

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

P.O. Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409
(818) 780-3951



To: RSRs and RSR alternates, Board of Trustees, Board of Directors, JAC, and regional literature committees

From: Bryce Sullivan, Chairperson
Steps Ad Hoc Committee

Date: November 5, 1991

Re: September Steps Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

The Steps Ad Hoc Committee met September 20-22. Members present were Alden Irish, Michael McDermott, Tom Catton, Bobbie Schmaus, Jeri Sarracino, Jim Buerer, Ceven McGuire, and Bob McDonough. WSO staff members, Steve Lantos and Cindy Sarnecky were also present.

A great deal of work was scheduled on the September agenda. We worked on seven drafts: Step Nine, Step Eight, Step Seven, Step Six, Step Five, Step Three, and Step One. We completed work on all of the drafts on our agenda with the exception of Step Two. The remainder of this report will briefly describe the work that we accomplished on each of the drafts.

Step Nine

The transition from Step Eight was the first item discussed. Some members pointed out that we need to avoid being redundant in the way that we approach the transition of each step. We looked over the previous drafts and decided that we had not developed a redundant style in the drafts so far. To insure that we avoid being redundant, we discussed alluding to the progression that is inherent in the steps instead of referring back to previous steps in a mechanical way. As part of the transition in the Ninth Step, we talked about Steps Six and Seven being a process of making peace with ourselves and Steps Eight and Nine being a process of making peace with others.

Following the transition in each step, we have a brief identification section. This section should speak to the reader so that the reader can identify with the text. For this step we discussed how at this point in working the steps we move from a focus on ourselves to a focus on others. We also talked about the expectations that many of us have in approaching the Ninth Step. Adequate preparation in Step Eight can release us

from these expectations. By getting on with the Ninth Step, members can make amends and put things behind them.

Spiritual principles are contained in the section following the identification section. The ad hoc committee is fortunate to have excellent outlines that were developed by prior committees of the WSC Literature Committee. These outlines are a well-developed framework for the steps. Probably the hardest part about working with the outlines is deciding how much emphasis to give each item on the outline. This is particularly true in the spiritual principles section. The spiritual principles that were discussed to include in this section included: forgiveness, courage, honesty, humility, and freedom.

After the section on spiritual principles comes the section of the chapter dealing with the application of the step. Although this step book is not intended to be a "how to" book, this section contains information about the basics of how many members in NA approach working the steps. For Step Nine, as with all of the steps, we discussed the role that sponsorship plays. Sponsorship is one of the themes woven throughout the book. For Step Nine, we discussed the member going over the amends beforehand with his or her sponsor to determine if making the amends would be injurious in any way. We also talked about the guidance a sponsor can give to make sure that the amends is appropriate to the harm. Underscoring the fact that there is no standard formula, we discussed how making an amends isn't merely saying that we are sorry. Following the applications section we concluded this chapter, as every other chapter, with a transition to the next step.

Steps Five, Six, Seven, and Eight

The committee reviewed the first drafts of Steps Seven and Eight on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. We worked fairly quickly through these drafts because we felt that they were well structured and didn't need extensive rewriting. On Saturday afternoon and Saturday evening we worked on the second drafts of Steps Six and Step Five. Again, we didn't feel that these drafts needed deep rewriting so our work went quickly.

Input was provided by a member of the World Service Board of Trustees that brought to our attention an issue that has come up a few times in committee. I want to bring this to your attention so that you can be aware of this particular dilemma. As you know, in our literature we say "we" rather than "I." We write our literature in the first person plural. I believe that it can be safely stated that if we were to use the first person singular that we would receive a good deal of input suggesting that writing our book in the first person singular is inappropriate. So why is this an issue you ask? I will give you an example from the Fifth Step draft. "We must overcome our fear and work the Fifth Step if we are to make any significant changes in the way we live. We muster our courage and go on. We may call our sponsors for reassurance. Taking this step with the support of our sponsors and a loving God is a way of putting into practice our decision to allow God to care for our will and our lives." If you will examine the underlined word "sponsors" you will see the problem that we sometimes have using the first person plural. The problem is the perception that some readers gain, thinking that the wording indicates that having multiple sponsors is appropriate. When we use the

word "sponsors," invariably, the comment will be made that an individual member should only have one sponsor. The committee agrees that one sponsor per member is usually best. We also want our writing to be grammatically correct. We are going to try to mix up the use of such phrases as "his or her sponsor," or "each of us may call our sponsors." We have also talked about the possibility of simply using the phraseology "we called our sponsor" even though it is not correct. Let us know if you have any ideas on this.

Steps One, Two, and Three

As you may know, Steps One through Three were written by a different staff writer than the drafts that are currently being developed. As a result, the drafts are stylistically different. And, not only are they different in terms of style, but they also miss the mark in other respects. All of the ad hoc committee members have believed for some time that we can produce better drafts of Steps One, Two, and Three. To this end, we have wanted to do some reworking of these drafts. Unfortunately the staff team didn't have time to do this work. Since staff time was unavailable, we had individual members on the ad hoc committee incorporate input from the entire ad hoc into Steps One, Two, and Three. These drafts were then reviewed by the entire ad hoc committee.

The reworked drafts of Steps One and Three were reviewed at the September meeting. Basically, each writer took input from the committee and restructured the drafts along the lines of our current format. These drafts were mailed out to the committee for review and were then worked on at this meeting. The committee was pleased with the work of the teams. We were able to go through the drafts of Steps One and Three and provide the staff team with further modifications to the drafts. There was not much original writing in these drafts. Instead, redundancies were eliminated, objectionable word choices were eliminated, and the drafts were restructured. The member working on Step Two was unable to complete his work on the draft. Since we didn't have a rewritten draft of Step Two, each member provided input to the staff team for them to rework the draft based on the committee members' input.

The drafts of Step One, Two, and Three will be mailed out to the literature committee and the trustees during late October. This will give the WSCLC about one month to review the drafts before their November meeting. The drafts of Step Five and Step Six will be mailed to the WSCLC as soon as possible following the November 1-3 ad hoc committee meeting. The WSCLC will review Steps One through Six at their November meeting. We expect that the review-form draft of Steps One through Six will be released in late December for a six month review and input period.

The committee is reviewing our production schedule and looking at moving the dates forward considerably. The ad hoc committee expects to have completed our work on Steps Seven through Nine by March of 1992. At our November ad hoc committee meeting we will be finalizing Steps Five and Six, reviewing the second drafts of Steps Seven and Eight, reviewing the first draft of Step Nine, and doing draft preparation work on Steps Ten and Eleven as time allows.

Thanks to all of you who have provided input to the committee. We genuinely appreciate your comments. Area and regional literature committees can begin making plans for the release of the review-form drafts of Steps One through Six. The WSC Literature Committee has indicated that the drafts of Steps One through Six will be out for a six month review period. The WSCLC will make a final determination on the release date and the length of the review period at their November meeting.