

April 15, 1983

N.A. Way Magazine
P.O. Box 110
Lisbon, Ohio 44432

Re: Response to Letter from Way dated 4/12/83

Dear N.A. WAY:

I recieved your letter this morning requesting our experiences with the N.A. Way Magazine. I'll try to be as brief and honest as possible in relating my experiences sofar, with the N.A. Way. Several comments I'd like to start with are, my experience with the N.A. Way has always been a growing one, I've always learned something about myself and new tools for my recovery through this effort. My overall feeling about this magazine is a very positive one, and I am very grateful to have been made to feel like a part of it, even though I've been unable to contribute as much to the cause as I would have liked to. I have a lot of respect and am inspired continually by those who have actively kept this project moving along towards its goal of carrying the N.A. message of Recovery to the addict who still suffers. They have done so in the face of some difficult setbacks and trials. Their dedication to consistency is a shining example to us all. I first heard about this magazine and sub-committee at an Addithon in Allentown, several weeks after the W.S.C.-82. One of the 3 Co-Chairpeople for the newly formed sub-committee was there and he relayed his experiences in the forming of it. He seemed somewhat confuse by it all, and wasn't sure if he was doing the right thing. The message I got was somewhat clouded by his confusion, and I didn't really understand what it was all about...I just knew that some kind of a sub-committee had been formed that had something to do with literature. It sounded controversial, and I had had my fill with controversy at that time, so I looked ~~around~~ for something positive and straightforward to get involved in. I got involved with a convention committee and a newly formed Newsletter for the Mid-Atlantic Region. At the 3rd East Coast Convention in Pittsburgh, I went through some very trying and painful growing experiences that caused a big change in my whole outlook on Recovery, and sort of lifted me out of a large area of negativity that I'd been stuck in for awhile. I guess you could call it a spiritual awakening of sorts. It was, for me. At the very end of the convention, I shared my experiences in a small, informal meeting, and one of the other Co-Chairpeople of the N.A. Way happened to be sitting in on the meeting. He suggested I write my experience down and send it in to the magazine, that that was the type of thing they were looking for.

His positive encouragement and spirit stayed with me upon my return home, and so I acted on it, and wrote about my experience. Of course, I wasn't happy with what I wrote, and had to rewrite it about 10 times before I sent it in, several months later. That's about where I was at with writing at that time. Very unproductive and perfectionistic. I recieved a reply that the article couldn't be printed because I had included names of places, and I think people's names, but along with that reply came positive encouragement to keep writing my experiences and sending them in. I felt like they really wanted to hear from me. I was also asked to be a part of the sub-committee, and to lend a hand editorially. It really sounded like this Co-Chairperson was reaching out for support, aware that the job couldn't be done alone. I replied that my hands were pretty full, as they were, with other projects and committments that I'd taken on, but that I would help out however I could. I continued to write my experiences and sant them in, and some of them got included in the magazine, which really shocked me. It was a good feeling to know that something I went through might help out some other addicts struggling, and that it was going to reach a lot of members. I always got some kind of positive feedback from the Sub-Committee Co-Chairperson who was actively keeping the magazine coming out monthly. In November, I recieved a packet of letters and correspondences that had taken place between 2 of the CoChairpeople of the Committee, and it was real controversial stuff which I really didn't want to read about or get involved in. But, at this point I sort of felt an obligation to at least read it and give my feedback to it, as it seemed to be stuff that could threaten unity and stop the publishing of the magazine. I didn't then, nor do I now, like the way that the whole situation was handled...it left a bad taste in my mouth. However, that is just my own personal feeling, and I'd like to add that the Co-Chairperson who was still active with the magazine was doing the best he knew how to do to bring about a resolution to the conflict. Plus, he did not abandon the ship and give up, he dug in and did all he could, and asked for help, and continued to ensure that the N.A. Way came out as close to deadline as I have ever seen any project in N.A. come. He used whatever resources that were available, and he did not do it alone, he worked within the committee, what was left of it. I stress this last statement because I hear a lot of people say that this guy is off on an ego trip+ doing it on his own, and what I have seen and experienced does not support those rumours in the least. Throughout the past year I have kept in regular touch with him...When I didn't like the way certain things were being handled, I wrote and told him about it. And that happened on more than one occaision. My letters were never ignored, they were always responded to immediately,

and the attitude on the other end was always open-minded and willing to look at all viewpoints. From all the controversy and negativity I seem to constantly hear about the magazine, the sub-committee and its sole surviving active Co-Chairperson, I get the impression that a lot of people get wrapped up in personalities-over-principles, and don't direct their difference of opinion in the direction of the sub-committee. They comfortably spread it around in the form of rumours and gossip, where it is safe and unproductive, and disunifying. I have fallen into that trap more than once, and it was only when I cut the shit and took my differences to where they could be looked at, useful and help to bring a change, that I felt better about the whole thing.

I don't approve of what the one Co-Chairperson did with the subscription list and money that members had given for the N.A. Way. She claimed to be acting on principles, but it has been my experience that true spiritual principles are reflected in the results they bring about. The only result I've seen by her actions, have been pretty negative. I offered to help her straighten the situation out, in any way that I could, and never heard from her. Principles without willingness or action wind up being pretty useless. I wish I could have been of more help in this area. I did all I could.

I hope to see the N.A. Way continue on in the coming year. I'd hate to see all the effort that members have put into it go to waste. I would like to see someone with a lot of experience, in Recovery and in Service, become the Chairperson for it this year. I was considering becoming willing to take it on myself...I do feel qualified, service-experience-wise, but after much thought and consideration, and discussion with my sponser, I don't feel quite qualified yet, recovery-wise. I would like to see someone with 5 years or more time-in-recovery, N.A. recovery, who has proven to be more than just a title-holder, someone who will take this project to heart, as the current active Co-Chairperson has ^{done} beautifully + effectively, become the Chairperson in the coming year. I stress the time-in-recovery in light of the way the stressful situation within the committee was handled. Very simply, I feel that someone with more time would handle it more calmly and effectively. I sure wouldn't be capable of handling it with poise, were I in the situation. Maybe in a couple of years, with more cleantime under my belt, I could, but I still have the tendency to react before I think.

I pray that the magazine and sub-committee continue on, and I remain willing to help in any way that I can. One other comment about the communication of the sub-committee - they communicate very well with the Fellowship, but they don't leave enough time for members to respond to their communications. They should try to bear in mind that everyone else isn't as quick with words and action as they are/...and, those that are willing and active sometimes have their hands full with 10 other projects and can't get around to responding immediately to requests. This has been my experience several times recently. Right now, I'm typing this while I should be doing something else, but I just felt the spirit move me, and so I said "C'est La Vie" to that something else. I'll get around to it shortly.

Thank you beautiful members who have kept this dream alive and who have added a lot to this addict's recovery by doing so. Keep doing it! I love you all.

Love,
 Pete Br 
 Member