

**My Gratitude Speaks
When I Care
And When I Share
With Others
The N.A. Way.**

THE
NA
WAY

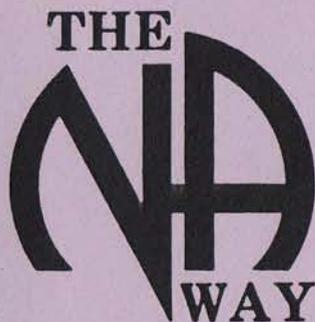
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*Before
and
After*





THE INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP
OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIMITED FREEDOM	1
MEMORIES OF JOEY	2
UNSEEN RESULTS OF TWELFTH-STEP WORK	7
IT'S NOT ALWAYS WONDERFUL	8
RECIPE FOR SERENITY	10
BEFORE AND AFTER	12
SPECIAL FEATURE: COMING OF AGE	14
BE AN EXAMPLE	16
AN OLDER MEMBER'S VIEW	18
THE UNFOLDING OF THE FELLOWSHIP	20
FROM OUR READERS	24
COMIN' UP	27
SUBSCRIPTION FORM	29
COPYRIGHT RELEASE FORM	30

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What is Narcotics Anonymous?

N.A. is a worldwide Fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other to stay clean. It doesn't matter which drugs you used, or what you have done in the past. We are concerned only with how we can help addicts recover. It costs nothing to be a member of N.A.—there are no dues or fees. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that *they work*. For more information about the N.A. groups nearest you, write us at the address below.

All members of Narcotics Anonymous are invited to participate in this "meeting in print." Send all input, along with a signed copyright release form, to: The N.A. Way; World Service Office, Inc.; P.O. Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409

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.*
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.
- 11 *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.*

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Limited Freedom

The worst fear I have ever felt is fear of insanity. I would like to say that I stay clean because I am a paragon of spiritual recovery, but really it is more fear of what may happen if I don't. We talk about having a spiritual awakening to N.A. Just prior to coming to N.A. I had what you might call a monster awaken within me. I came to the realization that all I had to do to be insane is think I'm insane. It doesn't sound so bad on paper, but believe me, I was around the bend. In Step One there is no "and therefore" between powerless over addiction and unmanageable lives. This step is a two part step separated by a comma. I still do not know if my crazy thoughts are caused by my addiction or whether my addiction causes my crazy thoughts. All I know is that my chances of being restored to sanity are maximized if I stay clean and greatly diminished if I use. Insanity makes for a very unmanageable life.

For me, being powerless over my addiction is evident in that once I start using I cannot stop. I can't get just a little high or a little drunk. My only choice is whether to take the first one, after that there is no more choice. I can only choose whether to start or not to start. That is the limitation of my freedom.

Truly, this addict "came to" N.A. to be restored to sanity. I stay clean because I figure it is the only way I'll ever get there. The Second Step is not a guarantee, but it does give me hope, and my program goes a long way on hope. I hope my Higher Power works the parts of the steps that are left up to Him!

D.J.
Texas



Memories of Joey

It's early afternoon on a gray November day, and the world is in transition. The collage of ever-changing Fall colors is slowly yielding—yielding to Winter and all of her wondrous miracles. And me, I'm just an observer watching from an apartment in Newark, New Jersey. I feel safe and warm, wrapped in the memories of an old friend, and secure in the feeling of a new one (hello K—). Sometimes I find it difficult to translate memories into words as they come and spill onto paper. They sometimes just seem so inadequate, so empty. "Dear Lord, may you guide my pen as I write of Joey."

Joe R. was an addict and he died. You say, "So what? Addicts die every day!" It's not how Joe died that I want to share, it's how Joe lived. Boy, how he did live!

Packing the truck, we made ready for the return trip. It was decided before K— came down that I would go back with her to visit, to share, and to write. We made plans to leave late Sunday night after the meeting about ten. I was looking forward to the four hour journey that lay before us. We left on time, believe it or not! As we headed toward the Beltway and toward New Jersey, we began to talk. The stars cut brightly through the clear night sky as we reached the



highway. The sharing got so intense at times that we inadvertently took an exit lane three different times before leaving Baltimore. When we saw the traffic lights on the beltway we began to laugh at ourselves. Realizing what we had done, we found our path once again and safely tucked ourselves away in the far left lane for the rest of the trip. As we continued to share, this little black truck became filled--filled with the memories of Joe.

He was small in size as far as men go. A neatly trimmed beard tightly hugged his face. It was graying. His hair lay in ringlets closely curled atop his head. This was new, and it looked good. Joe always kept a small grin handy, and wore it often. When meeting you, first time or not, this grin would give way to a big smile and then words would come. The words that I heard so many times before: "Hi, my name's Joe, I'm an addict from Jersey." Saying this, his brown eyes so full of life began to dance and twinkle with pride. At first he seemed quiet and shy. Shy even to the point of being isolated and withdrawn. If you were fortunate enough, however, to be graced with his friendship, you were truly given a gift from God.

I was Joey's friend, and I experienced that gift. I was witness to a miracle. I was part of a transformation. I watched as this small, shy, withdrawn guy changed. It seemed to me he became a giant. He gave freely and openly of himself with unconditional love.

It's true that Joe was an addict and that he did die; but not before experiencing recovery. Recovery from the disease of addiction in the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. He loved this Fellowship and this Fellowship loved him in return. The principles of Narcotics Anonymous not only gave him almost four additional years of life, they gave him the freedom to live and enjoy those additional years.

Recently my friend became ill. I began to question his illness, asking, "Why? Why Joey? What has he done?" My faith had been replaced by fear. Terrifying fear! Fear of loss. I may lose Joe? I remember the night that I got a phone call, and I remember K— telling me, "Joe's in the hospital."

"Again? Oh no, not again."

The next morning I made a phone call sharing the news. The voice on the other end replied, "How soon can you be ready?"

"I'm ready now!"

"I'll be there as soon as possible, be ready."

It was about six that evening before we left. That trip up the Jersey turnpike was long and full of questions. Many questions! We arrived at the hospital in Newark about 10:30 that night. The door to Joe's room was ajar. As we pushed it open Joe was sleeping. His back was turned toward us. Approaching his bedside we whispered, "Wake up sweetheart."

As my friend turned, now facing us, I now knew how sick he really was. Even as sick as he was his spirit could not be dimmed. We were still greeted with that smile. We stayed over that night.



I remember. It was late. I was physically exhausted from the trip and still couldn't sleep. My spirit was spent. My mind full of questions. As I lay on the couch, my eyes filled with tears and silent prayer began to trickle down my cheeks. I fell asleep that night crying and praying. The next day was Sunday. It was back to see Joe, then home.

Arriving home I shared my faith, my fears, and my feelings for my friend. My friend who was dying. Dying in a Newark hospital and I couldn't stop it. I felt helpless. The only thing I could do, I did. I stayed in daily contact with God as I understand Him, with K—, and with Narcotics Anonymous.

With the tools granted me by this program and God's grace, I began to rebuild my faith. I surrendered my fear, my powerlessness, and my helplessness. I came to believe that God had my friend, that Joey was safe in his arms. So when that day came I would be ready. Sure enough, that day did come.

The phone rang. It was Friday morning, the 13th day of September, 1985. As I picked up the phone, I knew. Don't ask me how, but I knew. It was K—.

"B—, B—, Joe's gone."



We did our best to console each other. The next few days were spent on the phone making plans and calling people. Plans for a trip that I had to make. A trip to say goodbye and I Love You! It's not easy to say goodbye.

I get up early. I'm dressing, preparing myself for the trip which lay before me. Fall's coming, I feel her chill in the early morning air. As I grab a warm shirt from the closet, I feel safe—safe in the darkness of pre-dawn. Very soon now a car will be in my driveway. The car that is to carry us to say goodbye. The sun was shining that day. It was to be warmer than I had first thought. The services were to be at 11:00 that morning, and it was already after 7:00. It was one of those days. We left around 7:30. We spent the next few hours playing tag all over the state of New Jersey, just missing people and unable to make contact. Our last chance was the church. Pulling up just as the line was forming to leave to for the cemetery, we found our place and followed.

Driving through the city where Joey grew up, it was good to be a part of his last good-bye. As the line of thanks passed through the iron gates and down the narrow, winding road, I was at peace. My friend was home. I was whole again. Returning to the car, the sun was shining, and I felt Joey's smile inside of me. We had first made plans to visit with the family and to pay our respects; however our plans were changed. Having no one to follow, and no directions that we trusted, we decided to drive into the city.

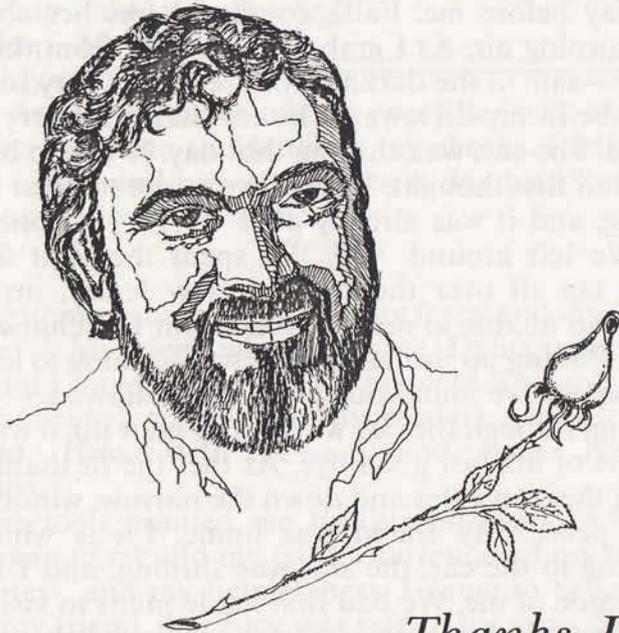
We crossed the George Washington Bridge and entered the city. The feel of death was in the air in many parts of the city, as the disease of addiction filled the street. Junkies clinging tightly to street corners, willingly waiting to die. . . For us in the car it was a real fix of gratitude. We are alive! Today we know recovery from our disease. And so did Joey. He did not have to die here, like this. He died clean. Thanks to Narcotics Anonymous, so can WE, you and I.

That was almost two months ago now. Today I am full. I am alive. Living and enjoying life. Today I live free in my recovery. Free from my disease. Today I am grateful. Grateful to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous for the ability to be a friend.

I will carry with me always the gift of Joe. The memory of his smile will light my soul on a daily basis.

Thanks Joe. I love you!

B.Z.
Maryland



*Thanks Joe.
I Love You!*

Unseen Results of Twelfth-Step Work



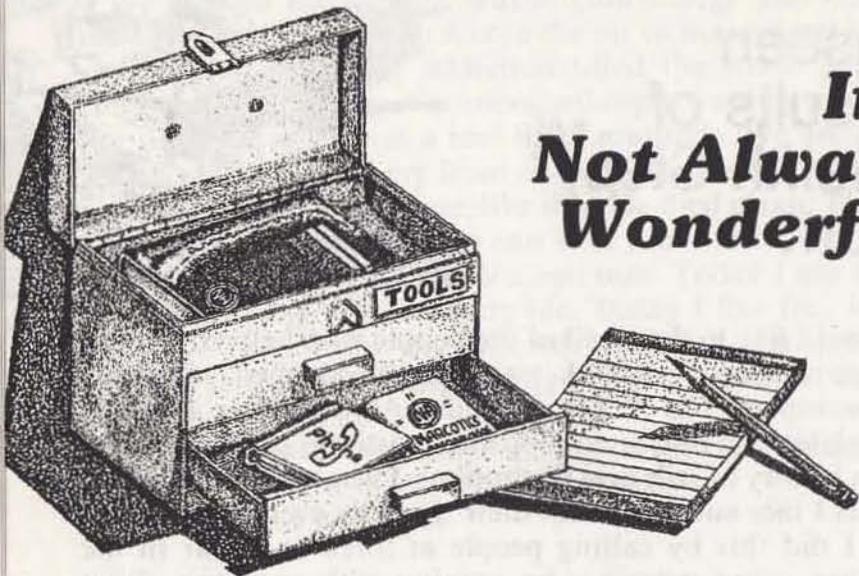
I would like to thank all of the people who helped me find this new way of life. I was Twelfth-Stepped into this Fellowship in Las Vegas, Nevada. At that time I was a cynical, burned out, unemployable prostitute and dope fiend with a history of jails and institutions. I was mistrustful of the addicts I met and tested out their sincerity every way I knew how. I did this by calling people at three and four in the morning, every morning, by arguing with everyone about everything I heard in meetings, by going to meetings high on various drugs, by claiming I knew more about recovery than they, and by every other means imaginable.

After being unable to achieve any clean time with such attitudes, I went to a home for women which did not require money or insurance, and was ran by the love of recovering addicts. In this house I made a big decision which I have not regretted. I decided to leave Las Vegas and reunite with my family, who had been enjoying several years of recovery in their own Fellowships. Unfortunately, I was unable to thank all of the addicts who had first inspired hope in me.

Since my decision to leave Nevada, I have enjoyed three years clean, and I'm happily married to a fellow member of N.A. I am graduating from college, have a stable, exciting career in computer programming, own a house, etc. Most importantly, I have found an indescribable feeling of serenity, self-respect, and love for my Higher Power, for fellow addicts, my fellow human beings, and myself.

Thank you. Just because one cannot always see the results of their Twelfth Step work, that does not mean it has gone to waste. It saves lives, and it gives us our lives.

R.F.
Virginia



It's Not Always Wonderful

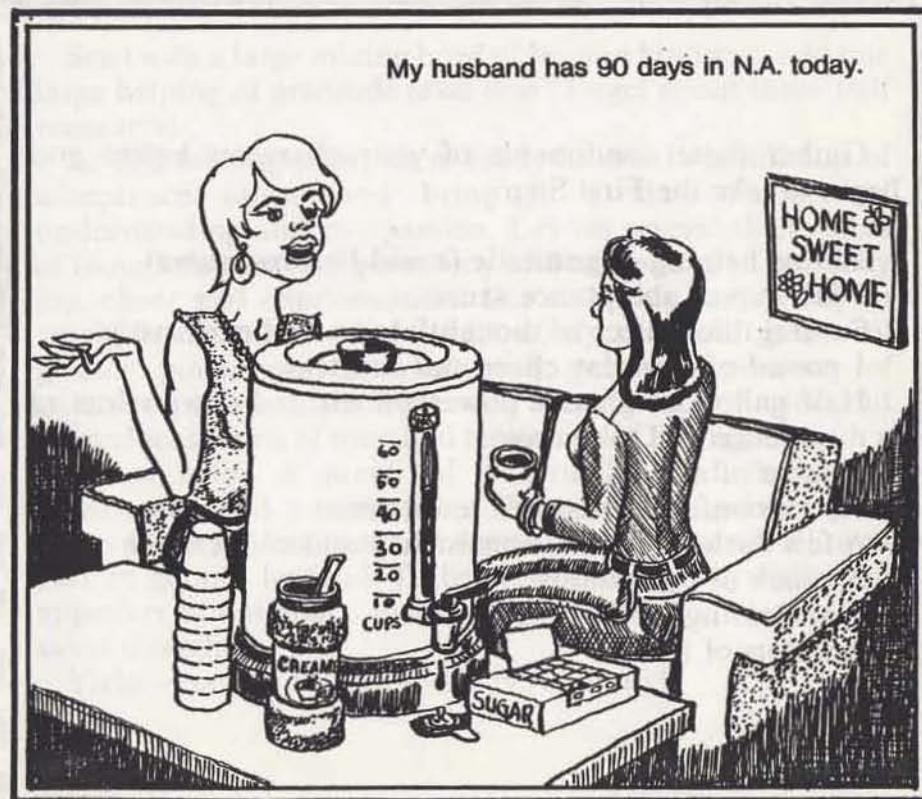
You know, I really do love this Program of Narcotics Anonymous and I really am grateful to be alive. However, there are days in which I don't have that truly unexplainable feeling of being grateful, and glad that I'm alive, etc., etc.

Those days are usually when I'm self-obsessed, which to me, is when I'm only thinking of material things—money, job security, etc. On those days I sometimes forget I have a tool to walk through this problem with. I used to think self-obsession was being obsessed with how I looked. When I heard people say they were self-obsessed, I thought, "Well, yeah, I care about how I look, but I'm not obsessed with it." How wrong I was. You see, that's one of the best gifts of this program—the ability to grow, to see things differently the longer you stay clean and work the steps. Your whole concept of life changes. Each experience I have, each step I walk through, I learn something; I realize something I've never realized before or understood before. Being able to face reality and live life clean is really quite hard at times. But I don't have another choice. I know what I have to do, I know that using is not a choice for me today. So I walk on through the day, work the steps of the problem, take care of one detail at a time, and you know what? eventually I feel full of life again. I feel grateful to be clean. I feel the unexplainable happiness and peace in my life.

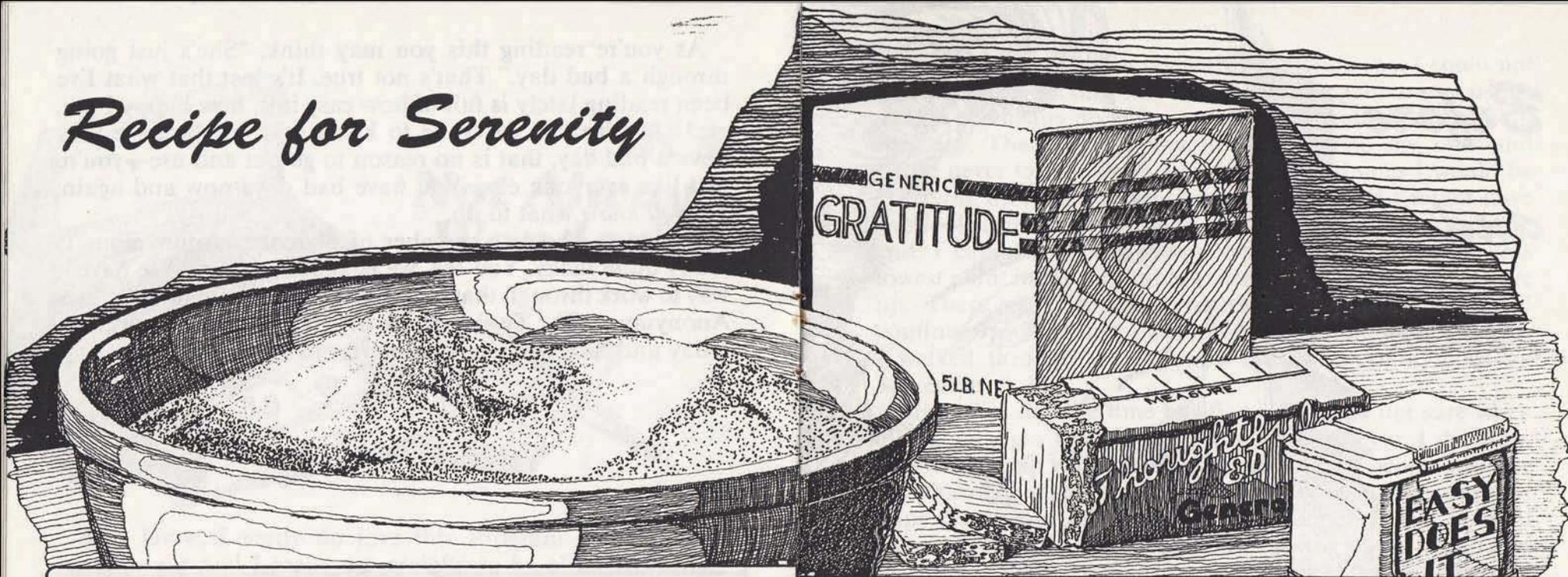
As you're reading this you may think, "She's just going through a bad day." That's not true. It's just that what I've been reading lately is full of how easy it is, how happy I am, etc. I just wanted everyone to know that just because they have a bad day, that is no reason to go out and use—you're just like everyone else. You have bad days now and again, but *you know* what to do.

Everyone who is a member of Narcotics Anonymous is really quite lucky. You see, we have tools to use. We have a way to work through that bad day. With the help of Narcotics Anonymous, The Twelve Steps, my sponsor, I can stay clean today and face whatever reality has to offer me.

C.S.
California



Recipe for Serenity



Gather these condiments of your character before you begin to take the First Step:

- 1 large helping of gratitude (avoid half measures)
- 1 full cup of acceptance sauce
- Several thick slices of thoughtfulness and generosity
- 1 pound of everyday cheer and courtesy
- Half gallon of greater power punch, laced with lots of patience and tolerance
- 1 peace of mind
- 1 teaspoonful of trust and tenderness
- A few dashes of calm, consistency and cooperation
- A pinch of punctuality
- A sprinkling of "Easy Does It"
- And lots of love!

Start with a large mixing bowl of human kindness, add one large helping of gratitude (and don't forget about those half measures).

At this turning point we're ready to mix in a full cup of acceptance sauce, and bring to a slow simmer of understanding and compassion. Lay on several thick slices of thoughtfulness and generosity and one pound of everyday joy, cheer and courteousness. Stir smoothly and gently to reach desired consistency. Add slowly one half gallon of greater power punch laced with generous portions of patience and tolerance. Serve with a total peace of mind and toasted teaspoons of trust and tenderness. Dust lightly with a dash of calm, a pinch of punctuality and dashes of consistency and cooperation. Then, with a sprinkling of "Easy Does It," lots of tender love and care—turn it all over, and let go and let God. To be served with good wishes, an appetizer of optimism, tossed merriment and a casserole of sweet thoughts.

Yield—enough for the whole N.A. family!

R.C.
Florida

*Before
and
After*



Here I am feeling fully human, fully alive. The emotions I feel today are quite different from those I felt a little over three years ago.

From the depths of despair my life changed, seemingly overnight. The humanness I had managed to hang onto revealed itself only in the pain and the tears that accompanied my existence. Days had progressed into years—so many years that I could not remember if I had ever existed before drugs became an intricate part of my life. I wasn't the stereotypical addict on the street corner, but I definitely was hopelessly strung out on prescription medication. My paranoia had progressed to such a point that I lived secretly—quietly—in isolation from the rest of society. Fear was my constant companion. My only socializing involved frequent trips to the doctor, the drug store, and occasional trips to a local convenience store.

There came a time in my active addiction that I could not face myself in the mirror. I tried time and again to stop using, always promising myself or my children that I would quit on Monday. There were many times I flushed my pills and swore never to take them again. Within minutes I would be scurrying on my knees to find some pills that I might have overlooked in the flushing. At times, especially towards the end, I came to believe I was totally insane. It was at this lowest point in my miserable existence that I simply just gave up. There were no more reservations; I knew that if I continued to use drugs I would die. With nothing left to lose, I walked through the doors of Narcotics Anonymous on September 9, 1982.

Since that day the time has flown by. I am not sure when all the changes took place in my life. However, I do know that they began with those small meetings of people just like me, sharing insights about their recovery from the seemingly hopeless disease called addiction. I entered into a stage of recovery. The First Step began with giving up all mood and mind-changing chemicals, and, little by little, the paranoia began to fade away. With the paranoia went the loneliness and the pain. Slowly I began to trust the people with whom I shared my pain, anxiety, and tears.

Today my frequent trips to town take me to Narcotics Anonymous meetings or to some hospital or institution meeting as a speaker or meeting chair. Isolation has no place in my life today. Today when I look in the mirror I see a full-time student, a mother, a wife and a carrier of the message. The message I carry today is one for other addicts who suffer from this disease—the message of hope.

Fear and anger have been replaced by serenity and acceptance of life. I have a wonderful group of friends who have touched my life and allowed me to be a part of theirs. I cannot pinpoint the exact time of day when I decided that I wanted to live and enjoy life as other people do. What is important to me today is that I never forget the depths of despair from which I have come, for I never want to go back.

L.C.
Texas

SPECIAL

FEATURE

In the recent survey regarding the future of the *N.A. Way* magazine, we heard the voices of our readers more loudly than ever before. (We will report more fully on those survey results next month.) Asked what criticisms they had of the magazine, one group of voices asked us, "When are you going to quit putting A.A. down?" Asked why the magazine should continue as a Fellowship project, a great chorus of voices said something like, "Our magazine is the only contact we have in our area with a clear *N.A.* message of recovery." These two groups of responses, it seemed to us, were discussing the same issue from two different angles.

Although we at the *N.A. Way* are very confident that the magazine has never "put down" any other Fellowship or organization, we do understand where that criticism comes from. N.A.'s struggle over the past several years to clarify its own message and stand on its own two feet is one that has touched nearly every N.A. community in existence. As a result, we have received a large number of articles which address that subject.

We have rejected a number of those which were harsh or critical of A.A., or of N.A. members who attend A.A. meetings, because we did not feel they were appropriate for the magazine. We have tried to print those which sought to

COMING OF AGE

outline a solution to this controversy. It seems clear from the volume of our mail on this issue, and from your responses to the survey, that ignoring this developmental issue will not resolve it, nor will addressing it in a belligerent, closed-minded way.

We have selected for this month's Special Feature three articles which address this issue, each from a different perspective. One is from one of the newer generation of N.A. members, who has been an advocate of the changes over the last few years, but who is reflecting on the need for moderation and tolerance in our approach. The second is from one of our "oldtimers" who shares about his own acceptance of the need for change, and calls on us all to move forward. The third is a reprint of an *N.A. Way* article that appeared in the May 1984 issue. This piece suggests that this is a developmental issue, not one that lends itself to "right or wrong" judgments, and that there is a simple way to outgrow the problem.

These are presented here with great respect and love for all who are touched by these growing pains, whatever your position may be. Collectively, through our application of the spiritual principles of the Narcotics Anonymous Program, we can resolve this one.

BE AN EXAMPLE

Last night I received a very disturbing phone call from a good friend, who asked me two questions: One, were we changing the traditions, specifically the Third Tradition? And two, would a person who identified as an "addict/alcoholic" be in the near future prevented from sharing in an N.A. meeting? I told this person that the traditions could never be changed, and to stop being paranoid, but I also thought about the questions long after we had hung up.

I am an addict who happened to be weaned on the N.A. terms of recovery; I identify as an "addict," measure my abstinence in "clean time" and consider myself "recovering" from the disease of addiction. I was taught very early in my recovery that it didn't matter what or how much I used, that I had a disease that went far deeper than the symptoms of my active drug use.

I also live in one of the oldest regions of Narcotics Anonymous, where for thirty of the thirty-five years of our Fellowship's existence, most addicts were not fortunate enough to have the literature available to them that we have today: the Basic Text, the approval-form version of It Works, the various I.P.'s, the N.A. Way and other pieces of literature written by and for addicts.

I have always felt I was extremely fortunate to have found N.A. at a time when this Fellowship was expanding so rapidly, not only in terms of members but also in our consciousness of the disease of addiction and the process of recovery. In a few short years, we have published not one, but two books on recovery in Narcotics Anonymous, but these few short years were not our formative years.

Unlike our parent program, whose members wrote their text within five years of their creation, we went for over two decades dependent on whatever sources of recovery material we could find, borrow or adapt; even our steps and traditions were basically written out for us, and adapted by us for our use.

Which brings me to the point of this article: We as a Fellowship evolved slowly and painfully, struggling for identification over a long period of time. We are not a spontaneous creation, and we are learning as a Fellowship who and what we are. It is an evolutionary process, quite

similar in many ways to the process of change experienced through working and living the Twelve Steps and Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. We, as a Fellowship, and as individual members, have learned internally that this process takes time, it takes patience, it takes tolerance, it takes humility, and it takes the willingness to practice these steps and traditions in all of our affairs.

I can't help but think of our unity in relation to this issue. I would love to see the day when each and every one of us uses only the language of recovery as written in our literature, but I am also aware that this may take a while. As with everything else that pertains to us, this evolution will happen in God's time, not ours, and while we are experiencing the transition we need to keep in mind the fact that we might be scaring and potentially alienating our fellow members by judgmental tactics. I have listened to many trusted servants, with long periods of clean time, voice their concern over our identification and the role of the member who has not yet made a personal transition in this area. This member has attended only Narcotics Anonymous meetings for years, has the same love and concern for this Fellowship as members who identify simply as "addicts," but was taught early in recovery to use different, possibly archaic language to describe continued, total abstinence from all drugs.

My friend expressed the fear that his name would soon be deleted from all speakers' lists in our region, that he would no longer be asked to speak, even on panels; that is a privilege that members earn by their participation in the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, which includes the criterion of identification as an "addict." On the other hand, that same member must *never* be forbidden from sharing in a Narcotics Anonymous meeting; that in itself is a complete violation of the Third Tradition and is a contradiction of all the spiritual principles that we have been taught in this Fellowship.

Individual members, groups and all service entities have the right and the responsibility to carry the message to the addict who still suffers, and this includes the addict who came into recovery at a time when the identification process was different than it is now. It is our only primary purpose, and to bar this message, to intimidate or prohibit any member from sharing their recovery in an N.A. meeting is a

travesty of all that this program promises.

We must carry with each of us the ability to teach and the humility to learn from the "oldtimer" who identifies differently than you or I, but may have practiced these steps and traditions longer than some of us have been alive. We must teach through our literature and through our own personal sharing, by example rather than penalty. We must keep our unity in mind, our common welfare and our primary purpose. I have no doubt that the day will come when we all identify by a common term, as addicts, but we also have to remember that this day may be a generation away, and until that time we owe ourselves and our fellow members the acceptance that we were given when we arrived at the doors of Narcotics Anonymous. We owe it to those who came before us, and to those who will follow us.

Anonymous

AN OLDER MEMBER'S VIEW

I have been a member of the Narcotics Anonymous Program constantly since 1971 and have been clean since June 1972. I have always been involved in service as a member of Narcotics Anonymous. I, like most people who got clean before the mid to late 70's attended A.A. meetings regularly, never thinking much about it. I did however, think it unfortunate that the addicts with more than a year or two in recovery quit attending N.A. meetings, and went exclusively to A.A. It saddened me because the "immaturity" that they said they objected to in N.A. didn't change if everyone who found some maturity left N.A.

But that's another subject. I mention these early days of my recovery as a matter of background for what I want to write about, which are some of the issues in N.A. today.

There is a great deal of discussion on language used in N.A. meetings and the relationship of N.A. and A.A. to each other. By the way, I'm an addict who attends N.A. meetings only, and have for about the last six or seven years. I came to that decision as a result of the Twelfth Step and the Fifth Tradition. To me the key of this issue is in both these

principles. It is not a matter of how many Fellowships you attend, but of understanding what each Fellowship is for, and then respecting each Fellowship while attending its meetings.

When I attended A.A. meetings, Alcoholics Anonymous demanded that addicts identify as alcoholics if they were going to participate in meetings. I complied in part by saying I was an addict and alcoholic, but continued to talk about my drug addiction. I only identified as an alcoholic by saying I was one, but in speaking I identified as an addict. I came to see this as a violation of A.A.'s Fifth Tradition—A.A.'s primary purpose is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, and I carried a message of recovery from drug addiction. I saw that the only Twelfth Step and Fifth Tradition I could really follow was N.A.'s. On that basis, I made a commitment to go only to N.A. for my recovery and my service.

It seems to me that N.A. is now coming of age, and asking the same thing A.A. asked years ago—that people, while participating in N.A. meetings, please identify as an addict and share about recovery from the disease of addiction through the Narcotics Anonymous Program. We did it for A.A., why not the same respect for ourselves? If you choose to attend more than one Fellowship, that's your business but be considerate and respectful of the Fellowship you do attend.

A great deal has changed since the 70's and before. The number of N.A. meetings has grown dramatically, the number of people with more than a couple of years clean has also increased significantly, and we now have our own book that works. That's right, I said our book works, but first you have to open it up and read it, and then when your finished you have to read it again and work the Steps.

Before 1971 I had tried many times to get clean. While attending A.A. meetings I was taught that I was sober; now N.A. is trying to remind us that we are what we wanted to be before getting here—clean. When was the last time you met an addict trying to find sobriety? Unless they were in a treatment program or A.A., addicts seek to get clean. N.A. is simply asking that people use our language. This request did not come about as a result of a decision by the World Service Office or the Board of Trustees, but by addicts all over. It's difficult and clumsy at first, but it reflects a pride in and

respect for our program; if you're ashamed of Narcotics Anonymous, what are you doing in our meetings anyway?

Narcotics Anonymous is more than any one of us; it's more than our home group, area or region. We need to realize that and to keep that in mind as we make decisions about our participation in Narcotics Anonymous. Our individual decisions may very well affect N.A. as a whole.

To those of you I taught to say "addict and alcoholic," "clean and sober," "sober" and "sobriety," I say that I am an addict who is clean and recovering in Narcotics Anonymous by the grace of God. I believe N.A. works, and while we may be forever grateful to A.A., they have already pointed the way for us, let's now proceed on our path. We are over thirty years old, and some would have us still clinging to mommy's bosom.

Anonymous

THE UNFOLDING OF THE FELLOWSHIP

From the May, 1984 N.A. Way

When I went to my first N.A. meeting in 1978, we had only one meeting locally, no local service structure, and very little literature. For virtually all of us attending that single isolated meeting, N.A. was, for all practical purposes, the A.A. meeting attended by addicts (many of whom called themselves chemically dependent, alcoholic or whatever). We openly endorsed and quoted the A.A. literature. When we referred to the Program, we called it A.A., as often as N.A. without really thinking. We had very little awareness of N.A. as a whole. I was not particular about those things at that time. I felt we were all afflicted with the same condition regardless of what we called it, and that we all recover by the same principles. We had a very tight knit group; we loved our N.A. group deeply, and worked hard at our recovery and at carrying the message.

Many groups seem to be in this same condition today. Perhaps the best word to describe those groups is "underdeveloped." They are often criticized by N.A. members who are appalled at what they see as a blatant disregard for the traditions. In fact, many would argue that

such groups are not N.A. groups at all because they do not follow the traditions.

When addicts from these two schools of thought confront one another, one school goes away calling the other "N.A. purists" who are out to stir up the serene waters of the group and quibble over semantic issues until the focus on recovery is lost. They believe that alcoholics and addicts recover quite well as one big happy family—"Why make them separate?" The other school goes away feeling that it is the first school who is making them separate by calling some addicts such things as "alcoholic" which implies that they are different from other addicts. They point to the Sixth Tradition and now our Basic Text and say, "as Fellowships, we are separate. Why not face that reality?"

The problem, as I see it, is not so much a problem at all, but rather the controversy is part of a normal developmental process of individual groups and of N.A. as a whole. Consider an analogy. When a child is small, it is extremely dependent upon its parents. The child mimics the parent. That is a normal part of identify formation. As it reaches adolescence, the child develops a strong need for its own identity, separate from its parents, and goes through a crisis—a period of critical change—in search of its own separate and distinct identity (we addicts know all about that!). A healthy person finds that separate identity and moves into adulthood (something we addicts know less about), relaxing the independent spirit and learning a style of cooperative interdependence rather than a dependence on significant others or rigid independence.

In my experience it is similar for N.A. groups and N.A. as a whole. Once an N.A. community becomes established, it spawns its own new groups; but the first group in an area in which there were no N.A. groups usually springs from the A.A. community. Our Fellowship itself was started by addicts in A.A. In that sense, A.A. is our parent Fellowship. So it's not surprising or particularly alarming that isolated, underdeveloped N.A. groups have strong ties to the A.A. community.

Predictably, as an N.A. group gains members who cleaned up in N.A. and have no particular sense of allegiance to A.A., tensions arise. The group is developing its own identity. It eventually goes through an adolescence—a period of identity

crisis in search of its separateness—and hopefully (if that passage is healthy and the crisis resolved), the group develops an autonomous identity and cooperates with its “significant others” such as churches, the courts, treatment facilities, and A.A. At that point an “adult” group is not affiliated with, and avoids language and practices that imply affiliation with, any outside enterprise. This is not to condone language or practices that imply affiliation at any developmental stage, but simply to place the controversy in a context in which it can be better understood and dealt with effectively.

Perhaps N.A. as a whole is, at this point in our history, going through an adolescence of sorts. One of our major crises today, as we are in a state of rapid growth and development, could be summed up by the question, “Who are we as an entity separate and distinct from all other entities?” Our literature consistently points clearly to the path we must take to continue to move forward: we must continue to establish our identity as a separate, distinct autonomous Fellowship, independent of all related and unrelated entities; we must cooperate, not affiliate with any or all of these to better carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

One of the best ways I have seen to knock the wind out of the sails of the controversy surrounding these issues has been pointed out in many ways in this magazine—simply to be clear about our own language as a Fellowship. Much care and hard work within our literature movement has gone into developing our own language with regard to our illness and our recovery process. This was not done to be cute, or different or unique or controversial. This was done because in N.A. we have taken on the task of broadening the perspective of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to include addiction to all mind altering, mood changing drugs. We have changed the language to take the primary focus off of the drug(s), and place it on the addiction process and recovery process. That does in fact set us apart.

We are not in competition or contention with any other Twelve Step Fellowship, we simply have a separate point of focus for our primary purpose. Our focus is on recovery from addiction irrespective of the drug or drugs involved. For N.A. to keep its own message clear, we must use N.A. language at N.A. meetings. That’s the way we can keep our doors as open

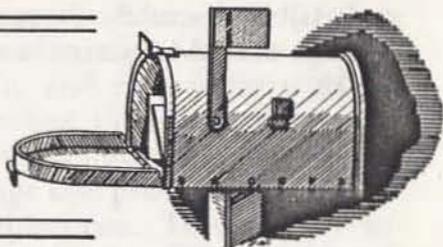
as possible to exactly those whom our traditions target.

Some of that language is as follows (all clearly used in our book):

1. We introduce ourselves at meetings as “addicts,” nothing else. That’s a term that includes us all, excludes no appropriate people, sets no one apart as different, and it’s the only term used in our Basic Text.
2. Rather than the words “sober” or “sobriety” which imply freedom from alcohol, yet do not accurately describe freedom from many other substances, we use the words “clean” and “recovery” or “clean time.” These words again are all inclusive, setting no one apart.
3. We read and refer to *only* N.A. Conference-approved literature during our meetings. Hopefully, our members read privately and perhaps discuss in other settings a whole variety of rich literature, but, again, to keep our focus clear, not during the meeting.

It seems to me that as we do just those few simple things to be consistent with our traditions and steps, the controversy dies down or dies out. It has been a thrill to be a part of N.A. at this exciting period in our history. The entire picture changed when our book came on the scene. We no longer have the excuse, “but we don’t have a recovery text of our own,” to be loose about our Sixth Tradition. We are now well on our way to a full, strong autonomous adulthood as a Fellowship, willed into existence over time by a loving God.

From Our Readers



Dear *N.A. Way*,

Sometimes such little things can become so overwhelming. I am moving for the fourth time since I've been clean, and that's only been sixteen months. Having the utilities disconnected in one apartment, and setting up the billing and connection fees in the new one, can just about drive me crazy. And this deciding which long distance phone company to use—calling and trying to figure out what is what, and which is cheaper—it's overwhelming. My friends in the program are a bit burned out on me moving, but at least this time I signed a one year lease—we were all happy about that. So, together (I hope I'm not assuming too much) we'll move again.

I'm so glad that I have friends today. I always thought that I had friends before, but I had to bribe them by getting them loaded to get them to do anything. My friends today aren't like that. All I have to do is ask for help—they seem to know that this is hard on me, and they're willing to be there for me. That's a good feeling.

When I look at my life today, I am so grateful. I've moved people in this program also, and we always seem to have fun. It's exciting helping someone through a new beginning, and to see them settle down. Now it's time for me to get excited, for this is another new beginning for me...

L.R.
California

Dear *N.A. Way*,

I am very pleased with the *N.A. Way*. The articles always help me and I sit right down and read it cover to cover.

I would like to keep my copies, but I keep giving them away. A couple of weeks ago a young man who is studying to be a counselor for alcohol and drug abuse asked me for some literature. I got him copies of our pamphlets, but I also gave him my last two copies of the *N.A. Way* and the *Newsline*. He said he found them helpful in gaining some insight.

Thank you and keep up the good work.

Anonymous

Dear *N.A. Way*,

I am new to the program (six months cleantime since treatment), but in that six months a whole new life has opened up for me in the program. I made a commitment to myself upon leaving the treatment center to get a group going here if there wasn't one already, and I did.

In the past six months I've gained only one regular member and anywhere from five to seven others who come occasionally. But it only takes two to make a meeting. And, I've had them by myself on occasion. But, I still continue and strive to stay clean. I am the only one who can do it and for the grace of God, I will. My Higher Power has seen to it to give me a place for the meetings here at my parents campground and I'm grateful because these are the same parents I had six months ago who couldn't trust me as far as they could throw me, much less have anything to do with me.

I'm here to tell you after twenty years of addiction that I have true meaning and purpose in my life. Living the *N.A. Way* and truly believing in this program saved my life. I don't ever want to be what I was. On a scale of one to ten, ten being worse, I was a twenty, but now I'm free, alive and happy. And,

thanks to my Higher Power and my folks, I'm proud to announce that the next Region of the Virginians Regional Conference will be held right here at the campground.

I would like to thank N.A. for my life and the N.A. Way for carrying the message to the addict who still suffers.

R.P.
Virginia

Dear N.A. Way,

Our group has decided to subscribe to the *N.A. Way*. We see it as a vital tool in carrying the message to the addict who still suffers. We are encouraging other groups in our area to do the same.

Keep up the good work.

Freedom Group
North Dakota

COMIN' UP

This space has been reserved for coming events anywhere in N.A. If you wish to list an event, send us a flier or note at least two months in advance. Include title, location, dates, contacts.

CALIFORNIA: Aug 22-24; Unity Weekend; Mill Creek County Campground; M.C.A.S., PO Box 792, Ukia, CA 95482; (707) Roy 964-3835; Sue 486-0435

2) Oct 24-26; So Calif 8th Annl Conv; Hyatt Regency, Long Beach, CA; CC of NA, Box 60846, Pasadena, CA 91106-6846; Valerie (213) 370-8052; Peggy (818) 505-8505

CANADA: Oct 10-12; 2nd Bilingual Convention Montreal 86; MBCNA, Victoria Stn, PO Box 313, Westmont, Mont., Quebec H3Z 2V8; (514) Paul 484-4048; Beverly 489-1748

COLORADO: Jul 4-6; WSUC 3, Stouffers Concourse Hotel, Denver, Box 816, Boulder 80306; (303) Janice 388-4777; Pam 893-0580; John 642-3273; Gary 830-2640

ENGLAND: Aug 28-31; World Convention-16, Wembley/Conference Center; Registration in the U.S.A., Vida (818) 780-3951, P.O. Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409; Registration outside U.S.A., P.O. Box 667, London, England NW8-7JW

FLORIDA: Jul 3-6; FRCNA V; FRCNA V, Box 14738, Orlando, FL 32857-4738; (305) Richard 677-7426; Karen 281-7307; Tim or Lisa 830-0140

2) Aug 24; 3rd Annl Group Picnic; Tradewinds Park, Pompano Beach, FL; Dave S. (305) 566-1526

3) Sep 19-21; London Alternative Conv for NA; LACNA, PO Box 2514, Ft. Myers Bch., FL 33931; (813) Pauline 263-2274; John 332-3467; Joe 332-4083

ILLINOIS: Aug 1-3; W Central Ill Area 1st Birthday; URSA Retreat House; Ursa, Ill; (217) Carol 222-9079; Linda 222-0406

IOWA: Jul 18-20; 3rd Annl Iowa Reg Conv; Coralville Lake and 10 So Gilbert St; IRCC, Box 2521, Iowa City, IA 52244; (319) Marty 354-4532; Jon 354-5485

KANSAS: Jul 4-6; 8th Annl Campout; Lake Barton West Off 281 North of Great Bend, KS; Nate (913) 841-3836; Curtis (316) 562-3330

MAINE: Sep 12-14; We're A Miracle III; ASC of Maine, PO Box 5309, Portland ME 04104; (207) Bruce C. 772-4558; Lisa D. 773-5492

MICHIGAN: Jul 3-6; RCNA of MI; Freedom II; Troy Hilton 1455 Stephenson Hwy; MDCC, Box 224, Royal Oak, MI 48068; (313) MSO 544-2010; Sharon 777-8089

NEVADA: Aug 1-3; 4th Annl Campout; Sierra Sage Reg Serv Comm, PO Box 3344, Sparks, NV 89431; 24 Hour NA Hotline (702) 322-4811

NEW JERSEY: Jul 18-20; 3rd Annl Campout; Wharton State Forest, Hammonton, NJ; 14 Forrest Dr, Turnersville, NJ 08012; Sonya F (609) 227-2319

OHIO: Jul 18-20; 2nd Annual Columbiana County Camp-Vention; 340 S. Fairfield Ave. Apt. A1, Columbiana, OH 44408; (216) Jo 482-3292; Shawn 385-7508

PENNSYLVANIA: Oct 31-Nov 2; TSRSCNA-IV; TSRSCNA-IV, P.O. Box 110217, Pittsburgh, PA 15232; (412) Bob P. 563-6854; Jeff W. 363-8444;

SOUTH CAROLINA: Jul 4-6; 7th Annl Carolina Convention; Blue Ridge Conven. PO Box 5497, Greenville, S.C. 29607; (803) Michael 762-1690; Dee 246-2969

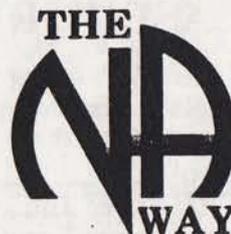
TENNESSEE: Nov 26-30; 4th Regional Conv.; Radisson Plaza Hotel, Fourth & Union, Nashville, TN; PO Box 121961, Nashville, TN 37212; Charlie (615) 868-3150

WASHINGTON: Oct 24-26; 9th Annl Conv.; Everett Pacific Hotel; PNWCNA #9, Box 5393, Everett, WA 98201; (206) Mike S. 672-6848; Russ F. 259-4904

2) Jul 4-6; Wariki Freedom Retreat IV; Wariki Freedom Retreat, 15104 NE 74th St, Vancouver, WA 98662; (206) Ladwa 694-7241; Mike M. 254-0179

WISCONSIN: Oct 24-26; 3rd Wisconsin Conv; WSNAC III, P.O. Box 3305, Madison, WI 53704; (608) 258-1747 (phoneline)

2) Aug 1-3; Mid-Coast Regional Conv II; Sheraton Manitowoc; Mid-Coast Reg Conv Com, PO Box 347, Manitowoc, WI; (414) Kathy C 921-4044; Bill L 233-6037



THE INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP
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THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

- 1 *Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.*
- 2 *For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority-- a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.*
- 3 *The only requirement for N.A. membership is a desire to stop using.*
- 4 *Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups, or N.A. as a whole.*
- 5 *Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.*
- 6 *An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.*
- 7 *Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*
- 8 *Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.*
- 9 *N.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.*
- 10 *N.A. has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.*
- 11 *Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.*
- 12 *Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.*

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