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Our Way of Life : A Short History of Narcotics Anonymous, Inc.

SHERMAN W. PATRICK

DOCTOR AND PATIENT—The man who would learn the human mind will gain almost nothing from experimental psychology. Far better for him to put away his academic gown, to say goodbye to the study, and to wander with human heart through the world. There in the horrors of the prison, the asylum, and the hospital, in the drinking shops, brothels, and gambling hells, in the salons of the elegant, in the exchanges, socialist meetings, churches, religious revivals, and sectarian ecstasies, through love and hate, through the experience of passion in every form in his own body, he would reap richer store of knowledge than text-books a foot thick could give him. Then would he know to doctor the sick with real knowledge of the human soul.

(Excerpted from *Psychological Reflections: An Anthology of the Writings of Carl G. Jung*. Selected and edited by Jolande Jacobi (Harper & Brothers, New York City.)

Paradoxically, this advice written long ago by the eminent Carl G. Jung, has been followed *almost to the letter* by the drug addict. The “almost”, however, represents the tragic consequences that gave rise to the formation of Narcotics Anonymous (N.A.), and what it means as a qualifying phrase is vividly revealed in this autobiographical statement written by the N.A. founder, Daniel Carlsen.

My background is that of a thousand others—I was a drug addict for 25 years. At the age of 16 my foster mother, who was a staff physician in the hospital where we resided, gave me morphine for the relief of pain caused by an abscessed ear. I liked the feeling the morphine gave me and, after the operation, when the drug was no longer administered, I asked for more, but was refused. I knew where pills were kept, and helped myself to them, not even knowing what narcotics were.

That was the beginning of 25 years of abject misery and slavery of the most vicious kind. Many times I sought cures, many times I was hospitalized, but until 5 years ago I was never given the necessary understanding of my condition that enabled me to overcome my condition of addiction.

After traveling all over the country, running away from drugs, only to find them again, I finally gave up, completely. I felt completely defeated and hopeless of ever overcoming my problem and tried finally to end my life. I was sent to the United States Public Health Service Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky, where I had been a patient before. But this last time there a “progress” had been brought to the hospital for the patients. It was called “Addicts Anonymous” and patterned after Alcoholics Anonymous. It was brought to the hospital by a recovered alcoholic who believed it would benefit addicts as well as alcoholics.

This man, who has a truly great spirit, inspired me to learn to hope, and to have faith, at long last . . .

(Excerpt from a letter written by Daniel Carlsen to CBS-TV, 9/1/53.)

With the discovery of this new and the hope for an effective way “thousand others” like him.

In April of 1949, “Danny” returned from that last stay at the referred to in the above quote, was an “Addicts Anonymous”, in there was already an A.A. (Alco new group Narcotics Anonymo was patterned after Alcoholics An holics Anonymous’s philosophy group to which he belonged “w

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These meetings were held ea woman addict explained the goo small, cramped and overcrowded were a welcome diversion to the there just to be going but then w saying. You had to ask yourself might help you stop using drugs first time you heard Danny but se These “trials” were made eithe a few times, or occasionally as s after hearing Danny for the first “word” was gradually spread destined to help the ever increas redoubled his efforts as his cont alarmed because of the number of of the New York City Domest wrote “I’ve seen boys of 8 so sh stole money to buy marihuana”.

It was during this time that their first meeting place. The loc chairs on tables, a floor damp always ready to turn out his li

With the discovery of this new philosophy, Mr. Carlsen found the means and the hope for an effective way to "doctor" the sick human souls of those "thousand others" like him.

In April of 1949, "Danny" as he was called by all who knew of him, returned from that last stay at the Federal Hospital at Lexington, Kentucky, referred to in the above quote, with a dedication to the purpose of starting an "Addicts Anonymous", in the New York City community. But since there was already an A.A. (Alcoholics Anonymous), he decided to call his new group Narcotics Anonymous (N.A.) to avoid confusion. While N.A. was patterned after Alcoholics Anonymous it followed the adaption of Alcoholics Anonymous's philosophy used by Addicts Anonymous, the original group to which he belonged while in the hospital at Lexington.

He had no problem finding members since he had met many addicts over the years who were, like him, seeking a way to shed the "life" for a fresh start as legitimate contributing members of society. He also became active in public relations efforts relative to his cause, both to attract new addicts and to obtain support and aid from the public. It was thus that he met with officials at the Women's House of Detention in New York City and obtained permission to "carry the N.A. message" to the addict offenders incarcerated there.

These meetings were held each Sunday and were well attended. One woman addict explained the good attendance by pointing out that in the small, cramped and overcrowded conditions of this prison, the meetings were a welcome diversion to the monotony of prison life. "At first we were there just to be going but then we began to think about what Danny was saying. You had to ask yourself whether it *was* true that this program might help you stop using drugs. It might not have done any good that first time you heard Danny but sooner or later you decided to try his way." These "trials" were made either after release, readdiction and rearrest a few times, or occasionally as soon as the particular woman got released after hearing Danny for the first time. Through these Sunday meetings the "word" was gradually spread to men as well. Danny's group seemed destined to help the ever increasing number of addicts in New York. He redoubled his efforts as his contacts with addicts increased and he grew alarmed because of the number of young addicts coming forth. A psychiatrist of the New York City Domestic Relations Court, Children's Division, wrote "I've seen boys of 8 so short they could barely clear the desk who stole money to buy marihuana".

It was during this time that N.A. got "off the ground" and obtained their first meeting place. The location was a cafeteria. It features stacked chairs on tables, a floor damp from scrubbing, and a janitor who was always ready to turn out his lights for the night—the Salvation Army

s Anonymous, Inc.

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Far better for him to put away his
and to wander with human heart
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Lowenstein Cafeteria in Hell's Kitchen. But they *could* talk and smoke and they had a place where they could meet and could encourage one another. Danny knew that the addict would be at home in this group and that the group truly existed for the addict. So for the first time the addict was actually wanted in a positive helpful community-based program.

Even in this setting, though the members *were* motivated to help themselves and others, they still had troubles and problems of all kinds. But despite the fact that their problems did not disappear, underlying remained the desire to not only help themselves but others too. In this way they strove to make the program a way of life.

Following the starting of N.A., Danny Carlsen organized a group composed of parents, interested relatives, friends and others interested in assisting addicts. This "parents' group" provided a point of referral for the increasing number of persons, particularly mothers and fathers of addicts, who were seeking a "listening ear" even though there was little by way of service that could be offered to them.

All this had become possible because Danny had met the then Major Dorothy Berry of the Salvation Army one Sunday afternoon while he visited the Women's House of Detention. It was she who made possible the first official N.A. meeting place and who personally encouraged and supported N.A. in its early days. This support, continued through the years, grew to become one of N.A.'s greatest assets. Too, the group gave the Salvation Army a source for referral in a problem area where none had existed. And during the day Danny was permitted to use Major Berry's office to carry on his program. From there he was also able to listen to the problems and concerns of addicts and their families alike. He talked with all such people who called for helping services in connection with an addiction problem. Major Berry once called this "telephone therapy", but call it what you will it helped to fill a void in the lives of those who called. It made them feel better because they could talk freely to a sympathetic ear and in this sense it was therapeutic.

Unknown to Danny and the N.A. members, the police called Major Berry as soon as it was noted that meetings were being held in a Salvation Army Cafeteria. They questioned the wisdom of the "Army's" permitting it, but by this time Danny's reputation for sincere and honest effort was well known and could be pointed out to them. More important, the fact of Danny's abstinence was being believed in by the drug addicts so that upon learning the details of the program and its modest success, the inquiries were dropped as quietly as they were begun. Unquestionably this back-handed police endorsement was a tribute to Danny's willingness to go anywhere to help an addict, to prevent trouble and to speak to any interested group desiring him.

Using the above "shoestr personality, Danny gained the a few influential people in New the National Advisory Council was born. Their prospectus, on the drug addiction problem has been accomplished in this

The National Advisory Council (NACON) is a non-profit organization of the State of New York. The Council, composed of citizens, is occupied with the reference to medical and psychological.

The recent upsurge in addiction facilities for addicts, the absence of the lack of reliable sources of Narcotics was formed to meet but my making facilities available. The Council's program aims at combating the application of scientific knowledge, opening new treatment centers, making available to addicts, and a program of a national system of therapy groups may render each other mutual aid.

The activities of NACON have support and the Board of Directors to enlist support for its program. It ruled that contributions to NACON

Within the narrow limits set by and little by little grew in size and carried him into direct opposition to their parasitic existence to the drug police protection. He used his influence to develop a helpful and practical program for members. He had no personal responses to letters like the following:

Dear Friend:

It is not necessary for us to be and the desperate need for its services you already have first-hand knowledge.

The need for research and medical sympathy and education.

We are in urgent need of funds, personal resources, to continue to come to our aid in this emergency.

Using the above "shoestring" program along with his own dynamic personality, Danny gained the attention and finally the active support of a few influential people in New York City. Out of their interest, NACON, the National Advisory Council on Narcotics, Narcotics Anonymous, Inc. was born. Their prospectus, originally written in 1951, is a terse testimony to the drug addiction problem and an unpleasant reminder of how little has been accomplished in this field after more than ten years of effort:

The National Advisory Council on Narcotics, Narcotics Anonymous, Inc. (NACON) is a non-profit organization incorporated in 1951 under the laws of the State of New York. The Council, which consists of professional and civic-minded citizens, is occupied with the problems created by narcotic drugs, with special reference to medical and psychological research, social services, and public education.

The recent upsurge in addiction to narcotics has emphasized the lack of treatment facilities for addicts, the absence of a coordinated program for rehabilitation, and the lack of reliable sources of information. The National Advisory Council on Narcotics was formed to meet these needs, not only through its own activities but by making facilities available to agencies already active in the field. The Council's program aims at combatting addiction and preventing its spread through the application of scientific knowledge. This means enlargement of research facilities, opening new treatment centers, making psychological and medical assistance available to addicts, and a program of education and enlightenment. The Council sponsors a national system of therapy groups (Narcotics Anonymous) wherein former addicts may render each other mutual assistance and moral support.

The activities of NACON have been limited because of the lack of financial support and the Board of Directors has decided upon a national fund-raising drive to enlist support for its program. The United States Bureau of Internal Revenue has ruled that contributions to NACON are tax exempt.

Within the narrow limits set by its lack of funds, N.A. carried on its work and little by little grew in size and scope. From time to time as his efforts carried him into direct opposition to the criminally depraved who owe their parasitic existence to the drug addict, Danny needed and got personal police protection. He used himself and his meager resources unsparingly to develop a helpful and practical approach to the problem faced by his members. He had no personal funds so was dependent upon results of responses to letters like the following:

Dear Friend:

It is not necessary for us to tell you about the work of Narcotics Anonymous and the desperate need for its services. We are writing to *you* because we know that you already have first-hand knowledge of our activities.

The need for research and medical care is more urgent than ever, as is the need for sympathy and education.

We are in urgent need of funds, having gone into debt as well as exhausting our personal resources, to continue this necessary work. We are now appealing to you to come to our aid in this emergency.

If you can contribute to our cause, please mail your donation at once. It will be used to help the victims of drugs and their families, as well as to protect the general public through needed education.

Any amount you may send will be most gratefully accepted.

Sincerely, (s) Danny Carlsen
Daniel Carlsen, Executive Director

P.S. We are still indebted to the printer for the cost of this mailing.

By 1955, the cafeteria had closed and their meeting place had been changed any number of times. None wanted the group and except for one brief period they had no money to pay for rented space. Danny still had access to (by now) Brigadier Berry's office however, and they carried on—even when they had to hold a series of meetings on the Staten Island Ferry. Finally, they sought and obtained a meeting room at a Y.M.C.A. building. The group had found a home. True they had it for only two hours, one night each week, but it *was* secure and sure. True, too, that they still had not found an effective way to support each other by having a regular club-room of some sort where they could together cope with the horrors of leisure (when the urge for drugs becomes strongest) but they at least had a start each week by these two hours.

One of the many persons aided and inspired by Danny Carlsen and his N.A. program to turn away from drugs and embrace the "way of life" was Rae. For almost 19 years she had been trapped in the "rat race" of drug addiction. The youngest of six, she always felt "a little left out" of the family—a feeling common to many who eventually become addicts. Her father died when she was eight, leaving a home too plagued with the necessities of survival in the then poverty-ridden hills of Puerto Rico to provide the love she needed to make her feel she "belonged there". By twelve she had "escaped" via marriage. One year passed and she had a son and no husband, so home to mother went the baby while she started work as a dancer since "I had good legs and I could kick real high because I was young".

Young indeed! First marihuana, then cocaine, and finally . . . heroin. "If I could have known what was to follow that first funny little cigarette," she says now . . . There were 30 in the old troupe. All became addicts and today she is the only one known to be alive. In her 19-year ordeal, Rae spent almost five years in prison for various crimes. She "kicked cold turkey" many times. Like Danny, she also tried treatment at the United States Public Health Service Hospital at Lexington, Kentucky (in fact while she was there she heard about him and about N.A. and wondered . . .). She also had used "alcohol therapy", but to no avail.

Then while she was in the Women's House of Detention in New York City she actually heard Danny's appeals. Sick, emotionally and physically, to the point of desperation she grasped this chance because "the man he

had with him one afternoon who helped *him* I surely had a chance. The therapy of the Salvation Army she got in therapy all paved the way for N.A.'s fight for the addict.

As for Danny, after seeing his countless addicts countless times freely sharing the sorrow and meeting all who cared to listen as a hope never feeling hopeless even when his groups together, in 1956 his efforts had helped many who had hope. When news of his death rallied to provide funds for his burial plot but Brigadier Berry who had taken an interest in Danny money towards burial expenses. entire bill. These generous offers from the "horrors" spoken of the human soul.

But N.A. was not to die with him to "kick" and fade into the void. And hundreds more had hope for Rae had worked so well and with to be its new leader. She had been years at this time.

It was not long before N.A.'s for once having the responsibility harder, than Danny himself.

Under her guidance, a few had the success of *any* venture repeated again. They expanded into the city them while they "kicked cold turkey" New York City with those who had personal appearances and via an and encouragement of an unthinking quotation from a letter written by gives a clear picture of the trials

Narcotics Anonymous is a program. Alcoholics Anonymous is for the how desperate N.A. is needed here some time in a room offered to us 23rd Street but it is not enough.

had with him one afternoon was one of the worst. I knew that if N.A. helped *him* I surely had a chance." Between Danny and Brigadier Berry of the Salvation Army she got her chance. N.A., medical care and psychotherapy all paved the way for her to become a second moving force in N.A.'s fight for the addict.

As for Danny, after seeing his dream start to come true, after helping countless addicts countless times in countless ways, after openly and freely sharing the sorrow and misery of his 25 years as a drug addict with all who cared to listen as a hopeful means of preventive education, after never feeling hopeless even when he was helpless and by that means holding his groups together, in 1956 he died penniless. But he died certain that his efforts had helped many who like him had been "hooked" and without hope. When news of his death reached his friends and supporters, they rallied to provide funds for his burial. The Salvation Army bought the burial plot but Brigadier Berry received call after call from wealthy citizens who had taken an interest in Danny and N.A., all of whom were sending money towards burial expenses. At least two persons offered to pay the entire bill. These generous offers bear testimony to this man who returned from the "horrors" spoken of by Dr. Jung, to become a true doctor of the human soul.

But N.A. was not to die with him. His program had already helped scores to "kick" and fade into the vastness of America's work-a-day millions. And hundreds more had hope for the first time of finding their way. Since Rae had worked so well and with such dedication for N.A., she was chosen to be its new leader. She had abstained from drugs of all kinds almost six years at this time.

It was not long before N.A.'s supporters rallied behind this new leader for once having the responsibility of leadership, she worked as hard, if not harder, than Danny himself.

Under her guidance, a few hard core members of the sort essential to the success of *any* venture repeated Danny's splendid efforts over and over again. They expanded into the very homes of those in need, sitting with them while they "kicked cold turkey", riding the ferries and subways of New York City with those who had to talk out a problem, and seeking by personal appearances and via any other means available to gain the aid and encouragement of an unthinking, unfeeling and ignorant public. This quotation from a letter written by Rae to a nationally distributed periodical gives a clear picture of the trials during this period:

Narcotics Anonymous is a program for the Drug Addicts much the same as Alcoholics Anonymous is for the Alcoholics. I wish I had the words to describe how desperate N.A. is needed here in New York City. We have been meeting for some time in a room offered to us by the McBurney Branch Y.M.C.A. at 215 W. 23rd Street but it is not enough merely to meet formally twice a week. Addicts

need a place to come any time of day and to have a telephone number where to call. Without some sort of refuge in a time of personal emergency, even the best will in the world to kick the habit is hopelessly lost.

In answer to this sad reality we have dared to rent one room for our Headquarters on 219 7th Ave., Room 22, between 22nd and 23rd Streets. Just to establish a place where our fellow addicts can seek our help, it is not much but it is something.

We are appealing to your readers knowing they are already burdened with a hundred and one other charities, with the hope they will still find heart to help us over our present hurdle.

We have enough to carry us for a month's rent, the insecurity about what happens after that, weighs heavily upon us, something which we share in common with the C.W. We are ever grateful for any consideration however small, and we shall remember you and your readers prayfully as we try to reconstruct our lives.

With sincere thanks
Rae
Chairman

As has been true of the many other appeals which preceded and have followed, this appeal was never answered. Yet today, more than 15 years after Danny first launched N.A., with nothing but a sincere belief that he had found an answer to the drug addict's riddle, it still survives and grows stronger. Many other efforts to help the addict have come and gone although backed by fine facilities, trained professional staffs, more than adequate financial support, and often the sponsorship or even the participation of governmental agencies at various levels, these other programs have somehow failed the test.

Meanwhile, with no dues, no formal by-laws, no officers other than Rae, and no membership list, N.A. goes on. Its successes are enumerated only by the hundreds of cards which are sent to Rae each Christmas by those who have "made it" and who, because of their unforgivable past, must *remain* truly "anonymous". Those who are working out their personal riddle still meet at the West 23rd Street Y.M.C.A. in New York City each Wednesday night. This meeting is open to all, including the general public. There is rarely a week when visitors are not present to see, to ask questions and to learn. They have welcomed the clergy, students, city state and federal police, court officers, medical men, psychiatrists, writers and reporters and average citizens alike, with graciousness and a willingness to share their lives and their hopes.

In addition, they hold weekly meetings in Brooklyn and Bronx, as well as at several locations in New Jersey. Too, the original Sunday meetings at the "House" continue and are now complimented by meetings at other prisons in and around New York City. Nor is this all; Rae has established groups in 14 cities in 10 states and territories of the United States and in 3 foreign countries in her efforts to spread the N.A. message, so that today N.A. boasts some 24 groups or "chapters" as they are called. She has

bared the horrors and heartaches the N.A. message via every appearance are before city, state as well as before any community limited income. (Happily, two years and has since poured her own e

In August of last year the first means of carrying the N.A. message membership and by the donation monthly free of charge to an even N.A. chapter which meets at Fellowship Church in the Bronx, is printed on stencils cut by the chapter's members.

Contained in its pages are messages and non-addict alike. These include contributions. In addition each p

This is an informal group of our strength in remaining free of Alcoholics Anonymous to which we claim no originality . . . but our addiction are basically the same principles which have benefited so many so doing we may regain our health to foster means of rehabilitation in the future for those who have be

1. To further our study by expanding the Thirteen Steps.
2. To acquaint our friends with the problem, and a sincere and helpful attitude.
3. To carry the N.A. message to those who are unable to make meetings.
4. To carry upon request, the message to those who are unable to make meetings.
5. To acquaint the public to the addicts, and the seriousness of the problem.

1. Admit the use of narcotics may become an undesirable power.
2. Come to realize that to face the problem.
3. Make a decision to face the problem.
4. Learn to accept my fears without help.
5. Find someone who has progressed.
6. Admit to him the nature and extent of my problem.

bared the horrors and heartaches of her personal life in her quest to spread the N.A. message via every possible mass media. Her many personal appearances are before city, state and federal task forces of various types as well as before any community-based group which she can reach on her limited income. (Happily, two years ago she was able to obtain employment and has since poured her own earnings into the N.A. program.)

In August of last year the first N.A. Newsletter appeared as a further means of carrying the N.A. message. Supported by the pennies of the N.A. membership and by the donations of friends and well-wishers, it goes out monthly free of charge to an ever growing mailing list. It originates at the N.A. chapter which meets at Fellowship House, St. Augustine's Presbyterian Church in the Bronx, is printed on the church's mimeograph machine from stencils cut by the chapter's members.

Contained in its pages are messages from other N.A. chapters, by addict and non-addict alike. These include short stories and poems as well as other contributions. In addition each publication contains the credo given below:

Our Purpose

This is an informal group of addicts banded together to help one another renew our strength in remaining free of drugs. Our precepts are patterned after those of Alcoholics Anonymous to which all credit is given and precedence is acknowledged. We claim no originality . . . but since we believe that the causes of alcoholism and addiction are basically the same, we wish to apply to our lives the truths and principles which have benefited so many otherwise helpless individuals. We believe by so doing we may regain our health and sanity. It shall be the purpose of this group to foster means of rehabilitation for the addict and to carry a message of hope for the future for those who have become enslaved by the use of habit-forming drugs.

Our Desire

1. To further our study by expressing in words and deeds our interpretations of the Thirteen Steps.
2. To acquaint our friends with our group therapy activities as prescribed by N.A.
3. To carry the N.A. message to our fellow members who also have an addiction problem, and a sincere and honest desire to know a better way of living.
4. To carry upon request, the N.A. message to those who are in need, and who are unable to make meetings due to their locations, or to shut-ins everywhere.
5. To acquaint the public to the various causes of human behavior found in the addicts, and the seriousness of the disease of addiction.

The Thirteen Steps

1. Admit the use of narcotics made my life seem more tolerable, but the drug had become an undesirable power over my life.
2. Come to realize that to face life without drugs I must develop an inner strength.
3. Make a decision to face the suffering of withdrawal.
4. Learn to accept my fears without drugs.
5. Find someone who has progressed this far and who is able to assist me.
6. Admit to him the nature and depth of my addiction.

7. Realize the seriousness of my shortcomings as I know them and accept the responsibility of facing them.
8. Admit before a group of N.A. members these same shortcomings and explain how I am trying to overcome them.
9. List for my own understanding all the persons I have hurt.
10. Take a daily inventory of my actions and admit to myself those which are contrary to good conscience.
11. Realize that to maintain freedom from drugs I must share with others the experience from which I have benefited.
12. Determine a purpose in life and try with all the spiritual and physical power within me to move towards its fulfillment.
13. *God Help Me!* These three words summarize the entire spirit of the 12 preceding steps. Without God I am lost. To find myself I must submit to Him as the source of my hope and my strength.

It also carries a feature series, "Now It Can Be Told", which presents a series of autobiographies of those addicts who are "clean" as an inspiration to others who may have lost hope.

All this remarkable effort has stemmed not only from the dynamic N.A. leadership but also from the simple format under which they operate. This program, deceptive in its simplicity, represents a lesson in human relations impossible to capture with the printed word. At each "open" meeting, members arrive both openly and furtively—some addicted and looking for hope and help, others drug-free and looking to their fellow members for support and encouragement to "make it a little longer". Those who are newcomers are shy and curious while others in the infancy of a new self-confidence reach out to embrace them. All quickly find common ground in the one criterion required of reach—a *sincere desire to cease drug use*.

First, they restate their commitment in the form given above (by the Newsletter) and then they take up the business of the meeting: helping each other by sharing their problems and seeking solutions for them. Such problems can range from finding money to pay a night's lodgings for someone newly released from prison or hospital, to whether one should tell a prospective employer about a drug history. And solutions are found, by "passing the hat", by recounting a similar experience and its outcome or by simply listening sympathetically while the troubled person verbally runs through his own dilemma. There is time, too, for answering the questions of visitors, honestly and fully. Only first names are used and each member's right to silent introspection is respected. Available for added counsel upon request are members of the clergy who donate their time. Since N.A. is non-sectarian, Catholic, Protestant and Jew are each represented and each clergyman gives unselfishly of himself without regard to the religion of the asker.

An N.A. "closed" meeting is held weekly at "Fellowship House" mentioned above in connection with the N.A. Newsletter. This meeting is for "clean" addicts only, and none other is allowed save the clergy, and more

recently one social worker who the therapeutic purpose for which the opening format cited their progress in the "Thirty" in turn according to his own plan achieve a "spiritual awakening" from drugs. His examination includes a clear understanding of how it applies in his own life. searching, reaching an intensity

It is here too, that the leader at a meeting, meet the public, and they "get out" the paper, discuss chapter activities and pool their "slipped" to try again.

When Rae and the other N.A. the N.A. program, it is which which few can match or compare for all drug addicts, but as the *Life* some addicts can stop using even thirty that's more than even it's surely more than anyone else ment to one man's faith, one N.A. will do if it ever gets the afforded the many other drug addicts story and a challenging thought

recently one social worker who donates time in order to further implement the therapeutic purpose for which this meeting is held. In addition to following the opening format cited already, members at these meetings examine their progress in the "Thirteen Steps". Each individual takes each step in turn according to his own progress and ability to "accept" and thereby achieve a "spiritual awakening" and entrance into a new life free from drugs. His examination is made aloud with the aid of his fellows and includes a clear understanding of the *meaning* of the step, its purpose, and how it applies in his own life. Thus these meetings are poignant, and soul-searching, reaching an intensity level equal to deepest psychotherapy.

It is here too, that the leaders of the group are schooled in how to run a meeting, meet the public, and above all to help their fellow members. They "get out" the paper, discuss N.A. business, report on the various chapter activities and pool their meager resources to help those who have "slipped" to try again.

When Rae and the other N.A. members look back over the 16 years of the N.A. program, it is which a new sense of dignity and accomplishment which few can match or comprehend. They do not claim to have a panacea for all drug addicts, but as they say: "we know that through *Our Way of Life* some addicts can stop using drugs, and if it's only one in twenty or even thirty that's more than enough to keep us together and trying." And it's surely more than anyone else has done to date. In the face of this monument to one man's faith, one cannot help but wonder how much more N.A. will do if it ever gets the financial support and open encouragement afforded the many other drug addiction service programs. It's a challenging story and a challenging thought, isn't it?