





WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

November, 1981

Dear Fellow Trusted Servants:

The time has arrived for us to take a look at, evaluate and decide if the Basic Text that has evolved from six W.S.C. Literature Conferences over the past several years represents recovery from addiction through our experiences in Narcotics Anonymous.

There has long been a need for a comprehensive Basic Text on recovery, the Narcotics Anonymous book. Our book is needed to carry the message of recovery to places where members cannot go or have not yet been or gone. A Basic Text book on recovery from addiction for public libraries and for the shelves of doctors; parole and probations; and judges' offices. A definitive text so millions of people may know that we can and do recover, a day at a time.

The Mid-South R.S.C. accepted the responsibility of printing, packaging, addressing and mailing this Approval Form of our book, our Basic Text on N.A. Recovery. As of this writing, many addicts are arriving in Memphis, Tennessee, to help with this great work and many others continue to send their spiritual, emotional and financial support from around the world.

Now it is on you. The time has come, to be or not to be...to do or not to do! Approval of Our Basic Text should proceed as follows: Narcotics Anonymous members read this Approval Form of Our Book and Groups of N.A. members vote to approve or not. The Group Service Representatives vote the conscience of the Groups at Area Service Committee Meetings and then the Area Service Representatives vote the conscience of their areas at Regional Service Committee Meetings. Regional Service Representatives, State Delegates (in areas that have not yet formed a Regional Service Committee), will then vote at the World Service Conference to be held in Los Angeles, CA, in May of 1982, to approve for Hardback. If your group's locality does not have an organized service structure, you should get together with other N.A. groups in your state and send a state representative who will have the same voting strength as an R.S.R.

In an effort to reduce the cost of printing and mailing, the personal stories have been excluded. Our book in its present Approval Form is Basic Text only. The stories, some of which were in the Review Form, will be considered separately at a later date. We remain your trusted servants.

In Gratitude and Loving Service,

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World Service Conference
Narcotics Anonymous

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NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

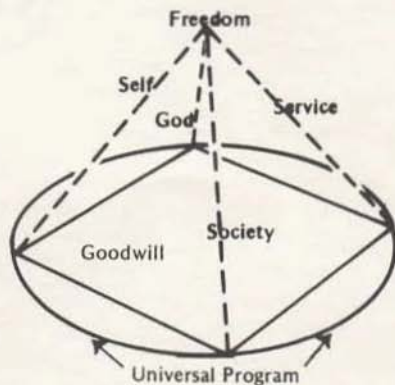
Many books have been written about the nature of addiction. This book primarily concerns itself with the nature of recovery. If you are an addict and have found this book, please give **YOURSELF** a **BREAK** and **READ** it!

Simplicity is the keynote of our symbol; it follows the simplicity of our Fellowship. We could find all sorts of occult and esoteric connotations in the simple outlines, but foremost in our minds were easily understood meanings and relationships.

The outer circle denotes a universal and total program that has room within for all manifestations of the recovering and wholly recovered person.

The square, whose lines are defined, is easily seen and understood; but there are other unseen parts of the symbol. The square base denotes Goodwill, the ground of both the Fellowship and the member of our society. Actually, it is the four pyramid sides which rise from this base in a three dimensional figure that are the Self, Society, Service and God. All rise to the point of Freedom.

All parts thus far are closely related to the needs and aims of the addict seeking recovery and the purpose of the Fellowship seeking to make recovery available to all. The greater the base, as we grow in unity in numbers and in Fellowship, the broader the sides and the higher the point of freedom. Probably the last to be lost to freedom will be the stigma of being an addict. Goodwill is best exemplified in service and proper service is "Doing the right thing for the right reason." When this supports and motivates both the individual and the Fellowship, we are fully whole and wholly free.



We cannot change the nature of the Addict or Addiction . . .

*We can help to change the old lie "Once an addict, always an addict,"
by striving to make recovery more available.*

God, help us to remember this difference.



NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS



NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
World Service Conference
Literature Sub-Committee

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W.S.C.-Literature Sub-Committee of Narcotics Anonymous

Basic Text Approval Form
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FOREWORD

"The full fruit of a labor of love lives in the harvest, and that always comes in its right session..."

The material for this book was drawn from the personal experiences of addicts within the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. This Basic Text is based on an outline derived from the pamphlet (our "white book"), "Narcotics Anonymous." The first eight chapters are based on the topic headings in the "white book" and carry the same title. We have included a ninth chapter, 'Just for Today,' and a tenth chapter, 'More Will Be Revealed.'

Following is a brief history of the book:

Narcotics Anonymous was formed in July 1953, with the first meeting held in Southern California. The Fellowship grew erratically, but quickly spread to various parts of the United States. From the beginning the need was seen for a "book on recovery" to help strengthen the Fellowship. The pamphlet, "Narcotics Anonymous," was published in 1962.

However, the Fellowship still had little structure and the 1960's were a period of struggle. Membership grew rapidly for a time, and then began to decline. The need for more specific direction was readily apparent. N.A. demonstrated its maturity in 1972, when a World Service Office was opened in Los Angeles. The W.S.O. has brought the needed unity and sense of purpose to the Fellowship.

The opening of W.S.O. brought stability to the growth of the Fellowship. Today, there are many thousand recovering addicts in hundreds of meetings all across the United States and in many foreign countries. Today, the World Service Office truly serves a worldwide Fellowship.

Narcotics Anonymous has long recognized the need for a complete Basic Text on addiction—a book about addicts, by addicts and for addicts.

This effort was strengthened after the formation of W.S.O. with the publication of **The N.A. Tree**, a pamphlet on service work. This pamphlet was the original "service manual" of the Fellowship. It has been followed by subsequent and more comprehensive volumes, and now the **N.A. Service Manual**.

The manual outlined a service structure which included a World Service Conference. The W.S.C., in turn, included a Literature Committee. With the encouragement of W.S.O., several members of the Board of Trustees and the Conference, work began.

As the cry for literature, particularly a comprehensive text, became more widespread, the W.S.C. Literature Committee developed. In October, 1979, the first World Literature Conference was held at Wichita, Kansas, followed by conferences at Lincoln, Nebraska; Memphis, Tennessee; Santa Monica, California; Warren, Ohio; and Miami, Florida.

The W.S.C. Literature Sub-Committee, working in conference and as individuals, have collected hundreds of pages of material from members and groups throughout the Fellowship. This material has been laboriously catalogued, edited, assembled, dismembered and reassembled. Dozens of area and regional representatives working with the Committee have dedicated thousands of man-hours to produce the work here presented. But more importantly, those members have conscientiously sought to insure a "group-conscious" text.

In keeping with the spirit of anonymity, we, the W.S.C. Literature Sub-Committee, feel it appropriate to express our special gratitude and appreciation to the Fellowship as a whole, especially the many of you who contributed material for inclusion in the book. We feel that this book is a synthesis of the collective Group Conscience of the entire Fellowship and that every single idea submitted is included in the work, in some form or another.

This volume is intended as a textbook for every addict seeking recovery. As addicts, we know the pain of addiction, but we also know the joy of the recovery we have found in the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. We believe the time has come to share our recovery, in written form, with all who desire what we have found.

Appropriately, this book is devoted to informing every addict: **JUST FOR TODAY, YOU NEVER HAVE TO USE AGAIN!**

Therefore,

“With gratitude in our cleanliness, we dedicate our N.A. book to the loving service of our Higher Power. That through the development of a conscious contact with God, no addict seeking recovery need die without having had a chance to find a better way of life.”

We remain trusted servants.

In gratitude and loving service,

LITERATURE SUB-COMMITTEE
WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

INTRODUCTION

This book is the shared experience of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. We welcome you to read this text, hoping that you will choose to share with us in the new life we have found. We have by no means found a "cure" for addiction. We offer only a proven plan for daily recovery.

In N.A., we follow a program adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous. More than one million people have recovered in A.A., most of them just as hopelessly addicted to alcohol as we were to drugs. We are grateful to the A.A. fellowship for showing us the way to a new life.

The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous, as adapted from A.A., are the basis of our recovery program. We have only broadened their perspective. We follow the same path with a single exception; our identification as addicts is all-inclusive in respect to any mood-changing, mind-altering substance. "Alcoholism" is too limited a term for us; our problem is not a specific substance, it is a disease called "addiction". We believe that as a Fellowship, we have been guided by a Greater Consciousness, and are grateful for the Direction that has enabled us to build upon an already-proven program of recovery.

We have come to Narcotics Anonymous by various means and believe that our common denominator is that we failed to come to terms with our addiction. Because of the degree and variety of addiction found within our Fellowship, we have approached the solution contained within this book in general terms. We pray that we have been searching and thorough, so that every addict who reads this volume will find the hope we have found.

Based on our experience, we believe that every addict, including the "potential" addict, suffers from an incurable disease of body, mind and spirit. We were in the grip of a hopeless dilemma. The solution of which is spiritual in nature. Therefore, this book will deal with spiritual matters.

We are not a religious organization. Our program is a set of spiritual principles through which we are recovering from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. Throughout the compiling of this work, we have prayed:

"GOD, grant us knowledge that we may write according to Your Divine precepts; instill in us a sense of Your purpose, make us servants of Your will and grant us a bond of selflessness that this may truly be Your work, not ours, in order that no addict, anywhere, need die from the horrors of addiction."

Everything that occurs in the course of N.A. service must be motivated by the desire to more successfully carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. It was for this reason that we began this work. We must always remember that as individual members, groups, and service committees, we are not, and should never be, in competition with each other. We work separately and together to help the newcomer and for our common good. We have learned, painfully, that internal strife cripples our Fellowship; it prevents us from providing the services necessary for growth.

It is our hope that this book will help the suffering addict find the solution we have found. Our purpose is to remain clean, just for today, and to carry the message of recovery.

Thank you,

LITERATURE SUB-COMMITTEE
WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

Chapter One

WHO IS AN ADDICT?

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

Those of us who have found the program of Narcotics Anonymous do not have to think twice about the question: Who is an addict? We know! The following is our experience.

As addicts, we are people whose use of any mind-altering, mood-changing substance causes a problem in any area of life. Addiction is a disease which involves more than simple drug use. Some of us believe that our disease was present long before the first time we used.

Most of us did not consider ourselves addicted before coming to the Narcotics Anonymous program. The information available to us came from misinformed people. As long as we could stop using for a while, we thought we were all right. We looked at the stopping, not the using. As our addiction progressed, we thought of stopping less and less. Only in desperation did we ask ourselves, "Could it be the drugs?"

We did not choose to become addicts. We suffer from a disease which expresses itself in ways that are anti-social and make detection, diagnosis and treatment difficult.

Our disease isolated us from people except for the getting, using and finding ways and means to get more. Hostile, resentful, self-centered and self-seeking, we cut ourselves off from the outside world. Anything not completely familiar became alien and dangerous. Our world shrank and isolation became our life. We used in order to survive. It was the only way of life we knew.

Some of us used, misused and abused drugs and still never considered ourselves addicts. Through all of this, we kept telling ourselves, "I can handle it." Our misconceptions about the nature of addiction conjured up visions of violence, street crime, dirty needles and jail.

When our addiction was treated as a crime or moral deficiency, we became rebellious and were driven deeper into isolation. Some of the highs felt great, but eventually the things we had to do in order to support our using reflected desperation. We were caught in the grip of our disease. We were forced to survive anyway we could. We manipulated people and tried to control everything around us. We lied, stole, cheated and sold ourselves. We had to have drugs, regardless of the cost. Failure and fear began to invade our lives.

One aspect of our addiction was our inability to deal with life on its terms. We tried drugs and combinations of drugs in an effort to cope with a seemingly hostile world. We dreamed of finding a magic formula that would solve our ultimate problem--ourselves. The fact was that we could not successfully use any mind-altering or mood-changing substance, including marijuana and alcohol. Drugs ceased to make us feel good.

At times, we were defensive about our addiction and justified our right to use, especially when we had "legal prescriptions." We were proud of the sometimes illegal and often bizarre behavior that typified our using. We "forgot" the times we sat alone consumed by fear and self-pity. We fell into a pattern of selective thinking. We only remembered the "good" drug experiences. We justified and rationalized the things we had to do to keep from being sick or going crazy. We ignored the times when life seemed to be a nightmare. We avoided the reality of our addiction.

Higher mental and emotional functions, such as conscience and the ability to love, were sharply affected by our use of drugs. Living skills were reduced to the animal level. Our spirit was broken. The capacity to feel human was lost. This seems extreme, but many of us have been in this state.

We become able to make wise and loving decisions, based on principles and ideals that have real value in our lives. Having our thoughts with the spiritual ideals that we are moving toward, we are freed to become who we want to be. What we had feared, we can now overcome through our dependence on a loving God. Faith has replaced our fear and given us freedom from ourselves.

In recovery, we also strive for gratitude. We feel grateful for ongoing God-consciousness. Whenever we confront a difficulty that we do not think we can handle, we ask God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

A spiritual awakening is an ongoing process. We experience a wider view of reality as we grow spiritually. An opening of our minds to new spiritual and physical experiences is the key to better awareness. As we grow spiritually we become attuned to our feelings and our purpose in life.

By loving ourselves, we become able to truly love others. This is a spiritual awakening that comes as a result of living this program. We find ourselves daring to care and love.

Higher mental and emotional functions, such as conscience and the ability to love, were sharply affected by our use of drugs. Living skills were reduced to the animal level. Our spirit was broken. The capacity to feel human was lost. This seems extreme, but many of us have been in this state.

In time, through recovery, our dreams come true. We don't mean that we necessarily become rich or famous. However, by realizing the will of our Higher Power, dreams do come true in our recovery.

One of the continuing miracles of recovery is becoming a productive, responsible member of society. We need to tread carefully into areas that expose us to ego-inflating experience, prestige and manipulation that may be difficult for us to deal with. We have found that the way to remain a productive, responsible member of society is to put our recovery first. N.A. can survive without us but we cannot survive without N.A.

Living just for today, we have no way of knowing what will happen to us. We are often amazed at how things work out for us. Recovering in the here and now, the future becomes an exciting journey. If we had written our list of expectations when we came to the program, we would have been cheating ourselves. Hopeless living problems became joyously changed. Our disease has been arrested and now anything is possible.

We become increasingly open-minded which opens the door for new ideas, in all areas of our lives. Through active listening, we hear things that work for us. This ability is a gift and grows as we grow spiritually. Life takes on a new meaning when we open ourselves to this gift. In order to receive, we must be willing to give.

Narcotics Anonymous offers only one promise and that is freedom from active addiction, the solution that eluded us for so long. We will be freed from our self-made prisons.

In recovery, our ideas of fun change. We are now free to enjoy the simple things in life, like fellowship and living in harmony with nature. We now have become free to develop a new understanding to life. As we look back, we are grateful for our new life. It is so unlike the events that brought us here.

While using, we thought that we had fun and that non-users were deprived of it. Spirituality enables us to live to the fullest, feeling grateful for who we are and what we have done in life. Since the beginning of our recovery, we have found that joy doesn't come from material things, but from within ourselves. We find that when we lose self-obsession, we are able to understand what it means to be happy, joyous, and free. Indescribable joy comes from sharing from the heart; we no longer need to lie to gain acceptance.

Narcotics Anonymous offers addicts a program of recovery which is more than just a life without drugs. Not only is this way of life better than the hell we lived, it is better than any life that we had ever known.

We have found a way out, and we see it work for others. Each day more will be revealed.

