



Narcotics Anonymous,  
**It Works:**  
How and Why

World Service Conference  
Literature Committee  
Unapproved Literature  
for Review and Input

**CORRECTED AND  
REPRINTED 9/87**

#### A NOTE ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This volume contains two different versions of the same book. The first section, Volume I, consists of the review-form manuscript which was distributed in 1985 with a blue cover. The second section, Volume II, comprises the approval-form manuscript which was distributed from 1986 to 1987 with a white cover. At the direction of the World Service Conference, both are joined together in this volume for the purpose of further study, review and comment by N.A. literature committees.

It should be noted that neither of the two volumes has been approved by the World Service Conference. They are draft items and should not be read in Narcotics Anonymous meetings. At the 1987 World Service Conference an ad-hoc committee was formed for the purpose of collecting additional input on this book prior to its completion. This review and input process will continue through 1987 and early 1988. When the ad-hoc committee has received sufficient input, it will be turned over to the World Literature Committee so that the book may be finalized and submitted to the N.A. Fellowship once again.

*Narcotics Anonymous,  
It Works: How and Why*

Pauline O. The Twelve Steps



World Council of Churches  
Liaison Committee  
Congressional Liaison  
for Narcotics and Alcohol

**Narcotics Anonymous,  
It Works: How and Why**

IT WORKS: HOW AND WHY  
Review Form, 2005

**Part One: The Twelve Steps**



*World Service Conference  
Literature Committee  
Unapproved Literature  
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Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions reprinted  
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FORWARD

... Regular Analysis is a Technology of Self and World for which there  
has been a major problem. VOLUME ONE

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**IT WORKS: HOW AND WHY**  
*Review Form, 1985*

... achievement... through the application of these  
principles.

In 1961, the book *It Works* was first published. In its early, the  
idea of addiction was described by following addicts who shared their personal  
experiences, thoughts and views. This book outlined a better way of life, and  
showed how to live. It provided practical instructions and  
discussed about the principles of recovery. Later on the Program of Narcotics  
addiction.

The second book is intended to provide a more in-depth exploration of the  
principles of the I.A. Program. The experience of numerous recovering addicts has  
demonstrated that the I.A. Program works. These addicts have shared, through  
their collective wisdom, that the secret to how it works is the Twelve Steps. The  
steps are not a work, it is the application of the Twelve Principles.  
Accordingly, this book is entitled *IT WORKS: How and Why*.

*IT WORKS* was designed to be used as a supplement to the Basic Text.  
There are 26 chapters, each addresses one of the 26 branches of the program.  
References appear from the Basic Text again, and are referred with just  
added to that reading they refer to the original source. In accordance with the



## FOREWARD

Narcotics Anonymous is a Fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. The Program of Narcotics Anonymous, often referred to as N.A., is based on 24 principles. These principles are specifically defined in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions which were originally borrowed from Alcoholics Anonymous and adapted for use in N.A. Thousands of addicts have achieved total abstinence and ongoing recovery through the application of these principles.

In 1982, the book *Narcotics Anonymous* was first published. In its pages, the disease of addiction was described by recovering addicts who shared their personal experiences, strength and hope. This book outlined a better way of life, and became known as a Basic Text of recovery. It provided general information and discussion about the principles of recovery found in the Program of Narcotics Anonymous.

The present text is intended to provide a more in-depth explanation of the principles of the N.A. Program. The experience of countless recovering addicts has demonstrated that the N.A. Program works. These addicts have shared, through their collective wisdom, that the answer to *how* it works is the Twelve Steps. The answer to *why* it works, is the application of the Twelve Traditions. Appropriately, this text is entitled *IT WORKS: How and Why*.

*IT WORKS* was designed to be used as a supplement to the Basic Text. There are 24 chapters; each addresses one of the 24 principles of the program. Numerous quotes from the Basic Text appear, and are referenced with page numbers so that readers may refer to the original source. In conjunction with the

Basic Text, it is hoped that this book will furnish addicts, with a desire to stop using, a practical means of achieving total abstinence and ongoing recovery.

Because addiction is a threefold illness, affecting us physically, mentally and spiritually, any discussion of the principles of recovery necessarily involves discussion of a Power greater than ourselves. Throughout these pages, you will find reference to **God, a Higher Power and God as we understand Him**. We use these phrases interchangeably, to mean only one thing: A Power greater than ourselves who does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. The Fellowship of N.A. encourages you to search out and discover for yourself, a God of your own understanding. In using the term "God, as we understand Him," we do not mean to imply male gender. We use these words only for the sake of simplicity, and acknowledge that each individual is entitled to develop and believe in his/her own personal concept of a Higher Power.

The information for this text was drawn from the experiences of recovering addicts throughout the United States. Particular effort was made to solicit participation from N.A.'s earliest members, who shared valuable knowledge and perspective, especially with regard to the Twelve Traditions. The contributors for this book are too numerous to acknowledge, and in fact decline special mention in the spirit of anonymity. We therefore humbly dedicate this book to the entire Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. We speak to its newest and yet-to-be members, without whom there would be no opportunity to share the miracle of recovery. We also speak to its older members, to whom we are eternally indebted for showing us the way to a better life. With these thoughts in mind, this book is offered, in a spirit of humility and gratitude, in the hope that all addicts may find recovery through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

In loving service,

WSC Literature Committee



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## THE TWELVE STEPS

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*"We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction--that our lives had become unmanageable."*

Addiction is a physical, spiritual and emotional illness with symptoms of alienation, denial, physical dependency and feelings of inadequacy. Powerlessness means the inability to control events--using. Recognition that we don't have power. Unmanageability in trying to control others, stealing, lying, cheating, using material possessions to "fix" us. Nothing worked--we tried to get the outside together, but the inside fell apart. Hitting bottom is crucial to spiritual growth.

Step Two           10

*"We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."*

Step One left us with a void because we can't keep ourselves clean. We couldn't use anymore and had nowhere else to turn. We had only our insanity to lose. It is necessary to admit defeat before we can become open-minded. We had to get rid of old ideas about God. Coming to believe means being willing to believe. There is a variety of paths to faith. Usually, belief comes a little at a time. Restoration to sanity gives us a relationship with God so that we can proceed with faith.

## Step Three

17

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

Step Three calls for a decision--action. This is a major decision in the beginning of recovery. Surrender may be painful, but to surrender is to win. We were unsuccessful at running the show--self-will leads to using. Willingness is all that is required. Turning it over is letting go of old ideas, sharing burdens with our Higher Power. God's will is doing our best, sharing recovery with other addicts, accepting life on life's terms. In practicing Steps One, Two and Three daily, we go to God with our everyday problems.

## Step Four

22

*"We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."*

The first three steps pave the way for the Fourth Step. We rely on our Higher Power and our sponsor. In being searching and fearless, we strive for self-honesty. There are many ways to write an inventory, but it is most important that it be written. We write about assets and liabilities--humility, kindness, forgiveness and tolerance as well as relationships, resentments, self-pity, dishonesty, pride and fear. We learn to identify the patterns of addiction which chained us to our past. This self-knowledge, accompanied by more action, brings freedom.

## Step Five

31

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

Admission prevents self-justification and rationalization--Choose another human being--a sponsor is usually best, but anyone we trust will suffice. We admit our shortcomings to God, to ourselves and to another human being. The exact nature of our wrongs are the character defects and addictive behavior patterns we discovered through writing. The results include not regretting our past anymore, a sense of belonging in the N.A. Fellowship, improved self-esteem and self-acceptance.



## Step Six 37

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

The knowledge we gained through Steps Four and Five can be painful--Step Six offers relief. Awareness necessitates action. Fear may be manifested in trying to dictate which defects are removed, or resisting letting them go. We combat fear with faith. Willingness is the foundation of recovery, and is necessary to spiritual growth. We realize it is an ongoing job and that there are different levels of willingness. We couldn't remove these defects by ourselves, but God can. We ask ourselves some questions to see if we are ready before proceeding on to Step Seven.

## Step Seven 43

*"We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings."*

The goal of Step Seven is an improved relationship with our Higher Power. Humility involves a realistic evaluation of ourselves and realizing that we are not perfect. A change in attitude--letting go of self-aggrandizement. Humbly asking for freedom from defects: "I can't, we can." Shortcomings are human failings. Applying Step Seven is an ongoing process. If we lose faith when our defects aren't immediately gone, we go back to the previous steps--slow, continuous progress; action and prayer.

## Step Eight 47

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

The purpose of Step Eight is to free ourselves from the guilt of the past, experience spiritual healing. Need to be thorough. In countering fear--trust our Higher Power, draw on strength gained through previous steps. We consider where, when and how we have harmed our friends, neighbors, family, employers, and people close to us. Making the list begins the process of becoming willing.

## Step Nine 51

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

Being direct and thorough. In active addiction, we were not responsible for consequences. Now, by being responsible, we no longer have to fear the past. We exercise prudent judgment, realizing that some wrongs can never be fully corrected. As a result, we experience a clear conscience, are able to stop rationalizing. We sever our ties with the ugly past, and we begin to feel good about who we are.

## Step Ten 58

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

Through the previous steps, we cleaned house. Step Ten keeps it clean. Necessary because hidden fears lead to relapse. We recognize guilt, fear, self-centeredness and resentment. We don't want to use, so we must live by spiritual principles. Regular practice--daily basis. Reviewing day's events, assets and liabilities, seeing where we were wrong, making a gratitude list. Promptly admitting wrongs, asking God to remove our defects, forgiving ourselves and others.

## Step Eleven 66

*"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."*

Asking for God's plan for us and guidance; we experience peace and joy. Looking for God's will gives us inner strength to face problems. We develop conscious contact by practicing accepting conditions as they are, and by practicing praying and meditating several times a day. Prayer is asking God for help in good times as well as bad. We begin and end our days with prayer, as well as praying spontaneously throughout the day. The answers to prayers sometimes come mysteriously. Through meditation, we communicate and utilize a Higher Power in our lives. We become open and receptive to the voice within, and gain serenity and a renewed commitment to the Twelve Step way of life.



Step Twelve 70

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

The Twelve Steps hold answers to all our living problems. They provide a basis for enjoying a life and serving others. A spiritual awakening is the result of the preceding steps. May be a sudden jolt or gentle awareness. In carrying the message, we share our experience, strength and hope. We demonstrate recovery by living it. Practicing these principles in all of our affairs is being willing to change. We set aside old ideas and apply the steps to our daily affairs. We gain a new strength and find God as a source of nurturance. We strive for self-improvement and take responsibility for our actions. We become more open-minded to new ideas, experience respect and love, and become able to live clean and grow.

## INTRODUCTION

This book contains 24 chapters which discuss and explain the principles of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. These principles form the basis of the Narcotics Anonymous Program. The Twelve Steps are the basic framework by which our lives change from addiction to recovery. The Twelve Traditions provide for groups what the Twelve Steps do for individuals. The widespread growth of Narcotics Anonymous and the recovery of thousands of addicts point to the beneficial necessity of holding to these principles.

The Twelve Steps offer us a solution to the disease of addiction, and an alternative to the miserable existence we have known before. Through practicing and applying each of the Twelve Steps, we discover the gift of recovery. This miracle is a gift in every sense of the word: It is unconditional and perhaps undeserved. As we stay clean and take each of the Twelve Steps, we realize that it is truly a privilege to apply these principles.

Before beginning the steps, an addict must have a desire to stay clean. With the willingness to avoid the first fix, pill or drink, total abstinence and recovery become possible. Living the Twelve Steps enables us to stay clean. In this way, a miracle happens: The obsession for drugs is lifted, and we experience recovery.

Never before were we able to go beyond the areas in our lives where fear stepped in and we stopped. There were always times when fear and terror would overwhelm us and we knew we could not go on. We all experienced a quitting point. However, most of us, even in the depths of our active addiction, wondered what was on the other side of that imaginary line we could never cross.

The Twelve Steps initiate the process of being restored to sanity. A Power greater than ourselves takes over. At the points where we always retreated before, we become able to stand face-to-face with this Power. Through this Power, we are

(This subject is the focus of the book.)

Numerous authors have written about the N.A. in a variety of ways and  
many of these books have become a source of information for the  
who were involved in the N.A. program. The Program of National  
Approval is based on the principles that are outlined in the  
Texas State and

**VOLUME TWO**

**IT WORKS: HOW AND WHY  
Approval Form, 1986-87**

In 1986, the book, *Approval Form*, was first published. In the years  
the demand of education was described by approving education was shared with  
personal experiences, insights, and hopes. This book outlines a new way of life,  
and became known as the Basic Text of approval. It provides general information  
and dialogue about the principles of approval found in the *Approval Form*  
Program.

In *It Works*, the author is intended to provide an in-depth explanation of  
the principles of the N.A. Program. The experiences of education reforming education  
has demonstrated that the N.A. Program works. These authors have shared, through  
their collective experiences, that the answer is how it works in the Texas State.  
The answer is why it works in the application of the Texas State.  
Approximately, this book is intended to explain *How and Why*...

*It Works* was designed to be used as a supplement to the Basic Text. In  
conjunction with the Basic Text, it is intended that this book will provide a source  
who have the desire to work with a structured source of reviewing and  
improving and ongoing process.



(This appeared on the jacket flap.)

Narcotics Anonymous (often referred to as N.A.) is a Fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. The Program of Narcotics Anonymous is based on spiritual principles, principles that are incorporated in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of N.A. Thousands of addicts have achieved total abstinence and ongoing recovery through the application of these principles.

In 1982, the book, *Narcotics Anonymous*, was first published. In its pages, the disease of addiction was described by recovering addicts who shared their personal experiences, strengths, and hopes. This book outlined a new way of life, and became known as the Basic Text of recovery. It provides general information and discussion about the principles of recovery found in the Narcotics Anonymous Program.

*It Works: How and Why* is intended to provide an in-depth explanation of the principles of the N.A. Program. The experience of countless recovering addicts has demonstrated that the N.A. Program works. These addicts have shared, through their collective experience, that the answer to *how* it works is the Twelve Steps. The answer to *why* it works is the application of the Twelve Traditions. Appropriately, this text is entitled *It Works: How and Why*.

*It Works* was designed to be used as a supplement to the Basic Text. In conjunction with the Basic Text, it is hoped that this book will furnish addicts who have the desire to stop using with a practical means of achieving total abstinence and ongoing recovery.



Other Publications from W.S.O.

- Narcotics Anonymous Basic Text*
- Narcotics Anonymous White Booklet*
- I.P. No. 1 *Who, What, How and Why*
- I.P. No. 2 *The Group*
- I.P. No. 5 *Another Look*
- I.P. No. 6 *Recovery and Relapse*
- I.P. No. 7 *Am I an Addict?*
- I.P. No. 8 *Just for Today*
- I.P. No. 9 *Living the Program*
- I.P. No. 11 *Sponsorship*
- I.P. No. 12 *The Triangle of Self Obsession*
- I.P. No. 13 *Youth and Recovery*
- I.P. No. 14 *One Addict's Experience with Acceptance, Faith and Commitment*
- I.P. No. 16 *For the Newcomer*

A variety of other publications dealing with specialized areas such as public information, service in hospitals and institutions, etc. are available. Write to the W.S.O. for a catalogue and order form.

This book is dedicated to the entire Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous--to its newest and yet-to-be members, without whom there would be no opportunity to share the miracle of recovery; and to its older members, to whom we are gratefully indebted for showing us the way to a new life--in order that no addict, anywhere, need die from the horrors of addiction.

Step 1 111  
"We admitted we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable."

Step 2 112  
"We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God or a Higher Power of our understanding."

Step 3 113  
"We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

Step 4 114  
"We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

Step 5 115  
"We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

Step 6 116  
"We humbly asked Him to remove all these defects of character."

Step 7 117  
"We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all."

Step 8 118  
"We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except where it would injure them or the community."

Step 9 119  
"We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

Step 10 120  
"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 will out."

### EPIGRAPH

The principles of the N.A. Program are the keys to freedom from addiction. Our experience has shown that there are no boundaries on that freedom, as long as we practice those principles and stay clean. May a loving Power greater than yourself be with you as you learn to apply the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. As you practice these principles in all of your affairs, you will find a freedom and joy you never knew existed. These spiritual truths are the Narcotics Anonymous Program, and it is through them that *It Works!*

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were wrong promptly admitted it."*
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conscious contact with God as we understood Him,  
praying only for knowledge of His will for us, and the  
power to carry that out."*



Step 12

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*"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."*

### Acknowledgements

The information for this text was drawn from the experiences of recovering addicts throughout the world. Particular effort was made to solicit participation from N.A.'s earliest members, who shared valuable knowledge and perspective, especially with regard to the Twelve Traditions. We are grateful to the many contributors for this book who are too numerous to list, and who in fact decline special mention in the spirit of anonymity. We would also like to express our appreciation to A.A. World Services, Inc., who granted permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. This book is offered, in a spirit of humility and gratitude, in the hope that all addicts may find recovery through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.





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September 1987

TO: The Fellowship

The following paragraphs of this letter are a reprint from the September report to the Fellowship from the Office. It is being included with this publication to explain the error made with the printing of the blue and white edition of the combined publication of *It Works: How and Why*.

"A serious error has been made with the printing of the blue and white version of *It Works: How and Why*. It is important that we make an amend to the Fellowship for preparing and distributing an incorrect version. If you have received a copy of the blue and white printing of *It Works: How and Why*, do not continue using it. The copy that accompanies this letter is the corrected printing.

To explain what occurred is embarrassing, but nonetheless essential. When we began putting this together following the 1987 World Service Conference, we utilized the file in our main computer storage memory. The material was printed out in the proper format, collated, and sent to the printer for production. Because we assumed that the copy printed out was the only copy of the manuscript that we had, we did not proofread the manuscript before sending it off to the printer. This is an avoidable and inexcusable error. Several members, soon after receiving copies, reported to us that it was different in some respects than the white cover copy they had been reviewing for the last twelve months. We were at first skeptical and asked members' assistance in pinpointing the differences they were finding.

Eventually, after receiving additional input from others, we did examine in extensive detail the material. We discovered in this investigation that the version of the manuscript that had been printed last year in the white cover was not the same version that had been printed in the white and blue cover. In tracing back the origin of this error, we discovered that the approval-form version of the text printed in the white cover had been lost when our main computer memory failed in March of 1986. This occurred after the typeset version had already been dispatched to the printing company, who was at that time printing the white cover edition. When we reconstructed files on our main memory in the computer, unfortunately we retrieved a back-up file which was an earlier version of the material.

Unfortunately, in May of this year when we printed out what we thought was the correct version, we did not remember the computer failure and did not check to make sure it was the correct version. Consequently, the edition currently in circulation is manifestly incorrect with respect to the portion that was distributed last year with a white cover.

The Office is currently reprinting the correct material, and it will be made available without additional costs to all individuals and committees who have already obtained copies of the incorrect material. We are endeavoring to keep the page numbers consistent so that any work an individual may have done on portions of the material where no change will occur, will be easy for the literature committee members to find and utilize.

We have halted distribution of copies of this publication until the corrected version is printed and available. We anticipate the process will



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take about three weeks.

I am very truly sorry for the mistake and the delay and the confusion that this will cause the ad-hoc committee on *It Works: How and Why*, and we are doing everything we can to expeditiously provide them with the correct materials.

In Service to N.A.

Robert B. Stone  
Office Manager

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World Service Conference  
Literature Committee  
Unapproved Literature  
for Review and Input

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