

CLEANSHEET



GREATHER
PHILADELPHIA
REGION



VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2

OCTOBER 1993

"ON SPECIALIZED GROUPS"

I am responding to Troy L. and his article in the October 1992 issue of The NA Way. You see, I support specialized meetings. I go to general meetings to deal with addiction and its effect in my life. For those issues and problems common to addicts, regular meetings are a close, helpful, spiritual, and understanding place to be. However, I am not a "superaddict." I am not all-knowing. I do not have experience with the special fears and problems so common to those who attend specialized meetings.

For example, as a man I was categorized by society in several ways during my using career. I was quite promiscuous and so was deemed a "stud" and not at all condemned by the vast majority of even "normal" society. Also, my using classified me as a man who could handle a lot without appearing loaded. (It was only appearance, believe me.) If a woman had practiced these aforementioned vices to half my degree, she would have been branded a slut, a bad mother, a tramp, something to be physically used and cast off, or any one of a hundred even less flattering terms. I understand the feelings involved. I know the meanings of the words. I have not truly felt that guilt, shame, or fear. I genuinely cannot identify with it.

And the gay or lesbian addict who wants desperately to share his or her life and problems therein knows agonizing fear connected with coming out, sometimes for the first time, with the declaration of their sexual identity. "Will they still love me? Will they be afraid of me?" These thoughts must be at the forefront of their minds. In NA, the overwhelming majority will accept and love them. But many will feel slightly ill at ease in spite of having a liberal philosophy. (cont'd page 2)

The Cleansheet is a function of the Greater Philadelphia Regional Service Committee. The primary purpose is to carry the written message of recovery to addicts seeking recovery, to promote unity and to provide our members with news. The opinions expressed herein are those of individual members of Narcotics Anonymous and do not necessarily represent those of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole. All material becomes the property of the Cleansheet. All material must be original and be accompanied by the permission slip on the back.

ON SPECIALIZED GROUPS
(cont'd from pg. 1)

Gay and lesbian addicts seeking recovery have suffered scorn, hatred, anger, and pain at the hands of straight society. Now we ask that they simply forget all that, trust us, trust the program, trust a Higher Power, find a sponsor, spill the contents of their souls, and work the steps. Specialized meetings reduce the stress of early recovery somewhat for those needful of them. They also promote the growth and trust necessary to truly be comfortable in the mainstream meetings.

When I attend a specialized group, one of two things happens. Sometimes, the meeting becomes a step or tradition study. Sometimes, though, as I assure the members that I don't wish to interfere with their meeting, I gain recovery tools and a greater knowledge and understanding of the addicts I am visiting. I always leave with one new true friend in my life. My knowledge grows because I am receiving it from many minds instead of one or two.

Recovery from the horror of addiction is fraught with fear, difficulty, trial and error, a deluge of unfamiliar feelings, and uncertainty. Since our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion, I submit that to not have these attractive avenues of recovery available would keep many thousands of suffering brothers and sisters away. If one addict is helped by this approach to recovery, it is worthwhile and valuable. If one is lost for lack of it, so is the premise of one addict helping another. That would diminish us all.

I cannot in good conscience ask any addict to conform to my recovery plan or take a risk he or she may not be ready for. Specialized meetings assure that recovery, especially early recovery, is available for everyone! My love to you all.

ST, Wisconsin

Reprinted from The NA Way Magazine, August 1993

WHY AM I SO LONELY?

Addiction to a person is the ultimate addiction. Whether we call it that or "codependency," or "passionate love," it is the most dangerous of all symptoms of my disease. This face of addiction causes people to murder each other, to kill their kids or their parents, to go up on buildings and shoot people at random on the street, or kill themselves-as I tried to do.

The need for another person slowly and subtly builds

up inside you, easy to ignore because we can so easily call it "love." Though the object of your "love" may repeatedly disappoint you, hurt you, lie to you, or is just plain insensitive and indifferent to your needs, you hang in there anyway. Though they may constantly pull away from making a true commitment, you hang in there anyway. Though your sponsor and your support group call you crazy for living in so much pain, you hang in there anyway. And in exactly the same manner in which I denied I had a problem with drugs, I denied I had a problem in my relationship.

It has to get better, you tell yourself over and over. If only she'd do this, if only he'd do that.. And you deny what is obvious to everyone around you, that you've forgotten how to live simply, happy, joyous and free.

Why was I so lonely? Because I had stopped looking at myself, taking suggestions, making meetings, and trusting in the process no matter what. Why was I so miserable? Because I chose to act on my self-destructive defects of character instead of using my H.P. and the program to work through them to grow. I was alone and lonely because I chose to overlook that N.A. means Never Alone. In short, I was lonely because I chose to be lonely.

I still hurt a lot. I still grieve the loss of what was good in that relationship and I'll probably feel this way for a long while yet. But it will pass...I don't have to kill myself because one person doesn't "love me enough" or "care enough about me to stick by me." I have a loving and caring Higher Power and a world-wide fellowship of beautiful, loving people just as willing to love me today as they were one the day I first walked into the rooms. Embracing my recovery with all my heart, despite the pain I am in, I am not alone anymore. Just for today, I choose to live.

Anonymous, New York, NY

(Excerpts from The N.A. Post Newsletter, December 1992)

UNCONDITIONAL

In the Basic Text's Introduction on page xv, it states "...our identification as addicts is all -inclusive with respect to any mood-changing, mind altering substance...our problem is not a specific substance, it's a disease called addiction."

What this means to me is that no matter what addiction that I'm suffering from, and want help in dealing with, the 12 Steps of N.A. can guide me and the fellowship can give me the support and unconditional love I need.

Tradition 3 states that "the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using." (cont'd on pg. 3)

ANNIVERSARIES

Keith SP	8-27	2 yrs	Sheldon L.	9-01	9 yrs	Donald J.	9-12	3 yrs
Paul J.	9-13	1 yr	Arnold SP	9-14	2 yrs	Richie B.	9-14	1 yr
Trina	9-16	1 yr	Sherri H.	9-19	2 yrs	Sandy S.	9-22	6 mos
George SP	9-22	3 yrs	Old Head Mike	10-01	6 yrs	Rob R.	10-4	3 yrs
Mary	10-08	10 mos	Rhonda D.	10-19	1 yr	Bobbie SP	10-20	1 yr
Bill H.	10-21	5 yrs	Reggie B.	10-29	6 mos	Carol C.	10-31	3 yrs
Faye	11-09	2 yrs						

*The Cleansheet needs the participation of it's readers.
Share your experience, strength and hope on any topic
related to your recovery or the N.A. program. Send your
articles, artwork, comments or suggestions to:*

Cleansheet

C/O

Greater Philadelphia Regional Service Office

6212 Ridge Ave, Phila. Pa 19128

attn: Cleansheet



CLEANSHEET PERMISSION SLIP

By signing this slip I am giving the Cleansheet permission to print the enclosed original material. I understand that the Cleansheet may edit at the discretion of the cleansheet Committee.

name of submitted work: _____

signature: _____ date: _____

please enclose this form with all submissions



WHATS NEW AT REGIONAL SERVICE OFFICE

*12 CONCEPTS OF N.A. SERVICE
JUST FOR TODAY DAILY MEDITATION BOOK
BASIC TEXT AND PAMPHLETS ON TAPES
THE N.A. WAY MAGAZINE*

*BI-PLATE MEDALLIONS YR.S 1-21
MEDALLION HOLDERS
BOTH NECKLACES AND KEYCHAINS
IN BOTH SILVER AND GOLD*

*LITERATURE IN SPANISH
N.A. TWELTH STEP CARDS
NEW PAMPHLET -- IN TIMES OF ILLNESS
VARIOUS SPEAKER TAPES*

PHONELINES

PHILA 7 BUCKS COUNTY

215-934-3944

CHESTER COUNTY

215-344-3250

DELAWARE COUNY

215-5349510

LACKAWANNA COUNTY

717-963-0728

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

215-496-2826

WILKES -BARRE

717-283-0828

OUTSIDE WILKES-BARRE

1-800-464-4010

DELAWARE

302-429-8175

NEW JERSEY

1-800-992-0401