as instruments of God's will.¹⁸ We receive the gift of
10 being able to help fellow suffering addicts when no one else
11 can.¹⁹ No greater change of personality is possible; it is
12 God's love present in our lives.²⁰ We see it happening among us
13 every day. This miraculous one hundred and eighty degree
14 change is evidence of spiritual awakening.

15 ²¹ We attend N.A. meetings and make ourselves visible and
16 available to serve the Fellowship.²² We give freely and grate-
17 fully of our time, our services and our experiences to our
18 fellow addicts.²³ We do not shirk when called upon to practice
19 these principles. We know that the more eagerly we wade in
20 and work to stay clean, the higher we're going to get and the
21 richer our spiritual awakening will be!²⁴ Helping others works.
22 We do these things because they are the things that grant the
23 new lives we are enjoying.

24 ²⁵ In the Twelfth Step, we practice the spiritual principle
25 of giving away the N.A. message of recovery in order to keep
26 it. This is like reaping what we sow.²⁶ The old habit of using
27 drugs is replaced by the new habit of not using, and helping
28 others to get clean.²⁷ Even a member with one week in the N.A.
29 Fellowship can turn to a newcomer and say, "Live One Day At A
30 Time", or "An Addict Alone Is In Bad Company."

31 ²⁸ When we share with someone, we may say, "Lord make me an
32 instrument of Thy Will."²⁹ We don't do it alone, and we don't
33 have to. It is just a matter of getting another N.A. member
34 to go with us on the Twelve Step call to carry the message to
35 a suffering addict.³⁰ We don't set ourselves up as God. That
36 is why it is spiritual. We get to be an instrument of God's

grace in action.³¹ It's a privilege and an honor to go on such 1
a call. Those of us who do service work are the luckiest people 2
on God's earth!³² Those who have been in the pits of despair, 3
now strive to help other people to find a new and better way 4
to live. 5

³³ We help newcomers, whether they are detoxing or just be- 6
ginning to learn the principles of N.A. We do what we can to 7
make them aware of what the program offers and try to make them 8
feel at home.³⁴ Experience shows the best way to accomplish 9
these ends is to listen carefully to what they want to do about 10
their problem. Next we can share our experience, strength, 11
and hope and then accompany them to their first meeting. 12

³⁵ The selfless service that comes from this work is the 13
very principle of Step Twelve.³⁶ It is clearly an awareness of 14
God's grace working that provides so much of what the prac- 15
ticing addict needs.³⁷ Just as the grace of a loving God was 16
given to us, we now have the opportunity to share this gift 17
with others.³⁸ One Twelve Step call of this nature can make a 18
life worthwhile. There are plenty of such calls for those of 19
us in N.A. 20

³⁹ The Twelfth Step also suggests that we practice these 21
principles in all of our affairs.⁴⁰ As long as we stay clean 22
and live these Principles, we are doing Twelfth Step work. 23

⁴¹ We are attracting people to us and the N.A. Fellowship by our 24
example of being clean. We no longer wish to participate in 25
the problem.⁴² We now serve God. In this manner of service, we 26
renew our vow to turn our will and lives over to the care of 27
God.⁴³ Even if we have no such understanding, we will acquire 28
it through seeing others recover. Fellow addicts show that 29
God is loving and we will know a life free of drugs that we 30
never dreamed possible.⁴⁴ The Steps do not end here, they are 31
a new beginning. 32

⁴⁵ All will be well as long as we remain abstinent and trust 33
in a Higher Power of our understanding. Living just for today 34
relieves the burden of the past and alleviates fear of the 35
future.⁴⁶ Clean, we learned to take whatever actions were neces- 36

1 sary and to leave the results in our Higher Power's hands.
2 We learned to trust God with our fate and to let Him help us
3 do our best each day. 48 The most important thing we can do is
4 stay clean today, through reliance upon a Higher Power.
5 48 We want freedom. Clean, we see that the greatest freedom
6 we can achieve is acceptance of God's will. 49 But, we recognize
7 that we are human and subject to mental and spiritual sick-
8 ness. 50 Each day, we ask our Higher Power to help us stay clean,
9 for that day. Each night, we give thanks for the gift of
10 recovery. Thus we begin to practice spirituality.
11 51 We are clean, but by no means perfect and our lives remain
12 unmanageable. We become egotistical from time to time. It
13 is hard for people in the Fellowship to reach us at these
14 times, but not impossible. 52 Our newly found friends usually
15 call our bluff, and cut through the dishonesties. When things
16 get rough, and spiritual contact is difficult, we learn that
17 it won't last. 53 If we do not use, and continue to maintain
18 spiritual contact within the Fellowship, we can get through
19 these trying times, and grow stronger.
20 54 Trusting others doesn't come naturally to us, but we must
21 learn to trust because an addict alone is in bad company. 55 The
22 needed strength wasn't there until we found N.A., which showed
23 us how to make faith work for us. 56 We had a lot of energy, but
24 we channelled it into self-destruction. Now, we can put the
25 same energy that we had used to perpetuate our pain into
26 strengthening our faith and becoming healthier, more loving
27 people. 57 We first learn to love our N.A. groups. Later, through
28 service, we learn how to put our energy to work, and the more
29 we serve, the better we get at channelling energy.
30 58 Remember, we didn't become addicted in one day. We can't
31 possibly solve all our problems at once, no matter how much
32 energy we have. Take it easy! 59 The only way we recover is to
33 apply what we learn from each other, on a daily basis. Our
34 growth is a lifetime process. 60 We never stop learning, and we
35 never stop needing one another's guidance and support. So,
36 we say, "Keep coming back; it works!"

61 Addiction is physical, mental, and spiritual. Therefore, we believe that we must develop faith in a Higher Power before we can hope to recover from its destruction. 62 When we have a strong faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and use that faith in our daily lives, that Power will be able to reach us and supply us with the strength and guidance that we need to recover.

63 The N.A. program is a spiritual program. Our members who are living a spiritual program have learned enough of their spirit to develop and maintain a conscious contact with a Higher Power. 64 We become more spiritual as we share ourselves with our fellow addicts. We gradually change from being dull and uncaring to feeling clean, and unclouded by earthly concerns. 65 Most of us experience steady growth towards serenity and towards God, as we understand God. Some have profound spiritual experiences, dramatic and inspirational in nature.

66 Regardless of which category we fit into, we all go through a profound change in our basic natures, which is much deeper than anything merely physical or mental. After a while it becomes obvious, even to outsiders, that a real and lasting change is taking place in us. 67 The most obvious change is the simple fact that we are staying clean. When we rely on God to guide our thoughts, changes are inevitable in our feelings and actions.

68 As new members, the talk of God we hear in meetings scares many of us. We are suspicious and skeptical because of disappointments we have had with religion. We assume that someone will try to take away our freedom to believe as we choose.

69 That is not the case. Spiritual and religious freedom is one of our most basic principles. Each of us are free to work out our own concept of God, or reject the concept of a God. We each build our relationships with our Higher Power in our own way in our own time. 70 Many of us come into N.A. as atheists or agnostics. Some of us come in as religious fanatics. Nobody is here to correct or change one another. We operate in an atmosphere of complete acceptance and respect

1 for one another's beliefs. 71 We try to avoid the arrogance of
2 self-righteousness, because it is one of the deadliest forms
3 of self-deception. Even though we avoid pushing any ideas on
4 anyone, we do suggest, strongly, that each person make an honest
5 attempt to find a Power greater than themselves.

6 72 From our experience, we have found that addicts who stay
7 clean, find and develop a relationship with a Higher Power.

8 73 We are taught to "act as if" we believe in God, by applying
9 spiritual principles and practices to our lives. 74 Three "musts"
10 are honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness to try. Agnos-
11 tics and atheists generally start out by just talking to "What-
12 ever's there."

13 75 There is a spirit or an energy that can be felt in the meet-
14 ings, and it is sometimes the newcomer's first perception of
15 God. This spirit, or whatever it is, relaxes and helps us to
16 get honest with each other. We let go of our egos and learn
17 from our fellow addicts. 76 Honest sharing speeds our recovery
18 and makes us believe that this Power is taking care of us, and
19 working for our good. We no longer blame God and others for
20 our problems, and see that our problems have been of our own
21 making.

22 77 After we accept that we created our own hell and that there
23 is a God that wants to help us, we begin to make progress in
24 solving our problems. 78 Through open-minded effort, we "act our
25 way into right thinking", letting our Higher Power find us,
26 rather than searching for God with only our minds. We come to
27 rely on a growing daily relationship with a God of our under-
28 standing. 79 One way to develop our conscious contact with God
29 is to make up a "gratitude list", count our blessings and
30 thank our Higher Power for them. Another way is to practice
31 accepting conditions as they are, and trusting that they will
32 improve if they're supposed to. 80 We do these exercises several
33 times a day, until they become a routine part of our lives.
34 In this way, we begin to face life on God's terms, and that
35 gives us the necessary sense of peace for us to live clean
36 successfully.

81 We must re-evaluate our old ideas, so that we can become 1
acquainted with the new ideas that lead to a new way of life. 2
We cannot throw out old ideas without replacing them. 3
We believe that the old self-destruction and self-centeredness 4
can only be replaced with spiritual principles. The three 5
basic spiritual principles are honesty, open-mindedness, and 6
willingness to try. We say that they are the "HOW" of our 7
program. 8

83 Rigorous honesty is the most important tool we have in 9
learning to deal with the past and to live today. Although 10
honesty is a difficult tool to practice, it is a most reward- 11
ing one. 84 We practice honesty under all conditions because it 12
is the antidote to our diseased thinking. We lose the fear 13
of being cornered. Our lack of fear and our new found faith 14
serves as a firm foundation for courage in the future. 15

85 Being honest is not a natural thing for us to do. We 16
don't expect to practice total honesty in all things overnight. 17
It is a gradual process in our daily living. 18

86 The situations that seem hardest to maintain our honesty 19
have produced the most rewarding results. When we are honest 20
in really difficult situations, the feelings of happiness and 21
serenity are overwhelming. 22

87 We have never before experienced gut-level honesty because 23
we covered up our feelings by using. We must learn to get to 24
the bottom of each emotion we have, and face it, so we can be 25
our true natures. Our lives become so much simpler, when we 26
get to know ourselves. 27

88 "Cash register honesty", is a good beginning in develop- 28
ing self-esteem. Self-esteem is based on facing and living 29
by the truth. 89 When we honestly evaluate what we really have, 30
we can learn to appreciate it. The gifts of recovery are 31
things that we can carry with us everywhere. 32

90 Managing our own lives got us to the program of Narcotics 33
Anonymous. What we knew about living when we got here had 34
almost killed us. 91 We came in sick people who knew very little 35
about how to be happy and enjoy life. Complete open-minded- 36

1 ness is necessary for us to learn a new way of life.
2 91 Being open-minded allows us to hear something that might
3 save our lives. It allows us to listen to opposing points
4 of view, and come to conclusions of our own. Open-minded-
5 ness leads us to those very insights that have eluded us
6 during our lives. 93 It is this principle, open-mindedness,
7 that allows us to participate in a discussion without jump-
8 ing to conclusions or predetermining who is right and who
9 is wrong. We no longer have to make fools of ourselves by
10 standing up for some non-existent values. 94 We have learned
11 that it is O.K. to be ignorant, for when we are ignorant we
12 are teachable and can learn how to live our new life success-
13 fully.
14 95 However, open-mindedness without willingness, will get us
15 nowhere. We must be willing to go to any lengths to get our
16 recovery. 96 We never know when the time will come when we must
17 put forth all the effort and strength we have to stay clean.
18 97 Honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness to try, work
19 hand in hand. The lack of one of these principles in our pro-
20 grams can kill us. Living a personal program without these
21 principles, will make recovery difficult and painful for us when
22 it should be beautifully simple.
23 98 Remember too that H.O.W. are spiritual principles which
24 mean that they can be relied on to get us out of trouble that
25 dishonesty, closed-mindedness and unwillingness got us into.
26 99 If it were not for this program we would be dead. This
27 program is a vital part of our everyday living. We go to
28 any lengths to help this Fellowship and it helps us.
29 100 If you come to Narcotics Anonymous to use people to help
30 you continue your habit, then we cannot help you. We cannot
31 play dishonest games anymore. 101 A closed mind is a barrier
32 against any change. On the other hand, a spirit of open-
33 mindedness, coupled with an admission of powerlessness, seems
34 to produce a positive change when asking for help. If you
35 have a drug problem and are willing to try it our way, we
36 will share with you how we stay clean.

102 In this Fellowship, the importance of togetherness is 1
expressed by some sayings: "United we stand, divided we 2
fall", and "I can't, we can!" These slogans tell us that if 3
we don't stick together and help each other, then we will 4
surely die. 5

103 We have a deadly disease, that before coming to the pro- 6
gram we did not know about. We were in the depths of despair, 7
degradation and lost in a destructive chaos. We came in puking, 8
sweating and shaking. 04 Some of us stayed. Was it through our 9
own merit? We think not! Our way got us here. Recovery was 10
done through the help of others, the tools they shared with 11
us, and a Higher Power. 12

105 From the isolation of our addiction, we were thrust into 13
a fellowship of people with a common bond: addiction, N.A. 14
is like a lifeboat in a sea of isolation, unwillingness and 15
chemicals. 06 We share the good times and the bad, victories 16
and failures, all without defeat as long as we don't pick up 17
the first fix, pill, drink, or joint. We get all our faith, 18
strength and hope from people sharing their recoveries. 19

107 We usually react angrily as recovering addicts if anyone 20
tells us what to do. In N.A. meetings, we share what it was 21
like in our practicing addiction, our suffering that brought 22
us to the turning point and how we stay clean today. 08 By tell- 23
ing our own story, someone else is bound to be suffering from 24
a similar problem and our experience tells them how to deal 25
with it--what works for one, might work for another. 09 Most 26
addicts are able to accept this type of sharing, even from 27
the very beginning. In time, we have a new source of strength 28
that will guide us in our recoveries. 29

110 By sharing in regularly scheduled meetings and one-on-one 30
with recovering addicts, we learn that part of our approval- 31
seeking behavior helps to keep us clean. 11 Meetings are an 32
important part of recovery. Those who attend meetings regu- 33
larly and work the steps stay clean. We need the approval 34
of people around us. Attending meetings encourages us to 35
stay clean and reminds us what it was like to be a newcomer 36

1 and re-enforces how progressive the disease of addiction is.
2 **112** This force in the meetings isn't just the people there, but
3 also something within the people. We return to these meetings
4 and use them like medicine in the form of unconditional love.
5 **113** A meeting is like a fence around our clean time. It pro-
6 tects us during all of our recovery. **114** At first, the members in
7 the meetings helped us through our remorse and self-pity by
8 accepting us just the way we were and showing us the necessary
9 care and love to begin to live clean. **115** By returning to meet-
10 ings, we came to believe in a loving God as he expresses Him-
11 self in the group conscience, that continues to save us from our
12 addiction and help us in our daily living.
13 **116** Finally, throughout our lives, we surround ourselves with
14 fellow members who continue to let us know we can count on them.
15 One of the advantages of the N.A. program is that it places us
16 in an intimate, regular contact with recovering addicts who can
17 most understand and help us in our recovery.
18 **117** Our experience is that those who begin sharing innermost
19 feelings, emotions and thoughts with other recovering addicts,
20 rather than giving a drug history, tend to make more rapid
21 growth. **118** When we tell our stories, whether one-on-one or in
22 groups, we can get out of the superficial personalities we
23 thought other people believed us to be. **119** Only another addict
24 can understand and accept us as we are. We recover through
25 this process. The Steps guide and the meetings give us the
26 opportunity to say and hear thoughts and feelings that would
27 otherwise be held in.
28 **120** On the outside world, a lot of the rules that apply will
29 not work with our new life in the Fellowship. **121** Expressing our
30 need for help at the time of crisis seems like a logical thing
31 to do, but we are sometimes illogical. To us, at first, it
32 feels like insanity to give another person knowledge of our
33 pain. As we become more closely involved with others we will
34 learn to share our pain and it will lessen. **122** Part of the horror
35 of addiction is being cut off from this human experience. Our
36 fears and guilt kept us from receiving the benefits afforded

to everyday people. Sharing enables us to return to the realm of human experience, increasing our capacity to feel the problems of another addict.

123 By sharing our experience of recovery with newcomers, both by sponsorship and at meetings, we help ourselves stay clean. 24 We find ourselves being constantly reminded of things that help us want to stay clean. Being able to serve as an instrument of a loving God and participation in the recovery of others keeps a sense of wonder and gratitude in our lives.

125 Giving comfort and encouragement to others encourages and comforts us. Today, we have people in our lives who stand by us when it's rough and help us do what we can do and not worry about what we can't. 25 Getting out of ourselves gives us more perspective on life and makes it easier to live with reality. We no longer feel like we have to run from ourselves. This program has given us a sure way to explore ourselves, rooting out defects and learning to live.

127 If you want to change your life--risk sharing! It is by taking risks we have almost lost our lives, by asking for help in the same way, we can change.

128 If we find ourselves in a bad place or we sense a bad scene coming, we call someone or get to a meeting. We have learned to seek good counsel from qualified people before making difficult decisions. 26 By reaching out and practicing the virtue of humility, and asking for help, we can get through even the toughest of times. I can't, we can! It is not a sign of weakness, it is a sign of growth. 30 In this way, we as recovering addicts find the strength we need when we need it most. It is a way of life for the addicts who want to learn to live clean and have discovered one another. We share our mental and spiritual resources for the good of everyone.

131 Recovering addicts take great pleasure in helping other suffering addicts recover. Recovery as found in Narcotics Anonymous must come from within and no one can get clean for anyone else.

1 **132** In the course of carrying the message, each of us comes
2 to our own understanding and if we have difficulties we trust
3 our groups and the Twelve Steps of the program to guide us.
4 These things should be used to help others.

5 **133** The Steps guide us into our place in society. We begin
6 by straightening out our internal disorder and obtaining
7 release from the defects that prevent us from being all we
8 should be. **34** We emerge as individuals reconceived with a new
9 awareness and the ability to take our place in the world.

10 Our viewpoint changes from that of a loner to a participating
11 member. **35** We emphasize setting our own house in order and
12 trying to do more than our part. We trust in our Higher
13 Power to give us strength and to meet our needs. **36** If we feel
14 that we have more than our share of difficulty, we should
15 share more with others and remember to be grateful for the
16 good things we already have. If we're not grateful for the
17 things we've got, we won't be grateful for the things we are
18 yet to receive.

19 **137** Responsibility is a key word here. There are certain
20 situations that demand more than we have to give. We should
21 avoid these or seek help if we find ourselves already in
22 such a situation. We are no longer asked to do the impossible.

138 Most of us are accustomed to getting bored and disinterested
24 when we find ourselves without major problems. We want to
25 change. Serenity not prayed for is likely to appear as bore-
26 dom. In the past we have relied on desperation to give us
27 the strength to periodically re-order our lives. There is
28 another way.

29 **139** When we accept that we are responsible for our problems,
30 we realize that we can be equally responsible for our solu-
31 tions. **40** It simply takes clean time for us to realize who we
32 are and what we want to do. What we can do is remember that
33 we are addicts. Being clean is abnormal to us, and we must
34 learn how to live in an on-going manner. **41** A great magic is
35 found when we help others. As clean addicts in the Fellowship
36 of Narcotics Anonymous, we help ourselves by helping others.

142 Our attention focuses on the solutions, and our old ideas break 1
up and dissolve like icebergs in the tropics. When the com- 2
pulsion to use is lifted from us, and we begin to think of 3
others before ourselves, a true miracle begins. 43 Working the 4
steps, practicing the principles and using the tools, we begin 5
to see ourselves in a new light. We find ourselves helping 6
others and securing help for our own problems. We redefine 7
ourselves. We become feeling people, capable of responding 8
appropriately to our environment. 44 We put spiritual living 9
first and exercise patience, tolerance and humility in our 10
daily lives. The further we get from the last pill, fix, 11
drink, or toke, the more we see of our past and the more we 12
realize the miracle of the release from our disease of addic- 13
tion. 14

145 What we have today is the wonderful fact of our recovery 15
and all that it means to us. Each day we live clean, awakens 16
us to the freedom we had all along, but failed to realize. 17
We succeed now where we had known only failure before. 46 Many 18
of our dreams, forgotten and obscured by our addiction, re- 19
turn and help us regain the sense of wonder and excitement 20
at the miracle of living clean. 47 The old compulsions fade 21
and the habits of mind associated with addiction weaken and 22
are broken. A great many things become possible for us. 23
Since we live clean and grow, we are able to take our place in 24
the world. 25

148 If we want to reap the benefits of staying clean, we find 26
it necessary to take continual inventories of ourselves. 27

149 Hidden fears and needs are still potential driving forces. 28
Just because we don't recognize fear or anger doesn't mean 29
that it isn't influencing our lives. 50 We found it important 30
to examine places where we grew angry or our beliefs were 31
tested. The areas we didn't want to question were those 32
that most needed to be looked at. 33

151 We also found it important to examine the other side of 34
the coin, the so called "good" qualities like truth. 52 Truth 35
seems to be something that is impossible to understand until 36

1 it becomes obvious. Truth is something we never suspected
2 until we knew it.⁵³ There are no exceptions--only incomplete
3 truths. Everything we know is subject to revision, especially
4 what we know about truth.

5 ¹⁵⁴ Another desirable quality is love. We love the ambitious
6 for they can inspire us; we love the failures for they can
7 teach us; we love the kings for they are but human; we love
8 the meek for they are divine. We love the poor for they are
9 so many. We love the rich for they are lonely. We love the
10 young for the faith they hold; we love the old for the wisdom
11 they share. We love the beautiful for their eyes of sadness;
12 we love the ugly for their souls of peace.

13 ¹⁵⁵ We think of love as a shield against the attacks of other
14 people, and as a weapon to blast through walls of hate, and
15 to open closed hearts and closed minds.⁵⁶ We feel protected by
16 our love, through adversity, discouragement, anger, and in-
17 security. We even feel uplifted by love, in the moments of
18 despair that still sometimes come to haunt us.⁵⁷ As our love is
19 strengthened, we become stronger, and better able to meet
20 life's trials.

21 ¹⁵⁸ In dealing with the other people in our lives, we develop
22 a loving attitude. We forgive more easily, anger more slowly,
23 expect less, and give more to our brothers and sisters. We
24 come to see all people as our brothers and sisters.⁵⁹ We have
25 learned this kind of unconditional love from our fellow addicts
26 in Narcotics Anonymous.

27 ¹⁶⁰ Through the love we have received in our Fellowship, we
28 begin to feel lovable ourselves. From there, we can truly
29 start to love and respect ourselves. This feeling of self-
30 love is totally alien to the egotism that we used to bolster
31 ourselves with, as practicing addicts.⁶¹ It is one of the things
32 that brings a sense of calmness to us, a feeling of solidarity
33 that comes from knowing the truth about ourselves, and accept-
34 ing it.⁶² In the old days, we knew, deep down inside, that we
35 were faking it whenever we indulged in our delusions of grandeur
36 and self-importance. Now, because we are beginning to love

ourselves unashamedly, we can love other people more com- 1
pletely, because we no longer feel like we have anything to 2
hide from anyone. 3

163 Our egos used to control us in all kinds of subtle ways. 4
For one thing, it seemed important for us to compete with 5
others in almost all of our endeavors. Some of us even refused 6
to try something that we might not be the best at. We watched 7
other people closely, not with any concern for their well- 8
being, but to check and see if we were measuring up to their 9
standards. 64 Some of us had no idea who we were, or who we 10
wanted to be. We only knew we didn't want to be ourselves. 11
Now, we realize that we were unwisely comparing our insides 12
to others' outsides, which could only work to frustrate us in 13
the long run. 14

165 The Twelve Steps to recovery, that N.A. outlines for us, 15
hold the answer for all of our ego-trips and insecurities. 16
They seem to hold the only answers for us that we can really 17
use. 66 In living these Steps, we first begin to let go of 18
old egotism. We then open up to a Higher Power, so that we 19
will lose all fear of facing ourselves and of facing other 20
people. Eventually, when we sincerely use this program of 21
action in our daily lives, we will be able to face our Higher 22
Power, ourselves, our loved ones, and even the "cold, cruel 23
world." 67 We develop a solid base to work from, which assures 24
us that we can go anywhere and do anything, with complete 25
assurance that we can handle whatever we have at hand. 68 With 26
that kind of attitude, we have a real basis for living happily, 27
and we are able to really be of help to the addict who is 28
still suffering. 29

169 The Twelve Steps led us to a point of recovery that 30
seemed to make the world change before our eyes, for the 31
better. 70 By practicing the N.A. principles in all our affairs, 32
we attract other addicts to us, addicts we are now capable 33
of helping. 34

71 Humility is a word that now loses its old negative con- 35
notations for us. In the days of our active addiction, we 36

1 were humbled by the drugs and the behavior patterns of get-
2 ting and using. We learned to place ourselves last, and the
3 addiction first.⁷² In a way, how we live now is similar to
4 that. We place our recovery first and our own petty desires
5 and egos last. We begin to actually want to do what is best
6 for all concerned, especially in our N.A. groups.⁷³ We have
7 found that the best results in staying clean can come, only
8 when we serve to unify our groups by attending meetings, and
9 by serving N.A.

10 ¹⁷⁴ In our past, we were usually irresponsible. After we
11 face ourselves in the inventory steps, and make amends to
12 others in our amends steps, we can no longer allow other
13 people to "pay our way" for us. We want to serve.

14 ¹⁷⁵ Earlier, we mentioned that it was important that we learn
15 to trust each other in N.A. In our groups, we all need to
16 open up; first, selfishly, for our own recovery, and later
17 candidly, for the inspiration of the newer members.⁷⁶ We need
18 to maintain an atmosphere of confidence by not using oppor-
19 tunities to look down on our fellow members, or gossip about
20 them.⁷⁷ Speaking up in meetings and on a one-on-one basis with
21 a sponsor are absolutely necessary for our survival, and a
22 break of confidence could cost another addict their life.

23 ¹⁷⁸ Those of us who are consciously working and using the
24 Twelve Steps to recovery in our lives are seldom bothered by
25 gossip.⁷⁹ Our lives are lived like "open books", and really
26 don't feel like hiding anything, or judging anyone. We no
27 longer feel a need to put up a front, because we are doing
28 the best we can.

29 ¹⁸⁰ However far we are in our recovery programs, we each need
30 to draw on the strength of the other people in the group. We
31 bring that strength out with us, into our every-day lives.

32 ¹⁸¹ We apply what we learn in the meetings to all our affairs,
33 using these teachings as a basis for living, but returning,
34 again and again to our groups, both to help and to be helped
35 in our recovery from addictions.

182

One of the simplest and most important parts of our whole recovery process is the concept of "live a day at a time." Often, we have to extend that idea to "live a moment at a time." In the course of our daily lives, we usually tend to forget to keep things simple, and we build our problems into unmovable mountains.

183

Patience is not exactly one of our strong points either. We are experts at making ourselves so frustrated that we lose perspective completely. That is why we need our slogans, and our N.A. friends to remind us to face what we can, as we can, and no sooner. We try to avoid setting goals for ourselves that are too high for us to reach. They set us up for defeat. We become willing to lower our goals, allowing ourselves to give our Higher Power credit for all things we accomplish, and to be grateful for them, even when we would rather accomplish more. Not only are many of us impatient with ourselves about what we expect to accomplish, but we are impatient about what we expect to have. During our active using, we often lived way beyond our means, out of necessity. Unfortunately, not all of us lose our extravagance and greed easily, even after we stop using.

187

It isn't easy, but, if we want to live happily, we have to learn to live ethically, and within our means, facing what we have and what we have not, with honest acceptance and gratitude.

188

In both, the case of accomplishing things and of acquiring things, we usually need to develop a habit of lowering our goals, to a more reasonable point, and reaching them in our own time. After a while, our ability to produce and to use what we have improves. As that happens, we gradually start raising the goals again, but only with the guidance of our Higher Power. As we do this, we insure our own success in meeting the goals we have set for ourselves, letting go of fear and impatience and raising our self-esteem.

190

We mentioned humility earlier, as a quality for us to shoot for, particularly in the confines of our Fellowship.

191

For most of us, it is much more than that. It is an attitude

1 that must be developed, before we can ever expect to live happily
2 in the world. Humility is an honest self-acceptance, which
3 leads to further acceptance of the conditions around us.¹² It
4 goes hand in hand with the qualities of patience and toler-
5 ance. As we recognize our own humanity, we become much better
6 able to recognize others, to let them make mistakes, and to
7 be themselves. We bring this new humility with us everywhere
8 we go, because each of us touches many lives.

9 ¹⁹³ One of our greatest enemies is resentment. It has the
10 power to kill. The only way to be rid of resentment is to
11 develop humility, in the form of forgiveness.¹⁴ We can't lose
12 our resentments, by using our own will-power, no matter how
13 hard we may try. Only through earnest prayer, and through
14 dealing with our resentments up front, can we start to forgive
15 the people we have hatred toward.

16 ¹⁹⁵ The benefits of forgiving our enemies are many. First, we
17 are able to use our thinking time on more important subjects,
18 instead of plotting our revenge, or writing little scenarios
19 about what we "ought to say or should have said."¹⁶ So, having
20 all this time, we are free to improve ourselves. We even-
21 tually start to see the very same defects that we had found
22 so intolerable in the other people in ourselves.¹⁷ We can do
23 little exercises in tolerance by making up our minds to let
24 people be themselves, and not lifting a finger to change them.

¹⁹⁸ Sometimes, the best revenge we can have over a manipulative
26 or unpleasant person is in not allowing them to "pull our
27 strings" by making us react unkindly to them.¹⁹ If we really
28 believe that a person is wrong, we have no business letting
29 that person have control of our emotions.²³ We are not re-
30 sponsible for another person's behavior, but we learn to
31 take responsibility for our reactions. Remember, we can't
32 change other people. We can, through the program of Narcotics
33 Anonymous, change ourselves.

34 ²⁰¹ We have just been talking about the qualities of patience,
35 tolerance, and humility. We also mentioned acceptance.
36 Actually, all of the first qualities mentioned are mere

aspects of acceptance.⁶² Those are the main ways that we use 1
acceptance in our lives. But, acceptance goes forward, to 2
the new member that comes into our Fellowship. 3
²⁰³ Alienation and isolation are symptoms of the mental part 4
of our disease.⁰⁴ To the practicing addict, life is just a 5
movement between connections and oblivion. Normal concerns 6
are pushed to the side, as the disease progresses.⁰⁵ Our 7
behavior confounds our friends and relatives, so we seek the 8
company of the only people who understand us: our fellow 9
addicts.⁰⁶ As the drugs consume our physical reserves, we 10
pass into the desperate state where getting and using is our 11
main activity. 12