

"Clean Acres" Area Newsletter Issue 3, Volume 2 April, 2000

February 24 "A new influence"

"Personality change was what we really needed Change from self-destructive patterns of life became necessary. "Basic Text, Pg, 15

In early life, most of us were capable of joy and wonder, of giving and receiving Unconditional love .When we started using, we introduced and influenced into our lives that slowly drove us away from those things. The further we were pushed down the path of addiction, the further we withdrew from joy, wonder, and love.

That journey was not taken overnight, but, however long it took, we arrived at the doors of N.A. with more than just a drug problem.. The influence of addiction had warped our whole pattern of living beyond recognition..

The Twelve Steps work miracles, it's true, but not many of them are worked over night. our disease slowly influenced our spiritual development for the worse. Recovery introduces a new influence to our lives, a source of fellowship and spiritual strength slowly impelling us into new healthy patterns of living.

This change, of course, doesn't "just happen," But if we cooperate with the new influence Na has brought to our lives, overtime we will experience the personality change we call recovery. The Twelve Steps provide us with a program for the kind cooperation required to restore joy, wonder and to enjoy our lives.

Just for Today: I will cooperate with the new influence of fellowship and spiritual strength NA has introduce to my life. I will work the next step in my program..

The foundation of the previous steps, Honesty, Openmindedness and Willingness allows me to continue the process of recovery. I got honest about the condition of my life and sought the strength of power greater than myself and became willing to follow his will and not my own.

Now in the 4th Step, I had to open up the closets of my fears, guilt, indiscretions and all that stuff I kept hidden deep inside of me. I had to expose me! My Sponsor helped get started with prayer for Courage, Commitment, and Willingness to complete the task to the best of my ability. Some days, I wrote a lot, some days I wrote a little. When I began putting my ideas, attitude, and behaviors down on paper. I was concentrating so much on my faults, and feelings of pain, that my sponsor had to tell me that everything I did wasn't wrong .That I needed to balance my inventory with some good things I've done, before the disease of addiction fully took over my life. When I've finished he took me out to dinner to celebrate.

When I did the 5th step with my sponsor, I got some more insight. He could relate because we did a lot of similar things. From my own experience, and my sponsors similarities, more so than differences ,we were able to pick out some of my obvious defects of character. One that was a parent and allowed me to continue using was denial, and this defect could be removed with honesty. He told me that spiritual principles were always the antidote to defects of character.

LOVE AND RESPECT, James J.

Clean Acres Area Newsletter Editor's page Spring Issue, 2000

The first few issues of the newsletter has been greatly received and respected, as an informative collection of recovering addicts experience, strength, and hope. We endeavor to continue that Tradition with this addition on recovery. "If you want what we have, and are willing to make the effort, these are the steps that we took", "How it works", Basic Texts. It is said that the program and the steps will bring about a profound change in anyone willing to practice these principles, with the 3 indispensable, the foundation with that change. Honesty brings about Acceptance, Open-mindedness brings Surrender, and Willingness allows Humility to emerge. The perfect state for an addict to be in. The "Personal Steps", the 4th, 5th, and 6th will be the topics of discussion, in this issue of the newsletter, and the effect these steps have on there recovery, and also the 4th, 5th, and 6th tradition.

Our Sponsor's corner will also cover that experience from someone with over 17 years in the recovery process and some insight about the "heartbeat of recovery."

Our features in the Newsletter includes the "Newcomer's Page", "The most important person at any meeting, because we can only keep what we have by giving it away." Also the Poetry, Muse, and points to ponder page, with articles sent in by addicts from the area. We have another "Interview with an addict" and of course, Anniversaries, Announcements, and Whatnots. We the Newsletter sub-Committee pray that you enjoy this issue.

LOVE AND RESPECT!!

Chairperson and sub-Committee members
"Clean Acres" Area Newsletter sub- Committee

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Steps: the key to freedom

Step 4 "We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves"

Step 5 "We admitted to GOD, Ourselves, and another human being the exact nature of Our wrongs"

Step 6 "We were entirely ready to have GOD remove all these defects of character"

Although all the steps are equally important, there are a few that seem to stand out and seem more significant than others, in my experience, this is such a step. This step offers freedom from ourselves. Before taking this step and after doing steps 1, 2, and 3. I thought everything was okay, because I felt real good, but I realized I had invented another person again. This step helps you to go within and change the way you think and behave. This step deals with honesty, but all through the first three steps, one has learned what the truth is as it applies to one's self. When doing this step it's important to not just focus on the bad, just tell the truth! There are hopes and dreams that can be written about. It's important to have the support and guidance of a sponsor. This step is essential in order to achieve ongoing recovery. If this step is not done the possibility of relapsing is greater. Once you start writing, do not stop but before you do, pray for guidance, then once you are finished, you will feel like a burden has been lifted and now you are free to be who you really are!

The key to step 5, is to once again to tell the truth about the exact nature, with emphasis on exactness. Often times we find ways to rationalize our wrongs and always appear in our minds to be the victim. "I know I stole your money, but you left it on the dresser, in front of me and left the room" In this step you will be making a commitment to your recovery and the program.

It is important to follow this step as it is suggested. One might think GOD knows my wrongs, why do I have to say it? Once said out loud it promotes humility. This step will make you feel uneasy and uncomfortable because of the admissions of the exact nature of your wrongs. Your relationship with the GOD of your understanding will change after this step.

In step 5, we looked at our wrongs and defects of character that excused those wrongs. In doing so we learned to see the pattern of how these defects have caused harm and wreckage in our lives. So we become entirely ready to have GOD remove these defects, however, were it not until those defects were no longer of value to me. I had used them as though they were a protective shield around me. As the principles were practiced more and more and the good and the positive results I received from doing it made the defects less attractive, although the defects are there, I don't have to let them create havoc in my life. They are not as valuable as they once were. GOD will not remove them unless I am entirely ready. That means that I have to participate in what I'm praying and asking for. Example: If you want to stop talking about people, you have to remove yourself and not engage in conversation with others who are talking about people, very simple. Let me put it this way, it's like that old shirt you have in the closet. It has holes in it, it's ripped and it's too small, but you throw it away because you like the way it looks, so you keep it tucked in the closet. You can always go back to it, because you know it's there, but you don't because you have nicer things to wear.

I AM AN ADDICT, NAMED JAY

Traditions: "The tie that bind"

Tradition 4 "Each group is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or NA as a whole"

Tradition 5 "Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry the message to the addict who still suffers"

Tradition 6 "An NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise lest problems of money, property or prestige, divert us from our primary purpose.

These are some of our most important Traditions and I hope by sharing my experience, Strength and hope, that it may enlighten the newcomer, and members of the fellowship

With a better understanding and perspective on how they allow us the freedom to recover.

When a group is formed, it has the right to chose its format and methods in which to carry the message. Getting a starter package from the Area service structure, the group Holds its meeting at a facility where they pay their rent (though many places will offer Not to accept, our 7th Tradition, explains that we are fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions, so no matter what we have to pay our way.)

Most group read from our literture "Who's an addict", " What is the NA program?" "Why are we here", "How it works", and the "12 Traditions". There is a group conscious to decide the best method to carry out the primary purpose. Some groups have a "clean time" requirement to chair at their meeting(90 days) or to speak at their meeting(6months however they do it the 4th Tradition gives them the automony they need to carry the message.

In carrying the message each group must offer an addict, any addict the hope of recovery By making their meeting an asmosphere of recovery .NA is a spiritual not religious program, so we only display our literture, and no one else's at our meeting, there are many 12 Step programs in our society and they all have their place, but not at a NA Meeting. "We are addicts who meets regularly to help each other stay clean"

Personal application of these Traditions in my recovery is that I must be mindful that My actions affect other addicts and the fellowship as a whole and any negative behavior Would have a adverse effect that be harmful, I must remember that my recovery depends On me carrying the message, and I need to carry that with some new ideas attitudes and behaviors, my new way to live! On my job, with my friends and family and in the community in which I live and most of all with my GOD as I understand him and please don't get a fixitation on the order of the listing.

I must be mindful that "money, property or prestige "could divert me from my primary Purpose. The spiritual principles of these Traditions are, Responsibility, Commitment, And Integrity, I must always remember that the core of my disease is my total self-Centeredness and that has lead me time and time again to familiar pain

I am an addict and my name is ADDICT!

NEWCOMERS'S PAGE

I'm an addict named Kevin.

I am extremely grateful to the program of narcotics anonymous for showing me how to live without using drugs. I had tried on my own many times to just not pickup and I always failed. I felt hopeless.

Narcotics Anonymous has given me the tools to make it through the day without getting high. I had tried NA before, but always relapsed, because I was unwilling to fully surrender to the suggestions of the program. This time around I have followed the suggestions. I have a sponsor, home group, made 90 meetings in 90 days, and don't go around people, places, or things. I use the phone numbers to call other NA members. I have found great support from the people in narcotics anonymous.

They truly care about my recovery. Without NA I don't know where I would be, but I do know it would be a very lonely place. Today through NA I fill hopeful and I have been clean for 90 days. I can't express my gratitude enough for this program and I will keep coming back.

Kevin M.

SUGGESTIONS

1. GET AND USE A SPONSOR
2. FIND AND JOIN A HOME GROUP
3. MAKE AS MANY MEETINGS AS YOU CAN
4. MAKE A HIGHER POWER A PROJECT YOU CAN UNDERTAKE.
5. "KEEP COMING BACK"

I'm a newcomer in this process and I want to talk about what it's been like for me in the last six months of my recovery.

When I came around this time I was really beaten and was ready to surrender. The war was over for me and it sent me here to the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous.

And from day one I have been following the suggestions and getting into the twelve steps of NA. This time I've gotten a sponsor, home group, phone numbers, pray, and make meetings. I also did a 90 and 90, because it was suggested.

I came here with a lot of fear, low self-esteem, and no self-acceptance. But each day I'm gaining more confidence and more hope that the program works. I see the evidence; it's all around me.

When I started the first step and excepted that I was powerless, it was like a weight was lifted off my shoulders. No longer do I have to be stuck on stupid or be mister control freak; I could let it go.

And I also got in touch with the fact that my life was extremely unmanageable.

I've incorporated spiritual principles in my life today and things are starting to come together, just for today. I don't have to be overwhelmed by life on life terms stuff. Like my sponsor says; if it don't apply then let it fly. Recovery is wonderful, I feel truly free today. I have come to terms with the fact that I am an addict and I'm taking the necessary steps to ensure that I don't relapse.

This is the greatest life I have ever known. Thank you Narcotics Anonymous.

Steve C.

Sponsor's Corner

Hello,

I'll always be an addict, My name is Jim L. The editor asked me to write about an article about my experience with sponsorship in N.A.. So that's what I'll attempt to do; share my experience, nothing else!

Our I.P. #11 uses a key word for me. The word is "vital". The pamphlet states " that it presents a simple understanding of a vital tool in our program of recovery". Also, later on in the pamphlet it states, "that a good sponsor relationship need not be based on friendship, but trust is vital.

vi- tal 1. Pertaining to life. 2. Essential to or supporting life. 3. Of the utmost importance or interest. 4. Full of life. The organs necessary to life; as the brain, heart, etc.

So, I believe that sponsorship is vital to recovery, as much as our vital organs allow us to live.

My experience with having sponsors has been a very rewarding experience. My first sponsor, Jerry G. and I, were regularly involved in sponsorship from 1982 until 1990. At that time he moved to Florida, and we stayed in touch sporadically. Things change and we drifted apart. I'll always be grateful for the time this recovering man spent with me. Jerry took me through our "Basic Text" which Jerry had been involved with the literature committee and along with our predecessors helped write our text. He guided me through the twelve steps, slowly, but steadily. Jerry gave me time whenever I need it day or night and showed me a lot of understanding. He helped and explained things to me, and my family once in awhile. I could write for hours about my relationship with my sponsor Jerry G. Thanks for the principles in his life we were able to lay a strong spiritual foundation of recovery. Today Jerry has 26 years clean, and I'm celebrating 18 years April 1.

I've had two more sponsors over the years for about a total of five years and although the help and trust these men gave me was great, to be honest it was never the same as my first sponsor. That's just my experience.

I've been blessed to be able to sponsor a number of men in my recovery. Right now, I'm involved in actively sponsoring four men. The experience, looking at it, shows the diversity of our fellowship. One guy from Phila. Is a United Auto Worker like myself and rides with a motorcycle club. He has over 14 years clean, we've been involved with sponsorship the whole time and have experienced the steps a few times. The relationship has evolved into a very strong bond and friendship and today we help and understand each other very well. The next fellow is an African American white collar worker from Delaware county with 10 years clean who I met while trying to carry the message at an H & I meeting. He asked me to sponsor him and we've been working at it for 10 years without a break. We've helped each other tremendously! The next fellow is an Iranian immigrant in the computer field with six years clean from New Jersey. The sponsorship is about two and a half years old and is going well. The next guy is Greek roofer from Chester county coming up on four years clean. We're developing a very strong bond in recovery and are working steadily through the twelve steps. All these men sponsor other men and make N.A meetings, work steps, and are involved in service. Plus they are willing to take direction. There have been many others, some changed sponsors and stayed clean, some died, some relapsed, some came back, and some just drifted away. I believe I'm responsible for my recovery and everyone else is responsible for theirs. I don't take credit for my sponsees and I don't take blame for the sponsorships that haven't worked out.

Some of the things I believe in I'll try to share. A sponsor is someone who is involved in N.A. who has experienced and is working the twelve steps. They are someone we can trust with anything and is willing to give us the time we need and share their experience with us. Our pamphlet says, " Primarily a sponsor is a guide through the twelve steps of recovery". Primarily means that's their most important job, but it's not the only thing.

Finding a sponsor is a question often asked. When I was in rehab 18 years ago, N.A. members came in and suggested getting a sponsor among other things. I went meetings the first day out and every day; the search was on. Some oldtimers suggested some things about finding a sponsor so I followed directions. First, I asked a God of my understanding to help me, lucky for me I had one at this point. Secondly, I talked and listened and observed some with some time and found out how far along they were in their recovery. I didn't want someone who was real cool and popular. I wanted a sponsor that was living the principles in his life and seemed to be enjoying his recovery. Plus the words *serene* and *calm* appealed to me.

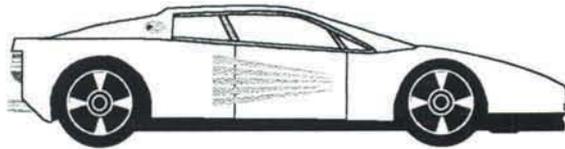
Another question is about opposite sexes sponsoring each other. It is strongly, very strongly suggested that we should find a sponsor of the same sex. This reduces the chance of emotion distractions that might take the newcomers and oldtimers minds off the primary purpose of N.A. I personally know I couldn't or wouldn't try it. Plus to be perfectly honest, my wife wouldn't stand for it.

As for my approach to sponsoring men; I really rely on God, the 11th step, my experience, and try to be flexible and try several approaches. Showing by example how I live my life around the meetings and home and in life all over. Encouraging the new member to make a variety of different meetings and find a home group. Introducing the newcomer to many other experienced members. Suggesting reading our pamphlets, Basic Text, and in time our other books. Be willing to go over these things with them. Be available when they need you. By going over the meaning of the twelve steps and in proper time guiding them through them. Suggesting that the newcomer get involved in group service, coffee, setting up meeting, etc. Tell the newcomer you don't know the answer if you don't, but that you'll try to help them find it elsewhere. Suggest that they should help the next suffering addict coming in the door, welcoming them and sharing as much recovery as they have. Letting them know that it's the entire N.A. program, not just the sponsor, that is important.

Well I'll wind this up now. What a great and important topic, I could actually write a lot more! Thanks for allowing me to share!

Let go and let God!

Jim L



Visiting Various Groups

“Progress in Recovery” group N.A., Erie and Park Avenues, Philadelphia. I went to visit this group because it’s a friend in recovery’s home group, Hiya Toni P. and Pat H., George and Blackjack. This group meets on Tuesday nights 7 PM until 8:30 PM at the “East Bethel” Church. This is an established group who recently celebrated it’s 13th anniversary.

“Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry the message to the addict who still suffers” and this group has a beginners meeting right off the bat. Their first meeting of the month is for beginners. It’s members serve the program in various capacities, H & I sub-committees, P & I sub-committees, etc, and it’s group members travel great distances to support new groups and keep hope alive.

The night I visited with two other addicts in recovery, Steve “Wonder” and Vincent “Hope”, three group members were celebrating anniversaries and there were balloons and smiles and joy all over the place. It is a well attended meeting. So if you want to “broaden your base” go visit this group.

Love and Respect

“Light of Exposure” group of Narcotics Anonymous. You are welcomed as soon as you enter the room by a home group member. With a hug and a salute, but the salute means down with the disease. The group meets everyday from 10 PM till midnite and is located at 1067 Huntingdon Ave on the corner of Huntingdon and Warnock. One of the thing I like about this particular group is the fact that they are the only meeting in north Philadelphia that meets that late. But as a fellowship their ability to reach still using addicts is tied to their willingness to offer meetings that are accessable and attractive to those addicts. Because it is located in a high drug area and it has the potential to be dangerous they carry the message to the front lines. The format is very organized and this meeting offers something new everyday with a different topic. For example every Friday is a step meeting, every Saturday is a tradition, and the last meeting of the month is a pamphlet. This meeting has a warm atmosphere of recovery and welcomes all. This group makes recovery attractive to the addict in this high drug zone area and addict yet to come. Out of towners and locals feel equally comfortable. This meeting, in my opinion, has given a lot of thought to our primary purpose. I feel it’s important to know how society takes to this group, and I’ll tell you real real good. Because as addicts we conduct ourselves respectfully. In a neighborhood of chaos it’s the N.A. meeting place that is respectfully serene. I feel that this group gives to we of N.A. and adds goodwill and unity as it talks about in our traditions. It exercises it’s autonomy in positive ways. I enjoyed my experience at this meeting and I’m going to keep going back to that meeting.

Steve C.

Announcements

Anniversaries

Add ons

Note* This is a quarterly publication, so anniversaries are sometimes announced before they happen. We pray that this fact doesn't diminish the significance of the honored occasion.

Editor and Staff.

Milestones;

Khalif... .. 14 yrs., April 15th
Toni P 5 yrs., June 26th
Wanda S 3 yrs., March 20th
Jim L 18 yrs., April 1st
Bruce S 10 yrs., April 1st
Steve C 6 mos., April 4th
Brigitte 18 mos., June 5th

"Anonymous" Group

307 Club House
7 N. 5 Points Road @ W.ChesterPke
11 PM, O, S
Come Fellowship at the only late
night meeting in the "Clean Acres"
Area.

"Clean Acres" Activities Sub Committee

"We do Recover" Day

Marathon Meetings 12 noon – 8 PM
Psycho-Drama Play 8 PM – 9 PM
Dance 9 PM – 1 AM
Donation for Dance \$5.00
Date to be announced!

"Free At Last" Group

Shops at Great Valley
Suite 5B Malvern Center
10 Liberty Blvd.
Mon. @ Thurs. 7 PM
Come to our meetings.
All are Welcome.

"Come Grow With Us" Group

13th Year Anniversary
Saturday, May 27th, 2000
6 PM – 9 PM Speaker Jam
Food, Fun, Fellowship
131 East Harmony St.
Coatesville, PA (Riverside Care, Inc.)

"New Life" Group

181 Harmony St.
Coatesville, PA
8:15 PM Thurs.
BT (1st 2 wks, TP 2nd 2 wks)

Interview with an addict

In our ongoing challenge with the recovery process, our experience, strength, and hope are what keeps it green for us. I have asked someone who's been around here a little longer than myself to tell us their story, and here we go.

C.A.N. Hi member, can you tell us who you are?

Bruce I'm an addict called Bruce.

C.A.N. How long have you been clean?

Bruce Uhh...Nine years, eleven months, and 23 days.

C.A.N. That means you're coming up on ten years!

Bruce April Fools Day.

C.A.N. How was it when you first came around?

Bruce People were more confrontational. If someone believed that you were not doing what you were supposed to do; or not adhering to the principles, you were confronted: in a loving and caring manner. It wasn't so much people allowing people to just "Well I won't say anything to him, he'll change when he gets ready". It wasn't like that. Because the reality of it is... if you allow me to stay caught up; and I can't myself out, who's to say that I won't die before I find out that I'm hurting myself. We don't always know that we're hurting ourselves. We're supposed to each other's eyes and ears. Like when I came around that's exactly what we adhered to. We were each other's eyes and ears.

C.A.N. What does the first step mean to you?

Bruce The first adherence of the first step means that you don't use chemicals. But it's also the foundation on which we begin to change. Uhhh...There's a lot of information in the first step. But people just don't, either not doing the work, or their sponsors haven't done the work. I don't know what the case is but I know like, let me say this, have you found the relapse process in the first step? It's written in black and white, within the first step.

C.A.N. No, I haven't found it.

Bruce The first step is about building a relationship between powerlessness and unmanageability. That is a relationship that must be built. Because that relationship keeps your sanity. Keeps you from going that much more insane. My belief is that everything that is shown to me throughout the beginning of the Basic Text, up to the first step, shows me my insane lifestyle. And I need to accept that I have been living an insane lifestyle, and it's all in black and white. It tells me from the beginning of the Basic Text, from the symbol to the end of the first step, tells me all of the insanity in which I've been living. It tells me how I've allowed this disease to be my God. I have allowed this disease to be..."you talk I'll listen", "you jump, I'll say how high". And like, no matter who I had to walk over; know what I mean, to do what I needed to do. Which is insane. If I believe that everything I do doesn't affect no one around me. That's insane. But getting back to that relationship. If I accept that I'm powerless over my thinking; when that first thought comes and I admit that I'm powerless over it, then I give myself time to relax a minute. And I don't obsess over it. And when I don't do that (obsess), my life gets some kind of manageability to it. Because I'm not reacting to that first thought, I'm giving myself some time to think it through. The first step teaches us to stop reacting and start acting. We no longer have to react on impulse. We are not allowed take time to begin to figure out which way I want to act. And that first step gives

Interview - Continued

you the ability to slow down; start to learn how to stop, and stay that way. Know what I mean? The relapse process is there in black and white. That's why I don't use cause my sponsor kept me there for thirteen months, thirteen and a half to be precise. And I need to tell you this; that before that point, I didn't get to start working on my first step until I had almost two years clean. Because there's a lot of stuff in the beginning of the Basic Text that no one works on that needs to be worked. The symbol, Introduction, Preface, Who's an Addict, What is the Narcotics Anonymous Program, Why Are We Here. All that stuff has some information in it that helps build a foundation so that using will never again become an option. If you lose that option, I can't use because if I use this will happen. Since we're doing this interview, I'm going to tell you where the relapse process is. It's Denial, Substitution, Rationalization, Justification, Distrust of Others, Guilt, Embarrassment, Dereliction, Degradation, Isolation, and Loss of Control. That's the relapse process; in that order. Because if you go back to your experience when you first used, before you used, you denied your reality. There was some stuff going on with you that you didn't want to face, so you began to deny it. Then you substituted what you needed to do for what you wanted to do. You substituted those emotions. I hear people say, "Let the feelings pass", listen; feelings don't pass. We mask them by other emotions. And when those other emotions stop working, the initial feelings that we thought had passed has not gone anywhere; they're right there. Waiting for us to come back to it, and we always go back to it. Because it's about replacing not displacing. When you replace something it's gone, it's removed. Then we rationalize. We rationalize our behaviors, "I'm doing this because of this". Then we justify our actions, "Well if this wasn't happening I wouldn't of had to do that". Now we go to the distrust part, "I ain't going to trust you to tell you what's going on with me for real". Because I haven't done the work in the beginning of the Basic Text which allows the removal of all prejudices. When we remove all the prejudices and barriers, we feel comfortable enough to tell each other the truth. Then guilt sets in, and guilt is just a thought not a feeling. You don't feel guilty, you think guilty. Then embarrassment sets in. Embarrassment is defined in Webster's Collegiate Dictionary as "a state of confusion" as a result of our disease. So, I'm confused as a result of my disease, I'm embarrassed about my behavior. So dereliction sets in. Dereliction is just "a state of abandonment", again defined by Webster. Anytime I abandon something I know to be right and true, to go do something I know is of negative consequence, I'm in a state of dereliction. Not meaning I'm living on the street in a cardboard box. It means I'm a derelict living in a nice apartment with a car and a job. So the degradation comes in and we start to degrade each other. We degrade the process of N.A., "it ain't working... I ain't going in there, they're lying, I don't feel comfortable"; we just degrade everything around us. Isolation sets in. We're coming to meetings but we still aren't talking to each other. We aren't going to the three part meeting (before, during, and after). We aren't telling each other what's really going on with us. Why is necessary to have something going on with me at 6:00 AM and I wait till 7:30 PM, till the end of the meeting when they ask "is anyone in pain". If I really wanted to deal with it I would've dealt with it when it came up. So I'm in isolation, so I lose control. Relapse process described in the first step; in black and white, it's in there.

C.A.N. Do you have a home group?

Bruce Yeah... When I go.

Page 3 Interview - Continued

C.A.N. Do you have a sponsor?

Bruce Right now... the sponsor that I was working with... umm; Right now he's having some difficulties in his life, and uhh... God bless him but uhh... he's got some things going on. So I haven't any work-work-work; the way we describe it, in the past three months.

C.A.N. Have you been in service in N.A.

Bruce Yeah, of course.

C.A.N. How has the twelve and twelve impacted your life?

Bruce I ain't that slimy person I used to be. Real simple.

C.A.N. Have you ever attended an N.A. convention?

Bruce Yeah, yes. I love conventions. The best convention I was at was uhh, Virginia Regional Convention. About... four years. That was the best convention.

C.A.N. What can you offer the newcomer?

Bruce Hmmm. Man, I guess one of the most important things is a sense of making them feel at home. A newcomer needs to feel welcomed. A hug. If they don't feel welcome, warm, and cozy inside, they ain't gonna hear nothing; or say nothing of value. Stuff that they need to let out or get in won't happen because they won't feel comfortable enough to do so.

C.A.N. Do you embrace a Higher Power?

Bruce Yeah, I have a relationship with a Higher Power, it's mine... it's personal, get your own. But; if you need to borrow mine, I'll let you.

C.A.N. Have you thought about using lately?

Bruce Hmm: a chemical? I thought using deceit, to get something I want. I thought of using manipulation; know that I'm wrong. Knowing that I'm wrong, that someone else would pay the price because they won't be able to get their just dessert; cause I'm ready to manipulate my way into getting mine first. I haven't thought of using no dope. I can't recall the last time I thought of using some dope. I can't even allow myself to get comfortable thinking about that stuff.

C.A.N. Can you give us your thoughts on recovery?

Bruce That seems to be like very vague. My thoughts on recovery; the recovery process? My personal recovery? What do you want to know?

C.A.N. Lets say the recovery process.

Bruce It is a wonderful process. It is a process that will take you anywhere you want to go. It is an unlimited process. It's repetitive, continuous, without end. It reverses everything, you can accomplish anything you choose to. Here's an example of this unlimited process. There is a man, one of my idols in this process. One of the guys I look up to. And I love everyone in this process; don't get me wrong, from the one with one day to the person with a hundred years. I love you all and I think you all have something to show me and tell me. But, this man I watched, when I got here he was working on his Masters. Now he has his P.H.D. and his own psychological practice. This man came out of a box like mine. We can achieve whatever we want to in this process as long as we don't put handcuffs on God. One of the first things that you need to adhere to in this process is building a relationship with God. In the beginning of the Basic Text it says that we need to build a relationship with a God of your understanding. Because a lot of this think that that means we get to create a God. You do not get to

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create a God in this process. Because if you create it, it's not a power greater than yourself. It's a masterpiece of your own creation, it ain't worth sh...t. But if you adhere to what the Basic Text says and build a relationship with God. The God that brought you here, the God that carried you through your disease. The God that brought you in out of the cold, the God that chose to bring you from the hithouse to a loving house. The God that chose to like; take a spike out of your arm, and put a basic text in your hand. The God that chose to take potato chips off your main course and give you steak every now and then. The God that chose to take those dirty clothes off your back, put you in a shower, clean you up, get your hair done, put some shoes on your feet, put some pants on your back, walk you down the road and get you a job, that God. Don't think your doing none of this by yourself, cause you ain't. That's the process of recovery, it is God's process. He's just granted you the serenity top accept it and given you the grace to have it. It's his gift, ain't nothing you deserved, ain't nothing you earned. If you're anything like this dope fiend; your ass earned a seat in jail, and a place in hell for the way that you lived. That's what you earned. Now let's look at recovery. And if you look at it as a gift why would you abuse it? Know what I mean? Why would you abuse it? It's a present day present. Treat it like that. That's what the recovery process means to me. I came in this process out of desperation, I stay out of appreciation. That's what it means to me. Like Forrest Gump said, "That's all I'm gonna say about that, Jenny".

I want to thank our reporter, Ken, for doing an outstanding job interviewing this addict and thank him for being so Honest, Open, and Willing.

POEMS AND OBSERVATIONS

PRAYER

I asked for strength
that I might achieve;

I asked for health
that I might do greater things;

I asked for riches
that I might be happy;

I asked for power
that I might have the praise
of men;

I asked for all things
that I might enjoy life;

I recieved nothing I asked for.

ANSWERED

*I was made weak
that I might obey.*

*I was given grace
that I might do
better things.*

*I was given poverty
that I might be wise.*

*I was given weakness
that I might feel the
need of god*

*I was given life that
I might enjoy all
things.*

All that I hoped for.

MY PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED

BEV. S



SHAME AND FEAR

Will I be ashamed to go back in the
world and use what I have learned?

Will I be ashamed to face my life
with all the people I have spurned?

Will I be afraid to grab this bull
squarely by the horn?

Will I walk in fear, scared of myself,
dreading the day that I was born?

Will I be afraid to live my life in
recovery from day to day?

Will I be afraid to work the steps,
and keep my addiction held at bay?

Will I be ashamed to get a sponsor
and let him teach me how to walk?

Will I be afraid to trust his motives
when he tells me not to talk?

Will I be afraid to make amends to
parents, children, and wife?

Will I be afraid to recreate this puzzle
that is my life?

Listen my friend; if I am afraid to learn to live
again, why start recovery, I can
leave right now and this miracle, quickly
end.

LONNELL