



IT WORKS  
HOW AND WHY

The Twelve Steps  
and Twelve Traditions  
of Narcotics Anonymous

## The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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World Service Office  
PO Box 9999  
Van Nuys, CA 91409  
Tel. (818) 773-9999  
Fax (818) 700-0700  
Website: [www.na.org](http://www.na.org)

World Service Office—EUROPE  
48 Rue de l'Été 48  
B-1050 Brussels, Belgium  
Tel. +32/2/646-6012  
Fax +32/2/649-9239

World Service Office—CANADA  
150 Britannia Rd. E. Unit 21  
Mississauga, Ontario, L4Z 2A4, Canada  
Tel. (905) 507-0100  
Fax (905) 507-0101

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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome! The book you have in your hands is a discussion of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. We realize that, whether written or verbal, no discussion of something as personal and individual as recovery can be all things to all people. This book is not meant to be an exhaustive study of NA's steps and traditions, nor is it meant to be the final word on any aspect of recovery or NA unity. Rather, it is meant to help you determine your own interpretation of the principles contained in our steps and traditions. We hope you will find personal growth, understanding, and empathy in the following pages. We pray you will be moved to a new level of insight into your recovery and the valuable place you occupy as a member of Narcotics Anonymous.

Each member of NA has contributed to this book in some way. Whether you are new to recovery or one of our longtime members, your experience, your support, and, above all, your presence in the rooms where addicts meet to share recovery have been the motivating forces behind the production of this book. Though the process of writing a book about the experience of a fellowship as diverse as ours has been lengthy, we saw all the barriers and stumbling blocks fade away in the light of our primary purpose: to carry the message to the still-suffering addict. That one purpose, clear and powerful, stands alone in our collective consciousness as the only thing that really matters. With that, all is possible and miracles happen.

The nature of the recovery process gave us the title for this book. After all was said and done, one fundamental truth emerged as the crux of our program: IT WORKS. The reasons our program works, the how and why of recovery, are found in many places: in each other, in our relationship with a Higher Power, in our hearts and minds, and finally, in the collective wisdom of our members. Because our principal endeavor in the development of this book has been to capture that col-