

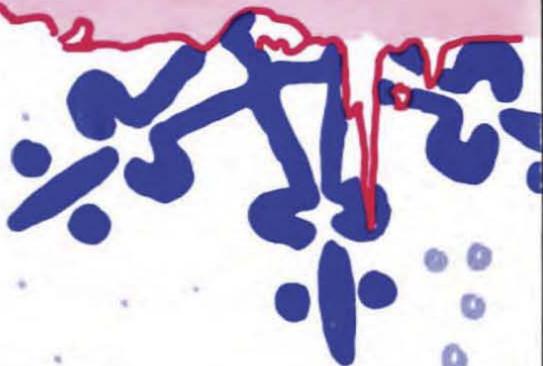


THE  
**N.A. Way**<sup>®</sup>  
MAGAZINE

December 1989

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Acceptance—  
four stages  
pg. 2

Viewpoints on  
tolerance  
and humor  
pg. 26



## The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous

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

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# THE N.A. Way<sup>®</sup>

M A G A Z I N E

Box 9999  
Van Nuys, CA 91409  
(818) 780-3951

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## Four stages of acceptance

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Most everyone in recovery has learned of the need for acceptance. Whether we're dealing with something as serious as the death of a loved one, or as trivial as our day at the beach being ruined by bad weather, most of us find we need to practice acceptance on a daily basis. Acceptance turns out to be an important part of finding serenity and happiness.

But what exactly does "acceptance" involve? How does a person come to accept something, especially something painful or tragic? It wasn't too long into recovery that I realized that I needed to learn a lot about acceptance in order to deal with many of the things that troubled me.

My sponsor helped. "Since you have learned to accept your addiction," my sponsor said to me, "why don't you think about how you came to do so? It might help you learn what you need to do in order to accept those painful experiences in your life." At his suggestion, I began looking closely at the process that had led me to acceptance of my addiction.

In my first months in the program, I didn't really believe that I was an addict. I could easily acknowledge

that I had used a lot of drugs. But an addict?—not me!

There were many factors that contributed to my denial, but the principal one was my belief that being a drug addict was a symptom of moral weakness. For me, to acknowledge my addiction would have been tantamount to admitting that I was an immoral person. And that I was unable to do. But I kept going to meetings.

Many months later, I heard an older remark, "To say that I am an addict is not to make a moral judge-

ment; it is to make a medical diagnosis." From that time on I began thinking differently. *Addiction is a disease! It really is a disease!* I had heard that dozens of times before, but on that day I internalized it.

I continued with meetings; "ninety meetings in ninety days" suddenly made sense! I went to libraries and read everything I could find about addiction. I took courses on it at a local university. I combed the Basic Text and other N.A. publications. I wanted to know everything about the

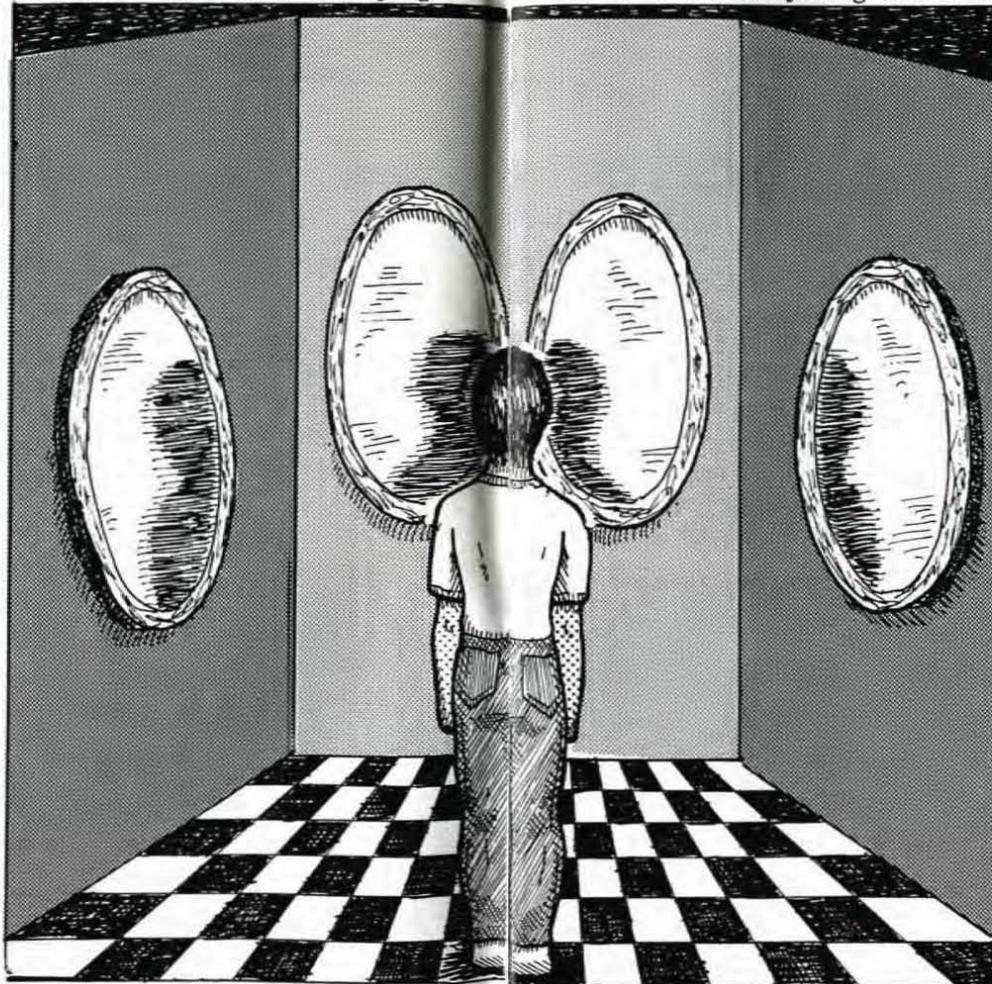
disease—its physical side, its emotional side, its spiritual side, its mental side.

I wanted to learn how addicts came to recovery, and how they stayed in recovery. I wanted to know what the steps meant, and how to use them. I wanted to know about sponsors, and how they could help. The energy that I had previously used to *deny* my addiction, I now used to *recover* from addiction.

All of this was accompanied by both minor and major changes in my lifestyle. For example, my weekly schedule had to be adjusted to accommodate the meetings I needed. I had to be careful to avoid persons and places closely associated with using. I had to start building a community of friends who didn't use, and who enjoyed life in recovery. I had to learn to use a telephone; to ask others for help; to take the important step of asking someone to sponsor me, and to take directions and suggestions from him; and to discover how to work the steps into the fabric of my life.

Many of these changes were uncomfortable. I was angry at being an addict and not being able to enjoy some of the things that non-addicts could enjoy. I became resentful when I found it wasn't safe to accept an invitation to a party where people would be using. I often felt lonely—sometimes even at meetings, and especially at those where I knew no one and no one seemed to care whether I was there or not. My sponsor suggested that I might have to change in order to feel more comfortable—and that, in itself, made me feel uncomfortable.

I became really concerned when, after a year or so, I realized that the



changes that had occurred in me were putting a stress on my marriage. I was becoming a new person, and my wife was scared because she was on unfamiliar territory with me! For a while, I was afraid that my recovery might even cost me my marriage.

"God has not brought you this far to abandon you," my sponsor said, and suggested that I work more on the Third Step. Not using was turning out to be the easy part of recovery; changing the person who had used was the tough part!

But what an adventure it turned out to be! As I worked on the steps, and as the steps worked on me, I started to become a very different person from the one I had been when I was using. Despair, loneliness, resentment, self-pity, fear, self-centeredness, dishonesty, pride—all these negative qualities that had characterized much of me were gradually replaced by their opposites. As I became the person I had never been, I found myself grateful for the program which was now giving me my new self. I had come at last to accept my addiction.

As I thought about how this had happened, I saw that acceptance was

a single event that had occurred at a given time and in a given place. It was instead a series of spiritual "growings" that had gradually unfolded.

The first such "growing" was my recognition of reality, of what had to be accepted—namely, my addiction. I had to recognize, not just in my head but deep in my gut, that I was an addict. Part of that recognition was a clear understanding of what it is to be an addict, and what consequences being an addict would have for my life. Meetings, especially ones around the First Step, together with all the learning I did about the disease, constituted my recognition of the reality that I had to accept.

The second stage of the process was to free myself from the negative feelings I had about my disease. Anger, loneliness, anxiety, fear—these were some of the feelings connected with my recognition of what addiction meant for me. I had to learn to experience and release those feelings.

That proved difficult! I was not used to feelings then. A lot of my using had served to cover them up. It took time for me to learn what I should have

learned in childhood—how to feel, to express feelings, and how to free myself of them. But this difficult work had to be done if I wanted to continue on the road to real acceptance.

The third "growing" occurred as I adjusted my life in order to deal with my addiction—going to meetings, using the telephone, getting a sponsor and working with him. I had already come to understand what my disease meant and, serious about recovery, I needed to take effective action against it. For me to say, "I am an addict," but then do nothing more, made no real sense. An important part of acceptance of my addiction was to do what I could to ensure that I would not return to using.

These three "growings" happened slowly. I don't know when the fourth and final one occurred but, one day, I found myself experiencing intense and overwhelming feelings of gratitude for my new life, for the new me. Not only was I grateful for the benefits which recovery had brought me, but in an odd way that gratitude also extended to my addiction itself. I was not particularly *happy* about having a disease that is incurable

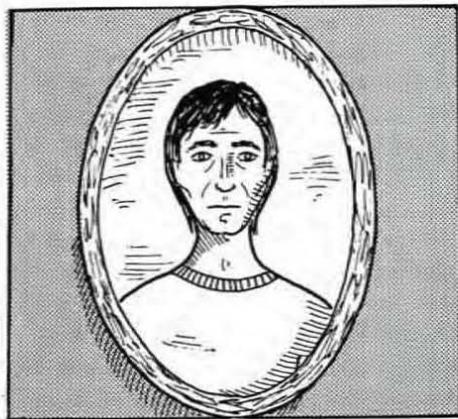
and potentially fatal. Acceptance of addiction did not have to include liking it! But I could say this much for addiction: it had brought me into the program, and so had made a new life possible for me.

These four related processes I went through in coming to accept my addiction are the same ones I use whenever I need to find acceptance in any area of my life: recognition of reality; freeing myself from negative feelings about that reality; adjusting my life to that reality; and developing gratitude for that reality.

These four "growings" are stages of spiritual growth, and as such are almost always painful. They are especially difficult when I have to accept something of major importance—for example, the death of my son, or learning to live with a difficult and insensitive person.

I sometimes find that, through acceptance, I come to like what I had first resisted, but that isn't always the case. Acceptance, however, always includes an element of gratitude. And as that acceptance grows and deepens, it brings me to new levels of serenity and peace.

J.C., New York





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## The joy of knowing that happiness is something else

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The subject of pain is one on which N.A. members are authorities. We all endured a tremendous amount of pain—physical, psychological, and spiritual—during active addiction. And for many of us, pain itself was the motivation for our recoveries. It was only when our pain became unendurable that we considered the possibility of stopping using drugs.

Like so many other addicts, I was in pain when I first came to Narcotics Anonymous. The physical distress, emotional agony, and spiritual anguish of my life had become so obvious to me that I could no longer mask it with denial. I came to N.A., not so much to stop using drugs, but to stop the pain of addiction.

It was, therefore, surprising to me that the pain of my life did not immediately stop after attending my first N.A. meeting. I continued to be in pain, the pain the Basic Text refers to as “the pain of living without drugs or anything to replace them.”

This new pain was almost as bad as the old. I have never agreed with the slogan used by some people in N.A., that their worst day clean was better than their best day using. My own experience tells me something much different. There were days at the beginning of my recovery when the pain of *not* using drugs felt far greater than the pain of *using* drugs.

I have often asked myself how I managed—how anyone manages—to stay clean at the beginning of recovery when they are suffering pain at this level. The answer, for me, is simple: hope.

The pain of active addiction was, for me, a pain bereft of hope, a pain that seemed destined to last forever, a pain that offered nothing but more pain. The pain of recovery, on the other hand, was a pain filled with hope—the hope that I would grow, that I would get better, that I could find joy in my life.

For a long time, I believed that the insanity implied in the Second Step was the insane behavior of active addiction. I had much trouble realizing that the step was not talking about *that* type of insanity as much as it was talking about the insanity of the emotional attitudes that were part of my disease of addiction.

In my addictive world, I was at the center. My pain took precedence over everything. And pain for me was frequently the pain of not having the things that I wanted or not being able to get my way. I was continually frustrated, angry, and depressed because I was so unhappy. I equated unhappiness with things and conditions outside myself, and was convinced that

happiness would occur if things and conditions would change.

My pain would stop, I told myself, if I was richer, if I was better looking, if I had a better job, if my sex life was better, if people loved me more, if people would leave me alone—the list was endless. If things and conditions would change, I said, the pain would leave and I would be happy. What I never realized, however, was that while happiness might be connected with things outside myself, there was another quality—the quality of joy—that had nothing to do with externals, but depended wholly on my attitude toward life.

My pain was caused by the lack of joy in my life.

Understanding the difference between joy and happiness was crucial for me. I learned that happiness depends exclusively on the external order of things, on what happens. Joy, on the other hand, is an internal condition, a state of being. Happiness is not something that can be controlled; but anyone can find joy in life.

Joy can be a reality at all times in all places and under all circumstances. In spiritual recovery we are confronted with the glorious theme of joy. Through working the Second Step I was enabled to unravel one of God's great mysteries: the *circumstances* of life do not determine the *quality* of life. The quality of joy is constant, no matter what the circumstances.

Recovery is not simply a good idea, a profound philosophy, a deep truth. Recovery is a way of life which produces human beings in tune with each other, at peace with themselves, and at one with their God. Narcotics Anonymous offers not only a

philosophy which is valid but a way of life which works. It works by accentuating the positive and eliminating the negative, by replacing insanity with sanity and pain with joy.

Understanding this, I realized that there was no need to give in to the destructive attitudes and dangerous actions which had filled me with pain and deprivation. With God's help, I could eliminate anger, wrath, malice, slander, jealousy, and revenge from my emotional repertoire. If I did this, I could be restored to sanity. Otherwise, my recovery could only be joyless and filled with pain.

Joyless recovery (if it deserves to be called recovery at all) offers abstinence from drugs, but refuses to let go of addictive attitudes. That kind of recovery could not let me live and rejoice in the circumstances of life. That kind of recovery could not let me greet each day as a new opportunity for growing, serving, and rejoicing. That kind of recovery is a way of life still tied to the selfish philosophy espoused in my addiction. That kind of recovery is connected to an emotional world that is bankrupt simply because, despite all high-sounding rationalization, it does not work.

When I realized that recovery was life and that life was joy, I began to approach life with thankfulness. As my gratitude grew, my pain diminished. I found that a joyful addict finds happiness in life itself. I understood what sanity could mean for an addict.

*J.F., Pennsylvania*

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## An awakening of conscience

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Tradition Two in our Basic Text states that "True spiritual principles are never in conflict." Well, our area has been torn by conflict since the last meeting of one of our subcommittees. At that meeting, what began as a sincere effort to safeguard the message of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous snow-balled into a travesty of our traditions.

Two people in our area who have served on the subcommittee were taking medications prescribed by their doctors. When this was revealed at the subcommittee meeting, various members shared their opinions on the medications involved. Those opinions swayed the vote.

Please understand that I am not pointing fingers, because *I was there*. As a member of that subcommittee, I think that my defects contributed significantly to the outcome. The resulting disunity in our area has had a profoundly negative impact on my personal recovery.

In our Basic Text, we are told that "when we realize that we have made a bad decision or bad judgment, our inclination is to make an attempt to rationalize it." Sure enough, that's exactly what I did. I found myself seeking direction from people outside our

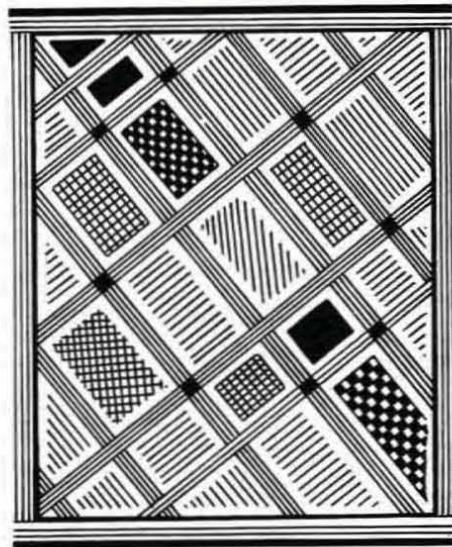
area, still arguing for the position of our subcommittee, and in so doing undermining the spiritual principles that I claimed to value most: honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness.

I am still reeling from the ensuing chaos.

Gradually, it dawned on me that, instead of trying so hard to be "right," I must simply find my own truth. I must search my heart, and make a decision for peace within myself. That decision involved humbly asking my Higher Power to help me admit I was wrong, and to make amends to those I had harmed. I experienced how vital the steps can be in seeking a spiritual solution to my problems.

I know that service work is important, and that it requires guidelines and policies specific to the needs of such work. But now I also know that there are no N.A. police, so I have stopped acting like one.

*B.S., California*



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## All the right reasons

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When I first came to Narcotics Anonymous some three and a half years ago, I had quite an ego. (I couldn't detect any self-esteem, however.) Humility? What was that? I observed the "trusted servants" in action, and wanted what they had—their service positions.

At that time, personal recovery was unknown to me. There I was, a disbarred trial lawyer without a forum in which to assert himself. Service work in N.A. was just the place for me.

Humility hadn't played much of a role in my law practice. Getting people to give in was the key to my success. My daily routine involved choreographing and manipulating people so I could get my way in court.

What was the result? A person who couldn't accept defeat. A person who was never wrong. A person who couldn't—or wouldn't—admit his mistakes. A person who didn't care to listen to others, ever. In other words, I was egocentric and pretentious. Being disbarred did nothing to change that.

Buying into the principles of N.A. has been tough for me, since they are so diametrically opposed to my lawyering. God's will? Group conscience?

Are you kidding? But slowly—ever so slowly—the principles of the steps and traditions have started to make sense to me.

As a result, my concept of service work has completely changed. It's not a matter of "wanting their service positions" anymore. I would be kidding myself, and others, if I said that my ego doesn't come into play at times. It does, but I'm able to recognize it—and if I don't, you will!

I work the steps to deal with my overblown ego. I practice the traditions, too. And in my effort to do God's will, my ego is starting to take a back seat.

**W**hat has truly helped to bring humility into my life was—and is—doing service work. At one point, my ego came into direct conflict with every aspect of Tradition Two. I wanted to govern, not serve. Only when I truly understood the meaning of Tradition Two, and practiced it on a daily basis, was I able to put service work into its proper perspective in my program.

It is said around the fellowship that you must come into N.A. for all the right reasons. I have realized that service work should be done for all the right reasons too.

*B.F., Illinois*

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## All things for good

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I am a recovering addict who just celebrated two years clean. Four days after I was released from treatment, I was in a car accident. My seventeen-year-old brother and I were returning from where he worked, and were hit head-on by a young man who was barreling down the road on our side at a very high rate of speed. My brother was killed instantly, and the other young man died within a few weeks.

I was released from a hospital after heart surgery and a subsequent stroke. Two months of physical and occupational therapy helped me learn to walk and talk again. In every area of my recovery—spiritually, physically, and emotionally—it has been a difficult, slow process, but I am definitely progressing.

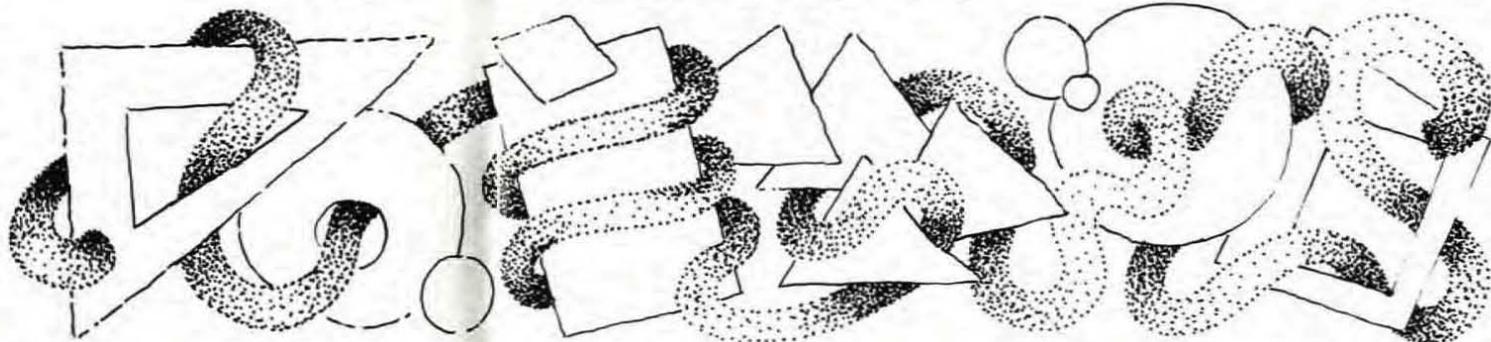
I believe today that all things work together for good. I believe that God will carry me through places where I cannot walk. I know that he works

through people. He has blessed me a thousandfold in the last two years. All my material needs are met, I have been reunited with my family, and I am back in school maintaining the "A" average I had before the stroke. I can walk, am able to love and be loved today, and have wonderful friends—both in the program and out—who accept me for who and what I am: a child of God trying to change everything about the way she used to be.

The young man who hit our car caused me and my family irreparable damage. You can't pay back a brother or a son or a hand. He created a void in our lives that can *only* be filled by a loving God. He had been a friend of mine, and I know he would never have wished this on anyone. He just made a very bad mistake.

I have the freedom to choose between self-pity, loneliness, guilt and fear, or giving, unconditional love, serenity, security, and joy today. Thank God for N.A. and for the smiles and hugs around the tables. I am a happy, joyous, and free *recovering* addict today, and proof that the old lie is dead. I am recovering emotionally, physically, and most importantly—spiritually.

*P.L., Illinois*



## Lost dreams

When I first came around to the fellowship I was a beaten-up, self-loathing shell of a human being, not unlike many members, who was desperate enough to reach out for a stranger's hand and go into a rehabilitation center. After all, what did I have to lose; in my way of thinking, I had already lost it all.

Oh, I still had some material things: lots of clothes, and a car with two smashed out windows (from me trying to steal drugs from pushers). I lived in my car until a girlfriend asked me to come stay with her.

My self-esteem had been wrapped up in going to medical school. I had convinced myself that as long as I could make the grade, then all the insanity, all the drug use, was okay. But I had dropped out of medical school.

By the time I arrived at my girlfriend's, school was gone and the drugs were gone and I was like a raw nerve. I remember saying over and over, "I'm worthless," and believing it.

I went into treatment for two reasons. First, I wanted to get back into school. You see, being a physician-in-training was still my identity, my defense against vulnerability. Second, I knew I could no longer deny I had a problem with drugs. I wanted to be cured so I could get back to school as soon as possible. Anything I was



asked to do I did (or so I thought). Within seven months I was accepted back into medical school, and my (now) fiancée was applying to transfer to the same school in the same class.

My baby brother was graduating from high school back home, and I was to attend the ceremony. When driving up, I stopped at one of my old hang-outs and indulged in one of my reservations—that my recovery had really only been a geographic cure. In less than twenty-four hours, I was using; all the pain, suffering, self-loathing, guilt, paranoia, and isolation came back worse than ever. My fiancée, ever the enabler, cabled me

the cash to get back to school and I had to call and tell my Mom and brother what had happened.

I didn't tell anyone else for fear it would wreck my chances of returning to school, even though my identity and what I did or aspired to do for a living were not synonymous anymore. But I made it to meetings right away, and upped my number of meetings.

That was exactly one year ago. My relapse taught me many things that in my hurry to be "cured" I somehow missed. It's a 24-hour-at-a-time program (I now pick up a white chip off my dresser each morning) and all the other days of recovery don't count if I use today. I learned about having

and using a sponsor; before this, I'd had one in name only. I learned about practicing spiritual principles like honesty; I told my friends in the fellowship and at school of my "slip." I learned about being just an addict—no better and no worse than anyone else in or out of the fellowship. I learned that no one is "slip-proof," especially not me.

I just completed my junior year in medical school, a feat I could not have done without the constant support of my fellows in N.A. And the neatest thing is that I'm more excited about celebrating my first anniversary in the program than about being one less hurdle away from being a doctor.

I owe my life to N.A., plain and simple. The principles of this way of life help me to help myself and others. As the literature says, lost dreams are re-

**'I'm more excited about the program than about being a doctor.'**

vived; there's no telling what miracles can happen when we work this program.

The key for me is working the steps, and accepting the fact that if I take my medicine (meetings, sponsorship, service), my disease will stay in remission. If I do these things, the ego-inflating job won't puff me up with false pride, and I can be a productive member of society.

*E.M., New Jersey*

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## A shared burden

I've been in recovery for almost two years. But as I read an article in the August 1989 *N.A. Way*, "A Loving Misfit in a New World," I realized I was in emotional relapse. As I read the article I cried, because I could relate to almost every word.

I have been feeling lost, confused, and not a part of this fellowship or the world. My prayers to my God have not been to take these feelings away, but to show me what His will for me was, and if it is important, to allow me some insight into where these feelings of fright are coming from. Then I read this article, and it was God saying, "Here you are!" Wow!

I, too, am living in an "unlearned environment" and questioning my own sanity, wondering what's right or wrong, just like the author of "A Loving Misfit." Sometimes I feel completely overwhelmed with day-to-day decision-making. At these times, I see my faith just dwindle, and the confusion I feel is almost enough to make me wish I could just get high one more time. I simply want to shut my mind off!

This need to be perfect, this inability to allow myself to be human, is much more than I can handle. The urge to hide and never come out again is strong. When I'm feeling like this,

I just know it will never end, and that life will always be more than I want to live through.

Life on life's terms was not something I was taught. My parents are still fighting life's terms, and *that's* what I was taught. I can understand why I think and feel certain ways, since I wasn't taught differently. But, damn, this relearning process is getting more uncomfortable all the time!

Reality is not real pretty today. I keep praying that God will show me how to mix this reality with some of my fantasies. How do I learn to be human and not take myself so seriously, to just keep it simple and give myself a break? It goes without saying that, when I expect myself to be perfect and don't tolerate my imper-

fections, I sure don't allow others in my life the dignity of their own journey.

When I feel down, as I do now, my sponsor tells me to make a gratitude list. The first thing on the list now would be that, although I feel defeated, I am in recovery, and I don't ever have to be alone. I only have to do this one day at a time; I don't have to get my whole life in order right now! I have tools to work with now, and people who will love me till I can love myself.

The articles I read in *The N.A. Way Magazine* and in *Meeting by Mail*, the bimonthly Loner Group newsletter, give me hope. They reinforce what I already know—that "this too shall

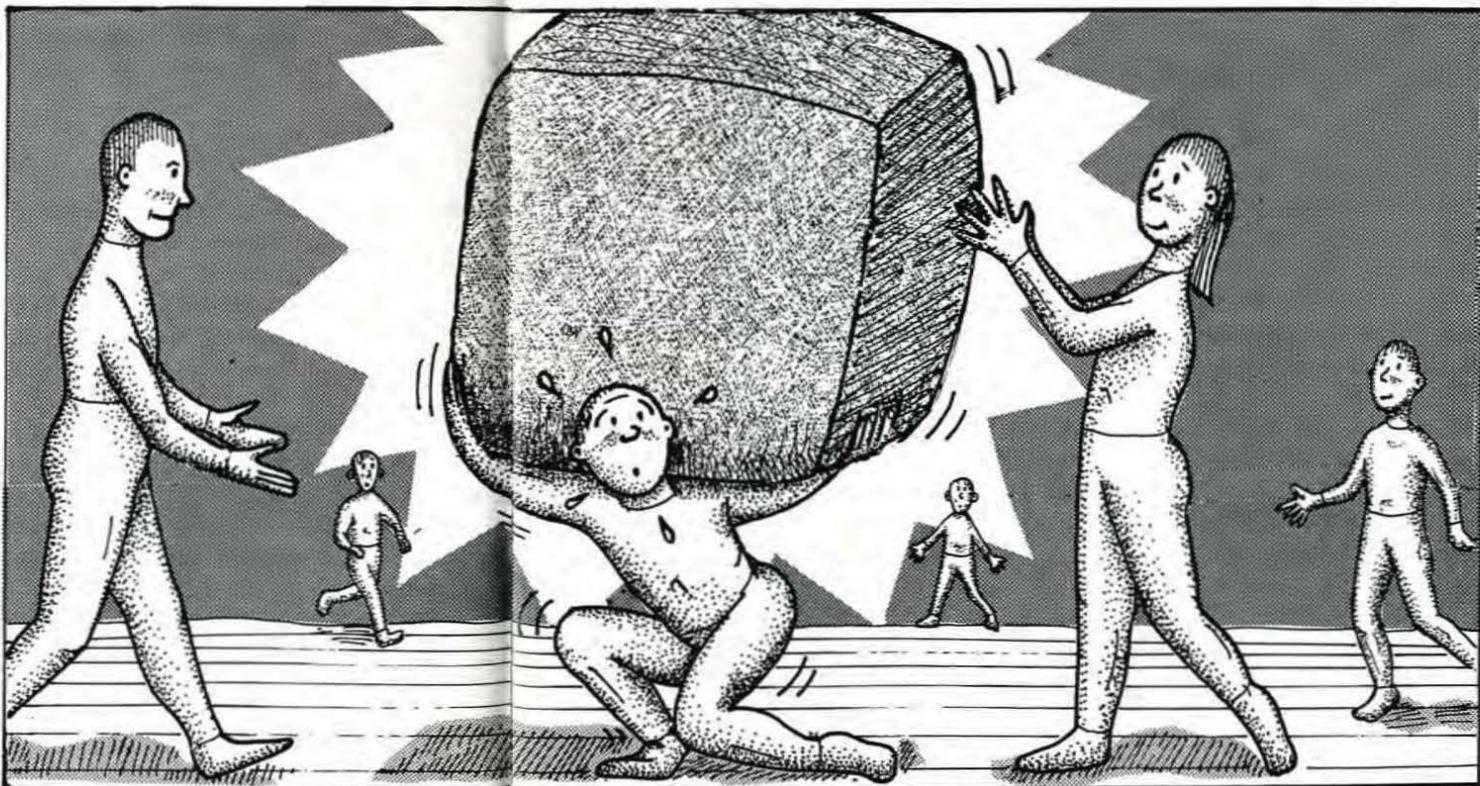
pass." I am grateful that God showed me into this fellowship, and that other addicts are here to guide me through the bad times as well as the good.

I'm told that when I'm at my lowest, the growth will be the greatest. I truly believe this. That's why I'm sharing this with you. Hell, after

'When I feel down, I make a gratitude list.'

writing this, I feel better already! Thanks, God. Thanks, Narcotics Anonymous. And thanks, my fellow addicts. I love you all!

T.R., California



## Fear into faith

God, how I remember those shakes—the ones I had when I was a newcomer. At my first meeting, my stomach was tied in knots when I had to introduce myself. I dreaded key-chain time; that walk from my seat to the front of the room seemed a mile long. I had to use the bathroom during the meeting, but it had to wait; there was no way I was getting up and walking across the room in front of all those people. Forget it! I was afraid of almost everything: success, failure, love, rejection, being noticed, not being noticed—everything.

I'm so much better today. I look back over these last twenty-one months, and the changes in myself seem almost unbelievable.

The day I started writing my First Step is the day recovery truly began for me. I uncovered so much about myself through writing out that step. I saw without a doubt how powerless I am over my addiction, and how unmanageable my life was and can be again. I poured my heart out in that First Step.

After it was all written, I was face-to-face with a whole lot of truths. That left no room for even an ounce of denial. I finally became honest enough to admit that I was an addict.

After coming to terms with this, I realized I didn't know how not to be

a practicing addict. That's about the time I surrendered my will and life over to the care of Narcotics Anonymous. You people seemed to know how to be clean and happy at the same time, and I wanted that.

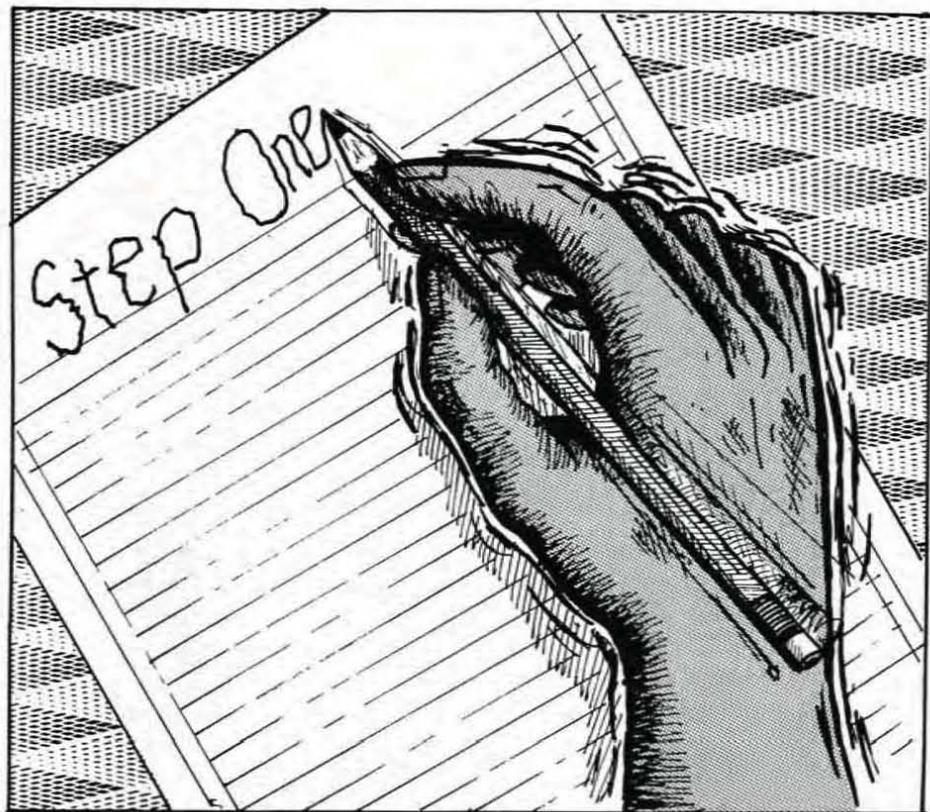
I went over my step with my sponsor. It felt good to share some sick parts of my life, but I didn't feel good the way I thought I should. I felt like an open wound that needed healing. I was ready for my Second Step.

Coming to believe in a power greater than myself wasn't difficult for me. I always knew in my heart that God existed. But I didn't have too much faith that he could restore me to any kind of sanity. In my Second Step, I wrote about a lot of insanities in my past, and some in recovery. I described my Higher Power and what he was to me: everything that represented love. His love was unconditional. He did not need to forgive me, because He did not judge me.

I went on to make a list of twenty spiritual principles and what each one meant to me. Step Two was a beautiful step to write, but I still couldn't understand exactly how I could be restored to sanity. I guess I expected something magic to happen after I came to believe. That's not how it worked.

I knew that "insanity is repeating the same mistakes and expecting different results," not only for actions but for attitudes. If my attitude didn't change, I knew my perceptions would continue to be unhealthy. In order for me to be restored to some degree of sanity, I had to change.

That's when I took the spiritual principles I had written about and



started applying them to my life. I vigilantly practiced being honest, open-minded, and willing. Instead of judging people, I began to accept them just as they were. As a result of being accepting, I experienced a whole lot of peace.

I try each day to act out of love. If what I'm about to do or say isn't coming from a loving heart, I try not to react at all—at least not until I can come from a place of love. I try not to have the "too much or not enough" attitude, and just be grateful for exactly what is in my life. I've learned that faith will conquer any and all fears that I have.

In the Third Step, when I turned my will and my life over to the care of God, I had an enormous amount of

faith that God would always take care of me. Today, I try to align my will with God's. By practicing the spiritual principles I learned in the Second Step, not only am I sure that my will is aligned with God's, I'm also becoming the kind of person I can love and respect myself. I feel good about me today.

Today, I love going to new meetings, introducing myself, and meeting new people. I can walk into any room I choose without my stomach getting tied in knots. I'm in a relationship, and I'm learning how not to be afraid of love or rejection. I don't shy away from being noticed today. I can sit in the front of the room and share my experience, strength, and hope.

*C.M., Maryland*



## Three little words

Did you ever think that three little words could change your life? I certainly didn't, but it happened—and I thank God and Narcotics Anonymous on a daily basis that it did. And what were the three little words that did so much for me? *Keep comin' back.*

I used drugs for thirty years. I loved those pills. I was in and out of psychiatric wards, hearing doctors say, "Take this pill and you'll feel better."

"Wow," I used to think, "another pill!" With me, the more the merrier.

I knew that something was strange about me. I was not well liked by others. I didn't even like myself. My thoughts of the past were ridden with guilt; of the future, with fear. When people I knew died, I used to say, "I wish it was me." Men did not fix me anymore, nor did money. I was a hateful, fearful, dishonest, sick person.

Then it happened—and oh, boy, did it happen. When I hit bottom, I called a friend for help. She took me to an N.A. convention! I was frightened—more like petrified, actually—sick, and very, very confused. However, people at the convention, people who did not even know me, kept telling me three little words—"keep comin' back."

I was shocked. Why were people saying this to me? It drove me crazy, hearing over and over again, "*Keep comin' back.*" But I came back, and I

continued to come back, because I wanted to know why they *wanted* me to *keep comin' back.*

I stopped using drugs because the people I'd met in N.A. were not using drugs, and the fog lifted from my mind. I now know why I continued to *keep comin' back.* I became part of something wonderful. My life has taken a 180-degree turn.

I do not use drugs today, thanks to the God of my understanding. I stay clean one day at a time. I have a wonderful sponsor who has helped me and continues to help me, and I love this woman a great deal. I have a great many friends who love me unconditionally, and I love them unconditionally, too. I work my program to the best of my ability. I do service, which I love very much. I sponsor four girls, each of whom helps me as much as I help them.

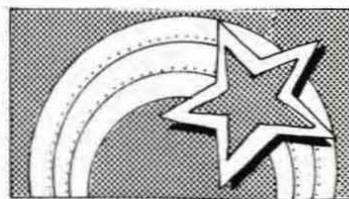
I find today that I do not have a *drug* problem, but I most definitely have a *living* problem. By working the steps and living the program, my life is becoming more and more manageable. I realize today that I'm powerless over people, places, and things; and God has certainly restored me to sanity. I have lots of faith. My God loves me, and as long as I turn my life over on a daily basis, all will be well.

My story might not be unique, but to me it's unthinkable that this recovering addict has not used drugs for nearly three years. I work with my sponsor on the steps and on everyday problems of life. I cannot do it alone.

I ask God daily to help me to *keep comin' back* to Narcotics Anonymous. I am most certainly grateful that you said to me those three little words.

S.C., Florida

## Feature



# Relationships— learning to trust

**Two workshop talks from the 1989 World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous, Orlando, Florida**

*The magazine is trying something new. We're reviewing tapes from workshops at recent N.A. world conventions, and developing stories from the ones that particularly catch our attention. You may notice that these stories read a little differently than those which were created with the idea of publication right from the start. They've got a "live" feel to them, in more ways than one—at least that's what we hope! If you have any comments on this experiment, or any ideas of your own, let us hear about them.*

Write us at:

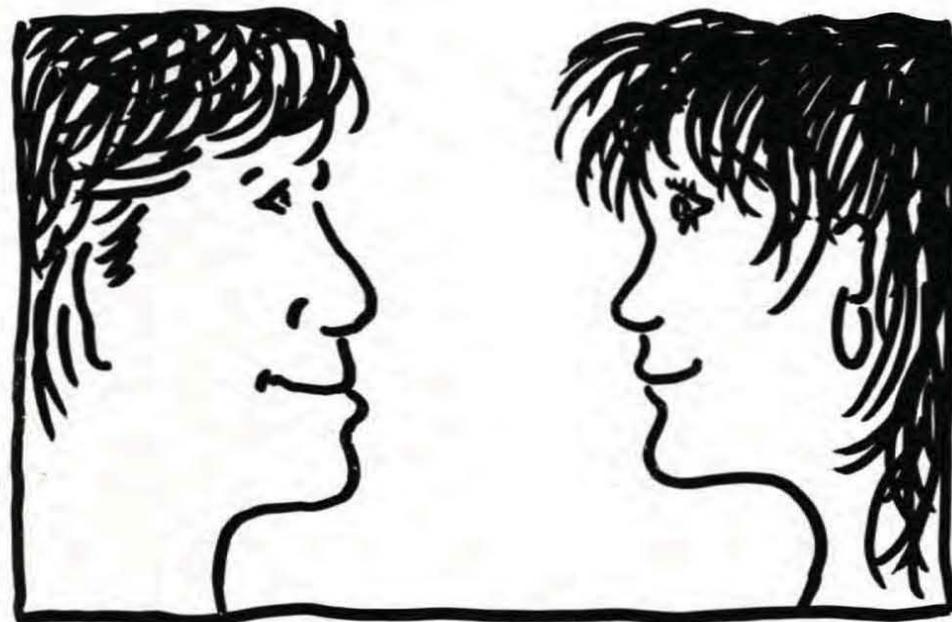
**The N.A. Way Magazine  
P.O. Box 9999  
Van Nuys CA 91409  
USA**

**PART 1—CATHY:** My whole life, I've always had one primary relationship at a time—usually pretty intense—but I never learned how to have more than one at a time. In order for me to end one relationship and go into another, I always had to go to war or just get rid of that person, kill them in my mind, so they would go away and then I could go on to the next one. In my addiction, I had "relationships" with people I never really knew—not even their names. Pear-head, Fast Eddie, Curly Bill—I didn't even know who these people *were*. They weren't really relationships, they were just people I associated with, one right after the other. The one thing we had in common was that we lived to use.

When I met Dick, we were both hippies, and we were both using. I remember seeing him sitting in this kitchen. He was shooting some kind of drug and I thought, "What a guy!"

But I had just left a relationship. I was attracted but also frightened when I met Dick; he must've been, too. I ran off to Maine, and Dick ran off to Florida. We had each, I think, made a conscious attempt to get just as far away from each other as quickly as each of us could, because whatever it was that we felt or saw in each other frightened us both a great deal.

As it turned out, we both ended up



at some big concert at State College, Pennsylvania—twenty thousand people running around naked, and there he was in the crowd. I had to think quick. What I was really looking for in a relationship at that time was somebody who could stay "up" as long as I could, and Dick seemed to fit the bill. After a lengthy, thorough assessment of the man—it took all of maybe ten minutes—I concluded that we were meant to be together. We've been together ever since.

For four years, we had about the same kind of relationship that any body has in addiction. We got up every day and we got drugs, as much as we could get. We were always blaming the other person for whatever went wrong (which was just about everything). Sometimes, we attempted to live some kind of normal life. But most of the time, we did a pretty good job of destroying each other.

I hear a lot of people talk about the extra loneliness of being alone in

addiction. I feared that loneliness, too. There was this thing I was holding on to that made sense to me; it seemed like the one point of reality in my life. Whatever I was going through, I knew that the person I loved was going through it, too. I guess that's why we didn't split up, even when it got real bad.

We stayed together using long enough to get clean together—both on the same day, as a matter of fact. The first instructions that we got were, "Don't use, and go to meetings." And immediately following those were, "Get out of that relationship—you can't be married. It will never work. Two people who were in addiction together can't stay clean together." People were advising us to date other people and get separate apartments. We got all the best advice in the world—from people who were not in any kind of a relationship. We did split up for a little there at the beginning, and when we got back together

it was difficult, but we did it. And, boy, am I glad we did!

During my first year clean, I was too afraid to trust anybody. When I went to meetings, I didn't talk. I was at a meeting on my first anniversary, and nobody knew it was my birthday because nobody knew *me*. I was angry, so I started talking about it.

It was the first time I had opened my mouth, and I started by complaining about the kind of people you were. I learned pretty quickly that if I wanted people to know me, I had to tell them about myself—and not just what I wanted them to know, either. I had to show them who I really was, and not be living a secret.

The result has been that, today, I don't have anything to hide. The

things that I fear and the people I'm afraid of, that's okay. I don't let it stop me from doing what I need to do to stay clean. My sponsor once told me that I might not ever stop being afraid, but that I would learn how to do what needed doing despite the fear—and that's what has happened.

There was a time when I couldn't have shared about this, because I didn't trust anybody or anything. But today, I have a lot of different kinds of relationships, and I have learned how to trust. (That sounds so good and pure, it makes me feel good just to say it!) I know people now—not always by their last name, but I know them: by their faces, by association, by the work that they've done, and by their kindness and generosity. I know

people today, and not just one at a time, but all together in the fellowship. That's a miracle for me.

After we'd been clean a while, both of us started getting involved in service. We have been through ten years of service together. Not that we're always on the same side of things—just the opposite. Whenever they ask for one pro and one con in a debate, he's one and I'm the other. We're independent people. But because we each do what we think is right and good, that makes us stronger and better for each other.

The thing that I love about Dick is that he does what he does for himself—his own recovery, his own program, his own commitment, his own sponsor. I don't have to do any

of that for him. I don't have to “do” anybody except me.

Trusting Dick with my heart and soul hasn't always been easy. Even after eighteen years, there are times when I look at him and think, “I didn't know *that* about you!” We're still learning about one another, and learning to trust one another—but that's half the fun of our relationship.

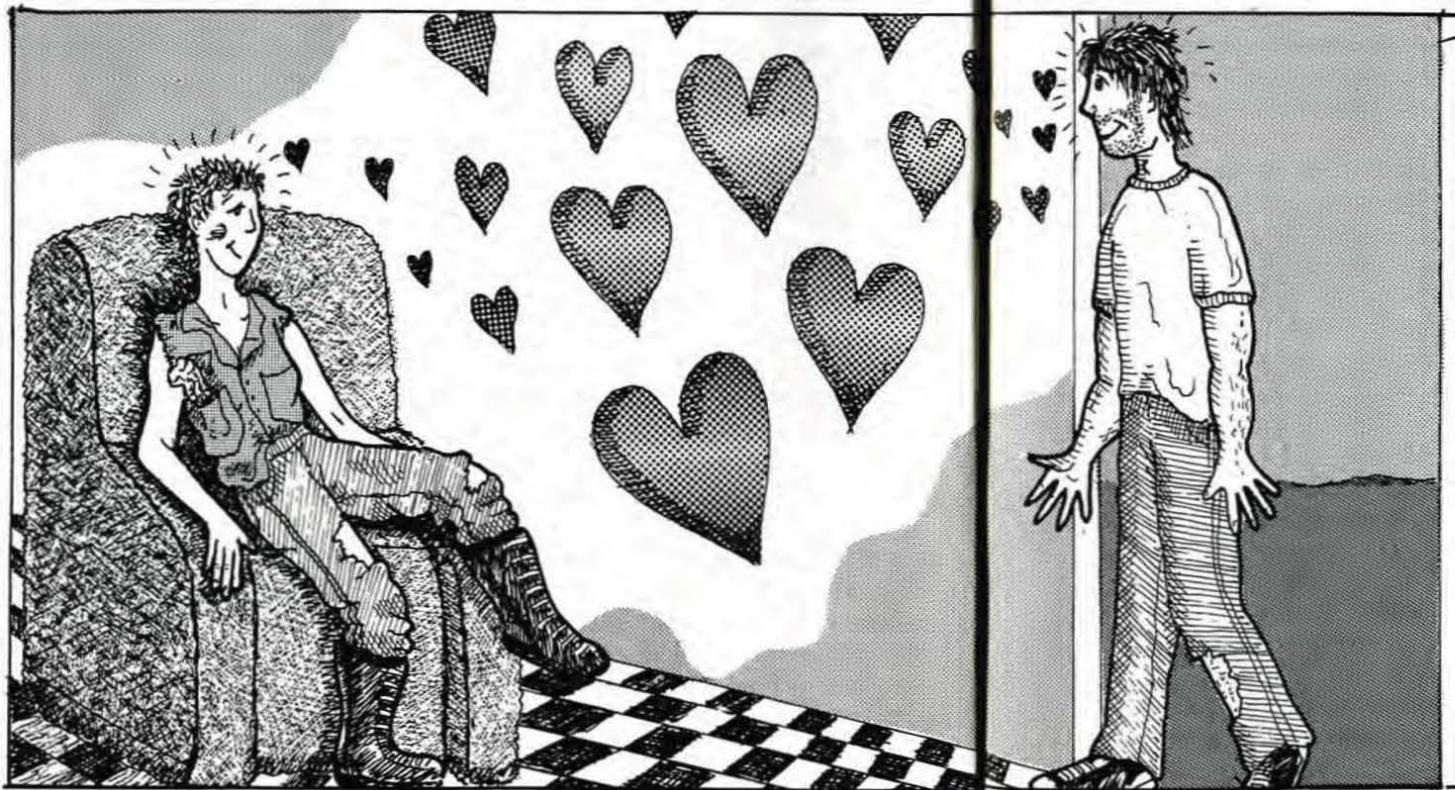
I consider what we have as a gift we've been given in recovery. For that, I'll be forever grateful.

\* \* \*

**PART 2— DICK:** I grew up in the kind of family where my stepfather beat my mother on a regular basis. I watched the next door husband beat the wife, and then I watched the wife beat the husband. I just thought that was the way life went. I swore I'd never get married.

And then I met Cathy. Her hair was cut real short. She was wearing combat boots, a raggedy pair of jeans, and an army jacket with the sleeves cut off and a bag of drugs hanging out of the top pocket. I fell in love immediately. Sometimes when I think about that day, I laugh. But a lot of days a tear will come to my eye, because I really believe that God brought us together, even in our addiction. It was destiny.

Cathy and I went through a few years of addiction together. I remember when we got married, her father had to pay a minister to marry us because nobody would do it unless we gave them a lot of money. After the fourth interview with me, the minister said, “This marriage will never work.”



And it wouldn't have worked if we hadn't found Narcotics Anonymous. By the time we got clean, it was just about over. Then in came God, saying, "No, it's not over. I'm going to give you another chance." And we came into Narcotics Anonymous.

We separated for a while when we first got clean. Then, when we first got together again, I wanted to chase Cathy back out of my life. I started doing stuff liking punching holes

'By putting  
recovery first,  
my relationship  
comes along  
just fine.'

through walls, ripping closet doors off their hinges, busting out windows, but she just wouldn't leave—thank God.

One thing I've learned is to not interfere with Cathy's program. I don't call her sponsor and say, "You should tell her to do this." I don't say to Cathy, "What step are you working?" and she doesn't do that to me. And I don't say, "Do you want to take a Fifth Step together?" I hear about people doing that, and I think, "Boy, do they want to get a divorce or what?" We work our own programs.

I put my recovery number one. When I do that, it seems like the relationship pretty much takes care of itself. Some people don't see the logic in that, but it doesn't matter to me, that's the way my life is today. My recovery's first; and by putting my recovery first, my relationship comes along just fine.

When people talk about us, they talk about the two of us in one breath—Dick-and-Cathy—because we are a team. We have no qualms about that. We complement one another. We're very different from one another, but what one of us doesn't have, character- or personality-wise, the other does. She's the kind of person who locks all the doors and windows and all that. I'm just the opposite. I go around *unlocking* everything. Together, we make a pretty well-balanced pair.

I was at a regional meeting one time. Cathy had to work and couldn't be there. I got nominated for a position. I told them that before I could say yes, I had to make a phone call. People said, "God, he's hen pecked!" But we always discuss any commitment in the fellowship that's going to take a lot of energy for either one of us, because it's going to affect the other person.

Being in a relationship, I had enough respect to ask my partner what she thought about it. I knew she would say yes, but still, I was taught when I came into this fellowship to share those kinds of things. I came back in the room and said, yes, I'd accept the nomination. By then, *they* were ready to say no. But it didn't bother me, and that kind of thing hasn't bothered me since I've been clean. I am married, and I am committed to Cathy, and I am grateful to God for that. I'm not going to abuse that gift.

The other thing I've been thinking about is building a relationship with a Higher Power. I've been doing a lot of work on the Eleventh Step lately,

and it's just about been driving me crazy. Sometimes I'd rather drive my car into a brick wall than work on the Eleventh Step. It's been slow, and I'm just like everybody else—I want it all right now. But that's not happening. So I have to take it as it comes, just like you guys have taught me.

I came into this fellowship not believing in God whatsoever. I used to sit in N.A. meetings and say, "You guys are going to chase me out if you don't back off with this holy talk. I don't *have* to believe in God; I don't *need* it, and I don't *want* it." But I kept coming back, and coming back, and coming back. That relationship has been built very slowly.

A lady told me one time that a seed had been planted, and that if I stayed in these rooms that the seed would sprout and blossom. Inside, I groaned, "Just what I need, an N.A. philosopher. What nonsense." Well, I think she must've stuffed a seed down my throat when I wasn't looking,

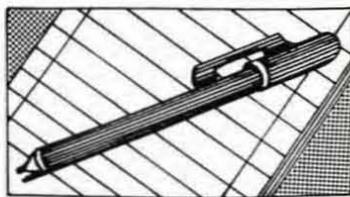
because it's been growing, just like she said. My relationship with my Higher Power is getting greater and greater, and a degree of conscience contact is forming between us. I guess I'm starting to grow up or something, I don't know. But it's getting better and better and better.

Building a relationship with Cathy has given me what I need to build other relationships. See, I didn't know how to do that. I didn't know how to *be* a friend. I'm not the kind of person who just walks up and starts a conversation. I am a real shy, kind of quiet person until you get to know me.

You forced me to be your friend, and that's something new for me. Before, I was always being forced *out*; now, I'm being drawn in. That's what the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous does. You're saying "Hi" to me; I'm wanting to run off, but then you hug me. And that's all it takes.



## Viewpoint



port for the use of inclusive language is growing in many denominations. As an N.A. member who is also a Christian, I am in favor of rewording our steps to make the language inclusive (for instance, saying "the God of our understanding" rather than "God as we understood Him").

Secondly, to the reader from Pennsylvania who feels uncomfortable when meetings close with the Lord's Prayer: I would never dream of asking a group of people of differing spiritual backgrounds to pray the Lord's Prayer.

When I am asked to close a meeting, I always ask that we close with the Serenity Prayer. Ironically, one will discover with very little research that it, too, is a Christian prayer. It is not, however, as well known as such, and tends not to offend people as easily. Perhaps the solution here is to write a new prayer of our own with which to open and close N.A. meetings.

Finally, I would like to state that I originally came to N.A. from another Twelve Step fellowship because I felt that they were deliberately turning addicts away from the God of my understanding. Let us not make the same mistake by excluding Christians from our policy of spiritual tolerance and inclusiveness.

V.B.

## Readers reply

### N.A., prayers, and tolerance

**From South Carolina:** In the early days of my recovery, the still, small voice inside me led me back to the faith and teachings of my childhood. Today, I am a seminarian. It is with a sad heart that I write this letter.

It would appear that Christianity has come to be considered a fair spiritual target in N.A. meetings and N.A. publications. In the August issue of *The N.A. Way*, there were two "Viewpoint" letters that made reference to Christian issues in N.A. meetings that I wish to address.

First, to the reader from England: He states that specifying God as "He" brings up connotations of a Christian, male God. I beg to differ. The Christian God is *not* male, and sup-

### "Spiritual, not religious"

**From Ohio:** I agree wholeheartedly with the author of "Spiritual, not religious" in the August issue of *The N.A. Way*. A meeting of N.A. or an N.A. event is not the place to air personal views of religion and theology. On the other hand, I have been at some meetings, and one N.A. retreat, where the other side of the coin rears its ugly head. "Organized religion" is set up as some ugly monster and then torn apart or dismissed for all the horrible things it has done or not done.

Fortunately, it's been my experience that these occasions have been few and far between. True, some religious groups and some leaders and members of N.A. groups have given the "H.P." a bad name at times, and some of us have had bad experiences with religious groups. What I don't hear so often is what my addiction—and my consequently distorted view of reality—may have had to do with my judgment in this area. Let's call a spade a spade. A resentment by any other name is still a resentment.

It seems the resentment of some toward "organized religion" is the last to be recognized as such, and the last to be dealt with honestly, openly, and willingly. Let's face it, folks: many of the so-called "hypocrites" prayed a lot of us into being clean, and many houses of worship have shown great hospitality in opening their facilities to the use of N.A. groups at nominal costs.

G.F.

### "Oldtimer's Disease"

**From Montana:** I'm writing for the first time to *The N.A. Way* because an article I really enjoyed has been called into question. I've just finished reading the letter in the August issue about "fanning the flames" with the "Oldtimer's Disease" article, which was published in April.

'A resentment by  
another name  
is still a  
resentment.'

When I read the "Oldtimer's" article, I did not jump right out and start taking inventory of my group's oldtimers. Instead, I looked at *myself*, and asked if I was like that. As I discovered, I do have a few of the symptoms, mildly, and I talked to my sponsor about them.

I did not feel like the article was insulting at all. In fact, I thought it added a humorous touch to a look at a real problem in our fellowship. I'm grateful that I can look at myself and my character defects in a humorous light today. I never could before. I think that *The N.A. Way* is helping me with my recovery today, and I'm grateful. Thanks.

B.H.

**From New York:** I identified a great deal with J.C., the author of the April 1989 article on "Oldtimer's Disease," and I'm sure every recovering addict will also identify at some point during their recovery.

Every month, I read the magazine with enthusiasm. But at the same

**'I've never seen anyone get loaded over something funny.'**

time, I am saddened by the way many addicts pick apart and analyze almost everything that is printed. It seems to me that too many addicts take too many things too seriously.

*The N.A. Way* is written by addicts for addicts. Let's be grateful for a magazine for the *whole* fellowship.

A.P.

### **"Computerized recovery instrumentation"**

**From California:** I am writing in response to an editorial reply from the October issue of *The N.A. Way Magazine*. The letter from Wisconsin referring to "Computerized Recovery Instrumentation" had me shaking my head sadly before I was half-way through.

When I read the original article, it was enough to keep me chuckling for the rest of the afternoon. If I may quote: "Ever worried about not sounding well enough?" God, yes. Who hasn't? When thoughts like these are rolling around in my brain, they hurt. But when someone talks about or writes about them in a hu-

morous vein, I can't help but laugh at myself. In my program, that's right up there in importance with calling my sponsor and working with newcomers.

To laugh at ourselves requires an ability to forgive ourselves. The agony caused by senselessly beating myself for mistakes made during my active addiction abates when I laugh about it. When I am taking myself so seriously that I can't see the humor in, for instance, falling in love (which is the spiritual equivalent of slipping on a banana peel), I am robbing myself of one of recovery's greatest gifts.

When I walked through the doors of N.A. some four years ago, I hadn't laughed in years—seriously. My addiction was a non-stop hell of seriousness. Very grim, it was. Almost the first sound I heard in a meeting, besides the sound of coffee perking, was laughter; laughter at all the silly things we think that aren't so different from what others think, laughter at some of the ridiculous things we believed when using, and laughter at some of the ridiculous things we believe now.

I have never yet seen a newcomer get loaded over something funny. I have never seen a gravestone marked with the epitaph, "Here lies so-and-so, funnybone wore out." Perhaps we can all learn to laugh at ourselves a little more if *The N.A. Way* will continue to print articles and cartoons that touch something inside of each of us, and also lighten the load of recovery a little with some well-deserved laughter.

C.S.

## From the editor



### **Readers' ideas sought for "Home Group" comic series**

Some of you may notice that the "Home Group" comic strip we've been running since the beginning of the year does not appear in this issue. We've put off publishing further episodes in the life of Jake, Slugg, Serena, and the rest of the "Home Group" gang until we hear what our readers would like us to do with the strip.

Humorous pieces, whether stories or funnies, are difficult to do. What one person thinks is totally hilarious will strike someone else as being in extremely poor taste. Humor stories run in *The N.A. Way* have received responses from both ends of the spectrum (see the "Viewpoint" section in this issue and in the August and October 1989 magazines). Reaction to the "Home Group" strip has been mixed as well; some readers tell us they like it a lot, others say they *hate* it.

When we first came up with the idea for the "Home Group" comics, we developed a year's worth of strips, which began appearing in January 1989. We've run out of that first batch, and decided it was time to ask what *you* thought about the comic before we developed any more.

Do you have ideas for the "Home Group"? Short, funny scenes touching on the lighter side of recovery? Reactions to the characters we've used, or

to particular stories which appeared this year? New characters? Share your ideas with us—after all, it's your magazine! Write us at:

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### **Group subscription drive**

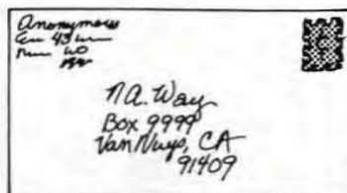
*The N.A. Way* will be conducting another group subscription drive beginning in January 1990. We'll be sending packets of group sign-up sheets to area committees at the end of this month, asking GSRs to take the sheets with them to their home groups. Next month, we'll talk more about the drive, and about what you can do to help.

### **New editor**

As most of our readers know, we've been looking for a new managing editor for *The N.A. Way*. We've received many applications, and have narrowed our search down to three N.A. members, each of them well qualified for the job. By the time our January 1990 issue hits your mailbox, we hope to have selected one of them to head up the staff of our international fellowship journal.

*B.S., Acting Editor*

## From our readers



### You never have to use again

I recently realized that death is really an option for me, or for anyone else who suffers from the disease of addiction and chooses not to follow the simple suggestions of the program of Narcotics Anonymous. Just as our fellowship is open to anyone regardless of age, race, sexual identity, religion, or lack of religion, so is dying from the disease of addiction.

It is not only for the heroin addict lying in the gutter with a needle sticking out of his arm, but also a doctor's wife with two small children whose drug of choice was alcohol. I know, because I just buried such a woman. I kept telling her friends to just let her go and she would be back when she was ready. It never crossed my mind that she might die first.

Our literature tells us that some must die in order for others to live. I am grateful to the program of Narcotics Anonymous and my higher power for allowing me to choose life. The message is simple: you never have to use again.

*Anonymous*

### A talk with my H.P.

Just want you to know, I sure enjoy *The N.A. Way*. I get truly excited when I open my mailbox and see the big brown envelope inside. This is the first time I've written, and I wanted

to share with you that on my one year clean date I had a major surgery on my back. Before two days had passed, I had gotten over thirty visits from my family in the fellowship. Man, what a great quality of people we have in our new N.A. life.

That night I decided to write my Higher Power a letter. After I read it back to myself, I got goose bumps. It really inspired me, and I would like to share with the fellowship.

\* \* \*

God, I don't think I'm any good to myself, by myself. I don't know what to do with me. Take my will, my life, and my soul. Hold me in your arms and mend my broken parts. Make me whole, complete, one with your will for me in this journey you have chosen me for. Take your perfection and direct me on the path that is designed by your grace. Let me always be aware, let me never get so big that I might forget that without you, there could never be a me!

*R.M., California*

## Comin' up



### LET US KNOW!

We'll be happy to announce your upcoming events. Just let us know at least three months in advance. Include dates, event name and location, N.A. office or phoneline number, and a post office box.

(Sorry, but we can't print personal phone numbers or addresses.)

The **N.A. Way**  
MAGAZINE  
P.O. Box 9999  
Van Nuys, CA 91409  
(818) 780-3951

**ALASKA:** Mar. 9-11, 1990; 6th Alaska Regional Convention; send speaker tapes; ARC-6, P.O. Box 84946, Fairbanks, AK 99708

**AUSTRALIA:** Jan. 26-29, 1990; Victoria Area Convention; phoneline 61-3-417-6472; Victoria CAC, GPO Box 2470-V, Melbourne 3001, Victoria, Australia

**CALIFORNIA:** Feb. 3, 1990; 5th Annual Napa-Solano Unity Day; Town & Country Fairgrounds, 3rd St., Napa; phonelines (707) 253-0243, Napa, and (707) 428-4120, Fairfield; Napa-Solano ASC, P.O. Box 5086, Napa, CA 94581

**2)** Mar. 29-Apr. 1, 1990; 12th Northern California Regional Convention; Fairmount Hotel, San Jose

**CONNECTICUT:** Jan. 5-7, 1990; 5th Connecticut Regional Convention; Treadway Hartford Hotel, Rte. 72 (Exit 21 off I-91), Cromwell CT 06416; rsvn.s (203) 635-2000; CRC-5, P.O. Box 2193, Middletown, CT 06457

**FLORIDA:** Jun. 28-Jul. 1, 1990; 9th Florida Regional Convention; Hyatt Regency Miami, City Center at Riverwalk, 400 SE 2nd Ave., Miami FL 33131, (305) 358-1234; RSO (305) 563-4262; FRC-9, Florida RSO, 1110 NE 34th Ct., Oakland Park, FL 33433

**GEORGIA:** Feb. 22-25, 1990; 9th Georgia Regional Convention; Ironworks Convention Center, Columbus; accommodations at Columbus Hilton, (800) HIL-TONS, and Sheraton Inn, (404) 327-6868

**HAWAII:** Feb. 16-18, 1990; 6th Oahu Gathering of the Fellowship; Camp Erdman, North Shore, Oahu; Hawaii RSO (808) 941-8638, Windward phoneline 941-HELP; Fellowship Weekend, P.O. Box 27909, Honolulu, HI 96827

**ILLINOIS:** Dec. 31, 1989; New Year's Eve Extravaganza; South Shore Country Club, 7000 South Shore Drive, Chicago IL 60649; RSO (312) 848-2211; Chicago RSO, P.O. Box 199327, Chicago, IL 60619-9327

**IOWA:** Jun. 29—Jul. 1, 1990; 4th Iowa Regional Convention; Holiday Motor Lodge, Clear Lake

**KENTUCKY:** Apr. 13-15, 1990; 4th Kentuckiana Regional Convention; Executive Inn, 1 Executive Blvd., Paducah KY 42001

**MARYLAND:** Mar. 23-25, 1990; 4th Chesapeake & Potomac Regional Convention; Ocean City Convention Center; accommodations CPRC Hotel Request, P.O. Box 4062, Salisbury MD 21801, tel. (800) 654-5440; CPRC-4, P.O. Box 771, Ellicott City, MD 21043

**MICHIGAN:** Jul. 5-8, 1990; 6th Michigan Regional Convention; RSO (313) 544-2010; MRC-6, P.O. Box 597, Bay City, MI 48707

**MISSOURI:** Jun. 15-17, 1990; 5th Show Me Regional Convention; Holiday Inn Executive Center, 2200 I-70 Dr., Columbia; rsvn.s (800) HOLIDAY; phoneline (314) 635-0271; SMRC-5, P.O. Box 373, Columbia, MO 65205-0373

**NEVADA:** Jan. 19-20, 1990; 6th High Sierra Blast; Diamond Peak-Ski Incline, Incline Village; phoneline (916) 546-1116; North Tahoe ASC, P.O. Box 7691, Tahoe City, CA 95730

**NORTH CAROLINA:** Jan. 12-14, 1990; 5th "Spiritually High" Convention; Great Smokies Hilton, 1 Hilton Inn Dr., Asheville NC 28806; rsvn.s (800) 445-8667; phoneline (704) 298-9562; Convention, P.O. Box 2066, Asheville, NC 28802

**OHIO:** Dec. 29-31, 1989; 1st Central Ohio Area Convention; Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, I-670 and Cassidy Ave., Columbus; rsvn.s (614) 475-7551; phoneline (614) 252-1700; Central Ohio ASC, P.O. Box 14460, Columbus, OH 43214

**2)** Dec. 31, 1989; New Year's Eve Celebration; Rhodes Center, Ohio State Fairgrounds, 17th Ave., Columbus; phoneline (614) 235-9662 or 252-1700; Central Ohio ASC, P.O. Box 14460, Columbus, OH 43214

**3)** May 25-27, 1990; 8th Ohio State Convention; Seagate Center, Toledo; send speaker tapes; Ohio Convention, P.O. Box 1046, Toledo, OH 43697

**OKLAHOMA:** Mar. 30-Apr. 1, 1990; 4th Oklahoma Regional Convention; Holiday Hotel, Shawnee; rsvn.s (405) 275-4404; RSO (405) 239-2768; OKRC-4, P.O. Box 5485, Norman, OK 73070

**ONTARIO:** May 18-20, 1990; 3rd Ontario Regional Convention; ORC-3, University of Toronto New College, Box 7079 Depot A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1X7

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Mar. 23-25, 1990; 8th Greater Philadelphia Regional Convention; Adams Mark Hotel, City Line & Monument Rd., Phila. PA 19131; rsvn.s (800) 231-5858; GPRC-8, P.O. Box 42628, Phila., PA 19101-2628

**SOUTH CAROLINA:** Feb. 2-4, 1990; Upper South Carolina Area Anniversary Convention; Ramada Hotel, Church St., Greenville; rsvn.s (800) 228-2828; phoneline (803) 282-0109; Anniversary, P.O. Box 4407, Greenville, SC 29606

**2)** Feb. 16-18, 1990; 2nd "Just for Today" Convention; Hyatt Regency Resort Hotel, P.O. Box 6167, Hilton Head SC 29938; rsvn.s (803) 785-1234; phoneline (803) 681-9595; Just for Today Committee, P.O. Box 22155, Hilton Head, SC 29925

**TEXAS:** Mar. 23-25, 1990; 5th Lone Star Regional Convention; Hotel Galvez, Galveston; rsvn.s (800) 392-4285; Lone Star RSO, 10727 Plano Rd., Ste. 200, Dallas, TX 75230

**UNITED KINGDOM:** Apr. 20-22, 1990; 1st London Regional Convention; for venue information call UKSO (1) 352-8356; send speaker tapes by 1/15/90; LRC-1, P.O. Box 417, London SW10 0RN, England

**VIRGINIA:** Jan. 5-7, 1990; 8th Virginia Convention; Radisson Hotel, 601 Main St., Lynchburg VA 24506; rsvn.s (804) 528-2500; Convention Committee, P.O. Box 11843, Lynchburg, VA 24506

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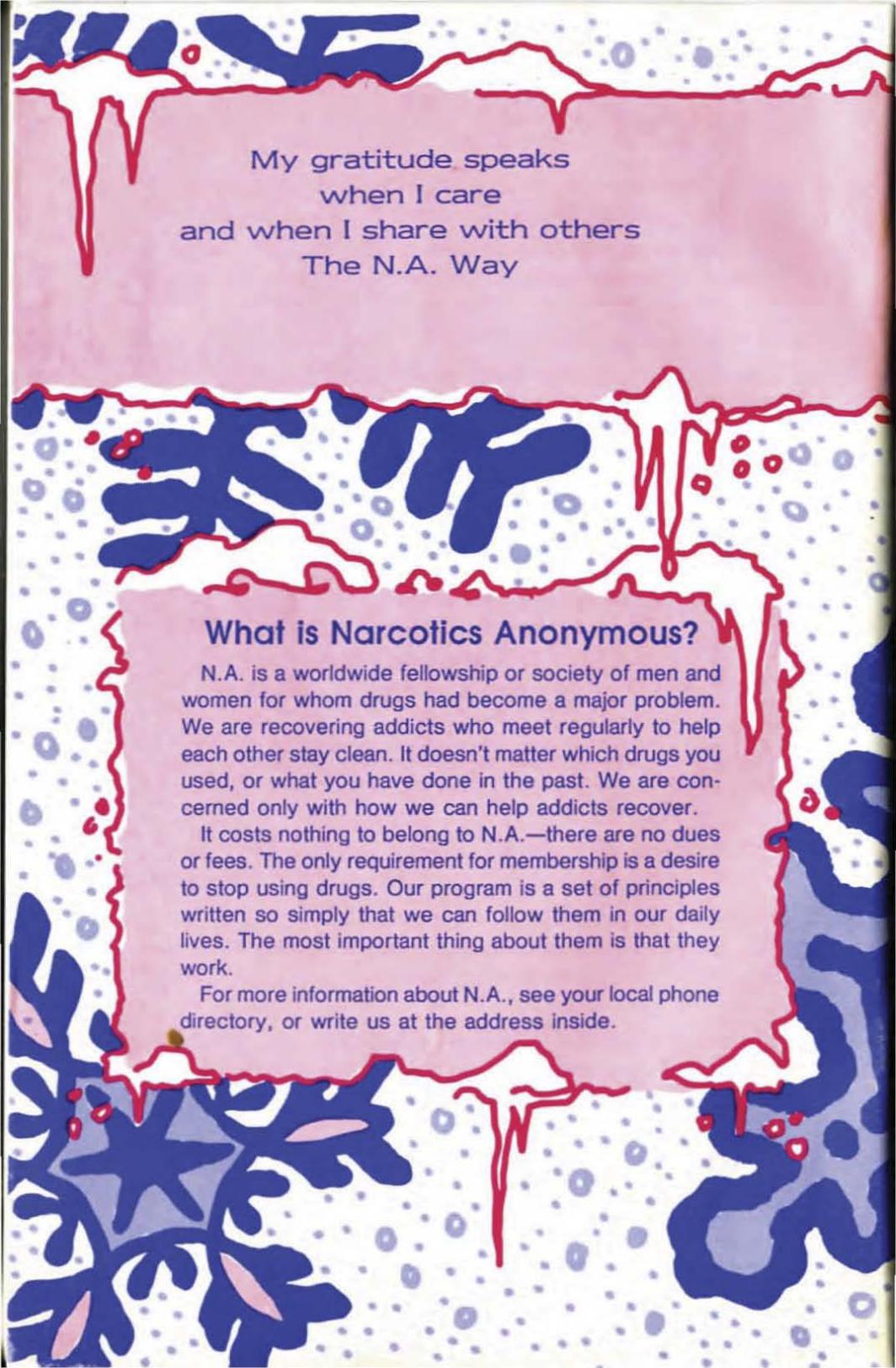
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## The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

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 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 nonprofessional, 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. Narcotics Anonymous 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.



My gratitude speaks  
when I care  
and when I share with others  
The N.A. Way

### 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 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 belong to N.A.—there are no dues or fees. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using drugs. 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 N.A., see your local phone directory, or write us at the address inside.