

THE
NIA Way[®]
MAGAZINE

May 1993

\$1.75



**KEEP GOING;
BACK**



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 NA Way MAGAZINE®

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

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The NA Way Magazine welcomes the participation of its readers. You are invited to share with the entire NA. Fellowship in our monthly international journal. Send us your experience in recovery, your views on NA matters, and feature items. All manuscripts submitted become the property of World Service Office, Inc.

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Subscription rates, please remit in US or Canadian currency: 1 yr. \$15, 2 yrs. \$28, 3 yrs. \$39, single copies \$1.75. Please inquire about bulk rates.

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The NA Way Magazine is published monthly by World Service Office, Inc., 16155 Wyandotte Street, Van Nuys, CA 91406. Second class postage paid at Van Nuys, CA, and other points. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to *The NA Way Magazine*, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999.

Where do they go?

Hi family. I seldom speak those two words aloud, yet they dance through my mind whenever I am of service at a meeting.

"Remembering when" has always been important to me because I can only measure my progress by comparing my life today to my life a year ago. As I approach the midpoint of my fourth year of continuous recovery, I find myself reviewing different aspects of my new life.

I bottomed for the last time two days before I attended my first meeting. I've been clean ever since. No detox, no rehab, no treatment—just lots of meetings. About the time I celebrated two years clean, I began seeing a therapist to assist with my ongoing recovery. One day at work, while trying to find out if our company benefits included such counseling, I was obliged to admit my addiction and recovery to an "earthling" who said that her brother was a using addict and remarked, "This counselling

must really work." Without a pause for thought I replied, "I don't know whether counselling helps or not. I just started two months ago. NA meetings work. They are what got me clean and have kept me clean for over two years."

During my recovery I have attended meetings throughout the US and Canada, and I even helped start a meeting. I love meetings. Sure, I have preferences regarding format, structure, ambiance—my home group is a candlelight meeting—but it is the sharing with people I love that keeps me coming back.

During my recovery I have noticed something about meeting attendance among recovering addicts. It seems there are lots of us working toward Year One, a good number working toward Year Two, some working on their third birthday, and maybe one or two of us who have been clean between three and eight years. I know three to eight is quite a spread, but it reflects my experience.

The hundreds of addicts I have met and shared with—where do they go? There are plenty of us with under three years, but after that, recovering addicts seem to drop out of the fellowship. Or so I thought.

As I approached my third anniversary, I noticed a number of addicts who had been "missing in action" attending meetings again, sometimes just before celebrating four, five, or six years clean.

Some of these fellow addicts disappeared for another twelve months, but a few remained and shared their experiences. They had taken the lessons and tools learned in Narcotics Anony-

mous and ventured out to face their fears and reality. Having learned what they could not change, they struck out to change what they could: themselves and their situations in life.

Some started families, some went back to work, some went back to college, some went back to high school, some started small businesses, and some attempted all of these things. As a newcomer, I did my ninety-in-ninety and kept coming back, sometimes as often as seven days a week. I have probably averaged three meetings a week throughout my recovery. During the last year I married a recovering addict, become a father to her two children, had a third child of our own, started a job, lost a job, and am now

in the process of starting my own business. Until recently, I was still able to attend my home group each week.

My wife has been working sometimes at two full-time jobs to help us reach our goals. She earned her GED with straight As and will be reentering school once the business becomes stable. Her work schedule now precludes me from attending my home group. I haven't been to a meeting in three weeks and I miss you all terribly. I read *The NA Way* like I did when I first discovered it and have had "mini-meetings" by inviting fellow addicts over for coffee or using the phone.

Where do "they" go? As I am now one of "them," I know, and I can't wait to get back to tell you all about it.

AZ, Michigan



Sticking around

My recovery has reached new levels in my life lately. I have a new, deeper trust in my Higher Power. I've become more aware of how my Higher Power speaks through my friends in NA. I've also learned how to feel very positive about personal pain and have gained a new awareness of myself. My program has changed from a list of things I ought to do to action I take to make myself feel better. It has finally become apparent to me that using is not an option.

Recently, I had an ugly experience involving another person. I've since come to the conclusion that the details of the situation are not important, but my reactions and feelings deserve consideration. I felt a tremendous amount of pain—pain that I'd neglected to feel until now. This pain was completely overwhelming, and I knew that I needed to do something.

The first thing I did was run. I ran to a safe place, called another program person, and talked to her. She helped me accept that what I was feeling was very real and valid. She also helped me understand that the situation was not my "stuff" and that I

could concentrate on my feelings rather than on the situation itself. Not only would this help me learn more about myself, it would keep the resentments to a minimum. I wrote in my journal, cried a great deal, and went to a meeting. I stayed with another addict that night, and throughout the following week I came to grips with my pain.

Looking back on how I got through all of that pain, I can see how recovery has become more instinctive for me. Though all I wanted was to feel better, using didn't even enter my mind. I knew that calling my sponsor, feeling my feelings, and going to a safe place to write it all down would help me through it. I didn't want to turn it all off; I only wanted to work through it.

My Higher Power was right there with me. While I was staying with my friend, talking to my sponsor, and feeling all of this raw, exhausting, deep-seated pain, I became aware of how God was carrying me through. It "clicked" that all of this pain wouldn't be happening if my God didn't think I was ready for it. My Higher Power doesn't allow things to happen to me if I'm unable to handle it, so I knew that I would see it through clean. Even though I hurt mentally and physically, I felt good because I knew God knew I could do it without using. I also knew that on the other side of the pain would be growth. As I look at it now, I can see some real strong and positive growth, and I am reassured that this is real recovery. These kinds of things will happen again, and now I know that I can see them through without using.

If I had known that this was what recovery was about when I first came in, I never would have stayed. But thanks to the recovery-oriented NA group that I'm involved in, I'm learning how to be a genuine person without the need to use. I'm thankful

to NA for giving me the knowledge to make it through these times. I'm also thankful for the loving, caring, feeling people who have been there for me while I've been reaching these new levels of recovery.

AI, Washington

We're glad you're here

I just got home from a meeting. I saw this newcomer there again tonight. He's been at three meetings now. He looks tired, sick, and old, but the light in his eyes shows that he's found something he wants. He never says anything, just mumbles his name and flounders around with some words before blushing (that's right, some of us can still blush).

After the meetings he hangs around at the edge of the room, quiet, trying to be nonchalant, not knowing how to approach anyone to talk. I can tell he wants to be a part of our group after, as well as during, the meetings.

He doesn't hang out long on Friday nights when most of the rest of us are talking about going to the pizza parlor for "the meeting after the meeting." He doesn't have a job. He doesn't have any money. He doesn't have a place to live right now.

He thinks he's different from us. He thinks he's so worthless that none of us would want to spend time with him outside a meeting. He doesn't want to impose.

But he keeps coming to meetings. He's trying to stay clean. He's reaching out as best as he can right now.

Let's take him to coffee tonight. After all, he's one of us.

VS, Oregon

I didn't let go, either

I am the writer of the article, "Don't Let Me Go," that you so kindly printed in the May 1992 issue of *The NA Way*. Since I wrote that article in December 1991, a year has passed. I am grateful for the many responses that have been published since then. The NA Fellowship did not let me go.

The past year has been a time of change in my life. I finally got a car, and I can now attend whatever meetings I choose to attend. I have found a new home group and volunteered to be the secretary. I now have a meeting every week without depending on someone else who might not have wanted to keep that commitment. My secretarial commitment has been very fulfilling. It's a literature study meeting that is designated non-smoking.

In less than one week I will be finished with school, graduating as the valedictorian of my class, thanks to my Higher Power and to people in NA who supported me and helped me to hang on through the anger, pain, and fearful times. I know I didn't achieve this alone.

Our ASC finally did adopt a non-smoking policy, and I have attended the last two committee meetings to get the feel for it before I make another commitment. Our area's literature subcommittee is not currently active, and once I'm settled in a job I'd like to offer to start it back up. NA literature has always been very special to me. It is the best way for me to hear the message of recovery because I can't "see" the personalities behind the words. That's why I've chosen step-and-tradition or literature study meetings as my home groups. That's also why I read *The NA Way*; even though opinions are printed, I know little else about the personality.

Our area is having an inexpensive New Year's Eve celebration that is not far from a busline so it is accessible to everyone. I guess we are growing, even though I can't always see it.

I hope and pray that all NA members who are trusted to be servants of this fellowship in any capacity remember to serve their fellow members, not their own egos and agendas. The opportunity to be of service needs to be available to all addicts, regardless of their income, physical health, or transportation needs. That is our First Tradition in action. Our common welfare should come first so that we can each have personal recovery. The unity spoken of in Tradition One, as I see it, is the consistency and availability of NA service to all who want or need it.

Thank you again, NA, for not letting me go.

Anonymous

Coming back to basics

Well, here I am at three years clean. I can't believe it. It seems like only yesterday I was writing to you on my two-year anniversary. But so much has happened that it also seems like forever. God is good, and I am truly better than blessed. I love who I am today and what I am doing.

A year ago I was living in another state. I had moved there and was adjusting to the change of scenery and recovery. God saw fit to put some truly interesting and wonderful people in my life. Right away I made friends. Better yet I met more of my brothers and sisters in the fellowship.

I got involved in the area H&I and convention subcommittees. (Service has been valuable in my recovery.) I started sponsoring a few guys. I was just busy living life on life's terms.

I was attending college at a nearby university and doing quite well. You see, I had always been one to bulls_____ my way through school. I would become good friends with the teachers, do the work, get good grades, and learn, learn, learn. My biggest fear is always that I'm going

to mess up and blow it, whether "it" is the next exam, paper, or homework assignment.

Fortunately, I have a conscious contact with my HP, and I always seem to get my work done. If it doesn't get done, somehow that test or assignment gets postponed. This has happened to me more than just a few times. God never ceases to amaze me. It's been about two-and-a-half years since I started back at school, and I still worry that it's been too good. I keep thinking the next exam is going to be the one that I bomb! Will I ever learn?

Anyway, school was going great and so were my day-to-day things, but something was missing. I could not put my finger on what it was. I was making meetings, doing service and schoolwork, calling my sponsor, etc. Something was happening. I felt myself becoming very irritable. I went to a convention, and it helped for a little while.

I was becoming very uneasy in the rooms of recovery in the area in which I was living. There was a lot of garbage happening: gossip, "thirteenth stepping," and some other stuff. I saw people, even a sponsee of mine, leave the rooms because of it. It was difficult for me. I was afraid. I had made some very close friends there, and I had found some beautiful people and some great recovery. But I was uncomfortable at the meetings. They weren't doing it my way! They weren't running the recovery meetings or business meetings the way in which I wanted them run. They didn't celebrate anniversaries like they'd

done in my old area. Things weren't the same!

I felt myself getting worse. I was talking to people back in New York more and more often. I even started driving forty-five minutes to go to meetings there. Fortunately, I still had close friends and sponsees in that area. I had about five or six guys ask me to sponsor them. They were, and still are, a major part of my recovery. They were calling me, and we would spend time together going over steps and traditions. I would even call on them for support.

Sponsorship is definitely a two-way street. As far as I am concerned, they are the greatest bunch of guys in the world. I love them so much. I have

given them the love that was so freely given to me.

One of them came in with a lot of anger issues and that tough-guy image. I always looked forward to seeing him and giving him a great big hug. He was just a big baby, like me, who needed to be held and loved. He would melt in my arms every time. To me, that was the power of recovery.

My sponsees keep me clean and busy. Unfortunately, they are not all still here, and that hurts. Watching some of them leave was one of the hardest things that I ever had to do in my life. I had smashed my telephone and cried to my sponsor over it more than once. I couldn't understand why. I kept saying how it would have



been easier if it was someone who I didn't like, but that's not how it is. I love all of my sponsees and everyone in the rooms. It just hurt so much because I was so close to them. They were my guys! I loved them so much and still do, wherever they are.

One of them called me the other day after I hadn't spoken to him in about five months. He said that he wanted to come back. He hadn't used, thank God, and I asked him if he still wanted me to sponsor him. He said yes, if I would. I told him that I never stopped loving him and that I would sponsor him till the day I die. You see, I have been taught that I should love people unconditionally. I see and hear about so many people sponsoring conditionally. They won't sponsor people who get into a relationship in their first year. They won't sponsor people who go to more than one fellowship. Some won't even sponsor people who don't do what they're told.

Who am I to say what somebody should and shouldn't do? They have an HP looking after them and putting them into different situations with all kinds of people, letting them go through things they need to go through to get better. All I can do is share my experience, strength, and hope with them. My responsibility to my sponsees and other fellow addicts is to be there for them. I give them the suggestions that were given to me. Then I let them go through what they have to and help guide them through it, no matter what! Like they say, "People who judge don't matter, and those who matter don't judge."

That sponsee hasn't called me back since, but I have accepted it. I plant-

ed a seed in him, and that's the best I can do. He knows where to go when he wants some help.

Anyway, I was going a little crazy and getting really scared. I felt as if my recovery was in jeopardy. Then I made it to the Greater New York Regional Convention. It was there that all of my questions were answered.

I walked into the convention with my ass in my hands. I was hoping that you people could help me put it back on. You sure did. I knew just about everyone there. It was my old region, and I did get around. What happened was that I learned, with the help of some oldtimers, what it was that I was missing in the area in which I was living. The Greater New York Region has been around for eleven years. I have been recovering in an area that is only about four or five years old. They are still growing. I've been going crazy expecting an area to be something that it wasn't. I haven't been working my First Step. (You may not know when you are working the First Step, but you sure as hell know when you're not!)

I had a true awakening that weekend. I spent time with all of the people from my old area, some of whom I had never really sat down and talked with before. These people knew who I was. They had watched me crawl into the rooms, they'd picked me up, let me cry in their arms, and just loved me until I learned how to love myself. I am so very, very grateful. I had to get back to the basics.

I was still concerned as to whether I should keep moving farther away

from home, or just move back. Well, I moved back, and my life has been so much better. It started even before I actually got here.

I got my old apartment back. The landlords wanted me to move into the apartment. They said that I was a great tenant and that they would love to have me there again. My friend was the H&I chair for the area and said that my old commitment was available again. The school that I had been attending informed me that I had been accepted again as a student and that they would give me credit for classes I took in 1986-87. Last but not least, I was just able to make the move, period. It was one of the easiest things that I have ever had to do in my recovery. I've had more trouble trying to get to a meeting on time than this.

From the time that I moved away, everyone said that they had missed me. I figured they were just being nice. But for some reason I knew that that wasn't really true. People from my old home group said that I had better not have found another home group! I did look for one where I was, but couldn't find one. It just wasn't meant to be. You see, I've learned to try to *let* things happen, not *make* them happen. When my HP wants something done, it's going to get done. I keep forgetting who's in charge. Thank God it's not me!

Since then, my life has been better than my wildest dreams. Everything is working out great. I wake up and show up so I can grow up. That's what my recovery has been: growing up. I'm twenty-five years old and for the first

time in my life I feel and know that I am growing up and becoming the best person I can be. For the first time in my entire life, I feel like an individual, a person. The world is a big jigsaw puzzle, and we are the pieces. No piece is like any other. It can only fit in one place. Many look a little alike and, in fact, some seem almost identical, yet we need each one to make the whole picture. What I can't do alone, we can do together. We may not have it all together, but together we have it all. God is good, and we are truly better than blessed.

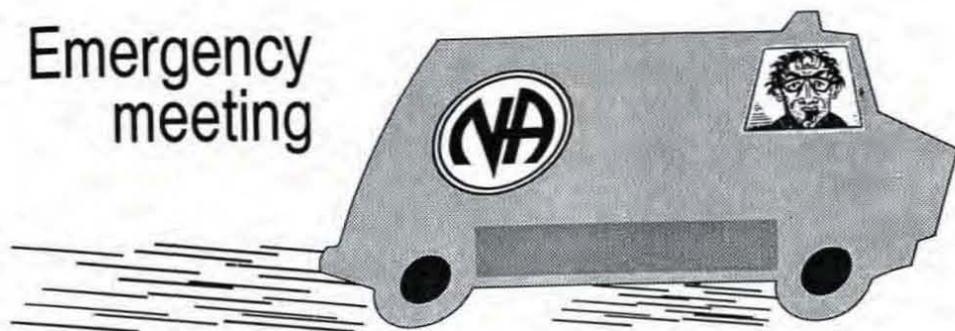
Thank you, NA, for helping to show me who I am, what I am, why I am here, how it works, the ties that bind us together, just for today, and, last but not least, that we do recover!

Before I end this letter, I have to say this: I have nothing against the area or region in which I was living. There was nothing wrong with it. The problems were all mine! I am not God, and it is not my place to judge anyone or anything. My HP doesn't judge me, so who am I to judge anyone or anything else? I still talk to and see some of the people from that area. They are true blessings in my life, and I will love them always. I just don't want anyone to think that I meant to say anything bad about them. Today I realize that no one is better than anyone else. We are all the best!

Without love in a dream, it'll never come true. The dream is real. We do recover. Peace and love,

HO, New York

Emergency meeting



Yesterday evening was one of those benchmarks in my recovery. I learned another valuable lesson about just how well the program works.

My landlady had a stroke about a month ago. I am the only boarder she has. When she had her stroke, fortunately I was home to call the paramedics and get them right over. She spent a month in the rehab wing of the hospital and returned home last Friday.

This lady has a few daughters, one of whom is my friend (and ex-mate). One of the other daughters has come from a few hundred miles away to direct the homecoming and hire help to assist in cooking and caring for the now-partially paralyzed matron.

This latter-mentioned daughter has a very controlling, abrasive way about her, and I intended to keep out of her line of fire as much as possible. A

couple of instances over the last few days have annoyed me very much: her behavior, her lack of regard for her mother's rights, and her lack of respect for me as a valid participant in the situation. For four years, I have lived alone in the house with the lady who had the stroke, and we are friends apart from our landlady/boarder relationship.

I don't think anyone is really interested in the exact circumstances that offended me, and I don't think they are relevant. What is relevant, and what I want to talk about here, are my feelings and what I did about them.

Yesterday morning was Sunday. I was feeling slighted and disrespected by the daughter staying with us, and it really rattled my cage quite a bit. I wasn't sure exactly what to do. It was two days after Christmas, and I

didn't want to call my sponsor unless I absolutely had to, although I certainly knew that was one of my options. What I decided to do was go to a matinee where it was quiet and I could think things over.

While sitting in the darkened theater, I remembered that Sunday is not one of my regular meeting days. It is a day I use for exercise, watching football, eating, etc., but not usually for

how much she appreciated the freedom to just be herself when she was with members of the fellowship. She shared that she didn't have to put on airs or try to be something other than who she was. This great revelation of hers was a bonus for me at that point.

I had already heard what I needed to hear when a member was reading the steps: "We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our

...there was a meeting that night,
and I realized I needed to be there...
Right after that, everything started
falling into place.

meetings. Anyway, I remembered there was a meeting that night and realized that I needed to be there no matter what. Right after that, everything started falling into place.

When I got out of the theater, it was still three hours before the meeting was to begin. I went to the gym and had a good, long workout. The workout made me feel physically fine, but spiritually I was still hurting. Now there was only one hour to meeting time. I had dinner right near the meeting location and walked into the meeting in plenty of time to see some friends and get all settled in before the meeting started.

The woman leading the meeting chose "family" as her topic for the evening. That topic seemed made to order for me to hear what I needed to hear. One thing the leader shared was

lives had become unmanageable." I thought of the Basic Text and its discussion of powerlessness over people, places, and things. I realized how much that had to do with my situation. I realized that I needed to work on acceptance. I realized that I needed to call my sponsor. I got really grateful that I was a recovering addict.

I shared some of these things with the group. Other people shared about their joys and struggles with family and loved ones. There were a lot of newcomers attending, and I think they left with the feeling that this program is really about something. I know I left with that feeling, as I so often do. Nobody does it like we do. It's a gift to be a member of this fellowship, and what a great gift it is.

Anonymous

Home Group



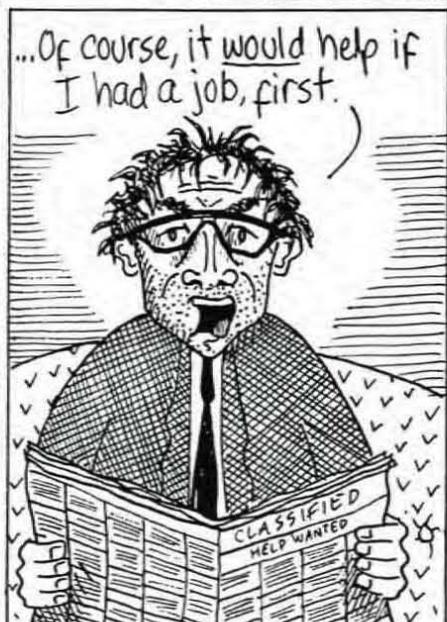
PERHAPS SOMEDAY HE COULD BE A POLITICIAN?...



...OR MAYBE A TOP FASHION DESIGNER?...



...OR THE NEXT VAN DAMME?...



From the editor



We need stories!

Many times we've tried to find out what makes our readers want to write down their experiences in recovery and share them with other magazine readers. We've racked our collective brain trying to think of words in which to humbly beg for manuscripts. We've come up with a lot of ideas, but most of them have been either unspiritual or impractical. So we're left with the same tack we've used all along: a direct plea. *We need stories!*

If you've put off writing because you think you don't have anything to say, think again. Any addict in recovery is bound to have valuable experience, strength, and hope to share. This includes you.

If you've put off writing because you think your writing skills aren't good enough, think again. We're not looking for another Mark Twain. And who knows what his writing was like before a copy edit, anyway. We'll help you with your grammar and syntax. You can even call us for help before you sit down to write. Honest sharing from the heart carries its own special message, far more profound than the most beautifully structured prose.

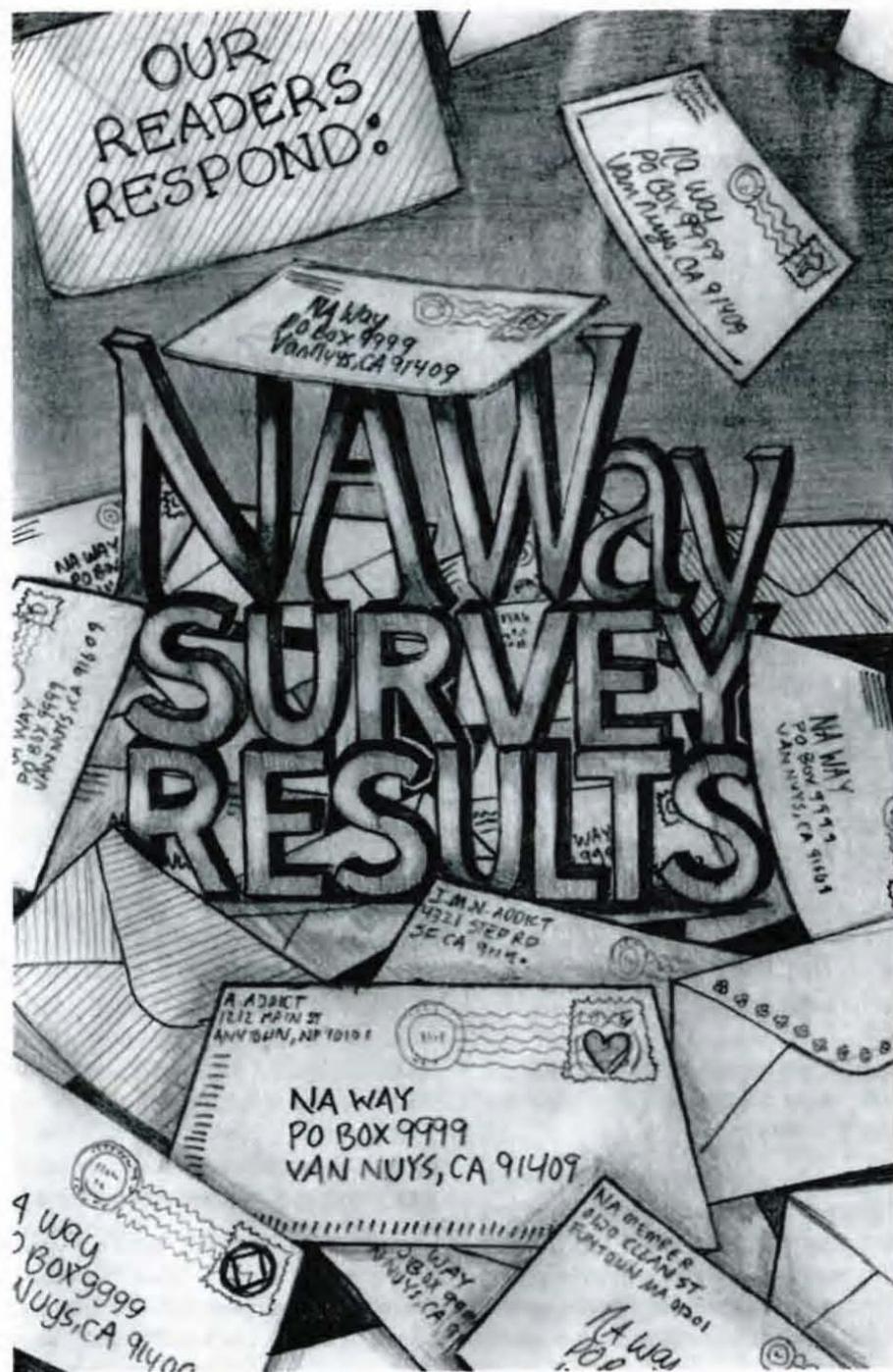
No matter what you think might keep you from writing a story, think again. We're trying to plan for issues using some of your suggestions, but

we need manuscripts in order to pull it off. In particular, we need essays on each of the Twelve Steps, sponsorship, and spirituality.

An important announcement about "Comin' Up"

As you may have noticed last month, we've expanded the "Comin' Up" section to two pages and made some changes to allow for the listing of more events.

Something else came up recently involving an area fundraiser that was not printed even though the committee had followed the requirement to have their information in by a certain time. We did some checking and discovered that, since getting the magazine on a reasonable production schedule, we would need three months lead time in order to include an event in "Comin' Up." If you want your event to run for more than one month, we'll need even more notice. Our suggestion is that you send us your event's date and contact information as soon as it is available. We'll make every effort to make sure your event is announced.



The NA Way survey results

In our January issue we included a reader's survey. Within two months, we received almost one hundred responses. Using those initial responses, we've compiled the results here for you. We've included or paraphrased the original questions asked for the benefit of our readers who don't have the January issue on hand. Included you will find mention of the suggestions you shared with us.

1. Out of the last four issues of *The NA Way*, how many have you read?

Eighty-seven percent read the last four issues. The rest indicated that the only reason they had not was because they had just started their subscriptions.

2. This question asked readers how many others saw their issue of *The NA Way*.

Over half responded either "0" or "1." The rest were evenly divided among choices of "2," "3," "4-5," "6-9," and "10 or more." Twelve percent indicated that they passed on their copies to H&I meetings or their home group.

3. Question three asked readers to describe the depth of attention they had devoted to the January issue.

Eighty-six percent responded that they'd read the issue "cover to cover" while the rest were split evenly between "skimmed" and "read articles of interest."

4. Next we listed the articles which appeared in the January issue and asked readers to specify, by article, the degree to which they'd read each item. The choices were: not read at all, skimmed, read, and studied.

Most everyone stated that they had "read" everything. A few said they had "studied" some articles while the articles which were "skimmed" were primarily the "Comin' Up" section and the news.

5. Here we asked what our readers usually turned to first in *The NA Way*.

Forty-seven percent responded with either the first page or the first story. Thirty percent said that they looked at the "Home Group" comic strip first. A small number mentioned either "Comin' Up" or the "Viewpoint" section as first read.

6. This question asked which item was most enjoyed by our readers.

Twenty-five percent stated that "Practicing the Principles" was their favorite. Ten percent liked "Clean and Crazy," while the remainder were

pretty well divided among "Home Group," the "Viewpoint" section, the "World Service News" section, and the survey itself.

7. The question asked which item was least enjoyed.

The two "winners" here were the news section and the "From the Editor" column; about thirty percent of total respondents selected these as their least favorite. However, almost ten percent answered "none" to indicate that they liked all items in the January issue. The only other significant response (ten percent) was to "Comin' Up." However, most of these indicated that they were isolated and had no personal use for that section.

8. This question asked for any additional comments about the January issue.

Only a very few respondents answered this one at all. However, other than the ten percent who indicated the magazine was "good," some felt that more "meat" was necessary and suggested accomplishing this in a variety of ways. Some asked for more newsletter reprints; conversely, some asked for less.

9. If *The NA Way* were to include the following features in its next issue, which one would you turn to first? (Percentages precede selections)

- 7% How NA communities survived recent hurricanes

- 15% AIDS in various NA communities
- 16% Gender-specific language in our Twelve Steps
- 10% Children at meetings
- 28% Diversity of spiritual belief in NA
- 21% Recovering with an emotional or psychological disorder

The following two categories were added by respondents:

- 2% None of these articles should be run
- 1% All of these articles should be run

10. This question asked our readers how they first heard about *The NA Way*.

Almost half said that it was through a meeting or their home group. We think some of these may be as a result of subscription drives. About ten percent mentioned subscription drives specifically. Other responses were divided among finding out through a friend, a sponsor, or in a service context.

11. This question asked our readers if they recalled a favorite or most moving story.

Almost one-half said they did have a favorite but couldn't remember its title or said there were too many to remember. Of those who could identify a favorite, seven indicated "Ramon," four indicated "the story of the oldtimer from Hawaii," two

indicated "the story by someone from Africa," and two indicated "Amends." Many other stories received one mention apiece.

12. Have you ever submitted a story for publication? Was it published?

Sixty-two percent responded that they had not. Of those who had, approximately half were published.

13. What motivated you to write and send it in?

The primary reason given for writing stories was a desire to share with other addicts. A few indicated wanting to respond to a particular article. Other reasons cited were ego(!), lessons learned from such experiences as a relapse, and a desire to comment on material read in the news section.

14. What do you think of humor in *The NA Way*?

A whopping eighty-six percent said they loved it and wanted more. The prime example mentioned was usually the "Home Group" cartoon. A few thought it was okay, and a few thought it was stale.

15. This question asked our readers to comment on the news reported in *The NA Way*.

Twenty-four percent wanted to read news that concerned NA as a whole. Twenty percent thought news should somehow fulfill our primary purpose. Another twenty percent liked the

presentation as it is currently. Almost ten percent thought there was no need at all for news reporting in the magazine. A few commented on wanting to see only facts—no opinions or speculation.

16. This question asked readers to identify any objectionable story.

Nearly half of our respondents couldn't remember anything objectionable, but ten percent found articles written by "NA fanatics" offensive. While the rest were mostly individual comments, "taking God out of the Basic Text," "insulting other fellowships," "taking medication in recovery," "bland articles," and "articles about smoking" received two comments each.

17. Do you believe the magazine fairly reflects NA's diversity?

Seventy-five percent responded yes. Others felt that it appeared to be slanted toward newcomers, lacked representation from those with strong opinions, or didn't include enough articles from outside North America.

18. How do you feel about fiction in *The NA Way*?

Over half said "No way, Jose!" Twenty percent weren't sure. Of those who said yes, a large number recommended "recovery fables," and all said it would have to be clearly identified as fiction.

19. What has not been in the magazine that you'd like to see?

We received a wide variety of responses on this one. Suggestions included, but weren't limited to, material about NA's history, issues focusing around themes, articles and news from outside North America, women's issues, poems, articles from addicts who are incarcerated, and articles about service. Other suggestions included having a column similar to "Dear Abby" done humorously, puzzles, and more material on our spiritual principles.

20. Does the magazine serve a purpose for you?

Almost everyone said yes, with some reporting the purpose served. Most often mentioned was having something to read between meetings that was different than existing literature.

21. Do you think the magazine is good for newcomers?

Only a few (about five percent) said no, with the primary reason given being that the occasional controversial topic was not something newcomers should have to be subjected to.

22. Should the magazine attempt to appeal to non-NA members?

Of those who responded to this question, ninety percent thought not. Those who said yes said the magazine was appropriate for family members or professionals.

23. This question first informed our readers that the magazine is not currently self-supporting, then asked if they thought magazine expenses should be fully supported by its subscribers.

While most felt it should, they also stated that a self-supporting magazine was perhaps an ideal for which to strive, not necessarily something likely to happen. Twenty percent felt that the magazine should receive support from others source. WSO and the World Service Conference were mentioned among those sources.

24. This asked our readers to state whether the price of the magazine should be increased or the quality downgraded to cover costs.

Sixty-seven percent thought the price should be increased rather than downgrading quality. Seventeen percent thought the opposite should be done. The rest weren't sure.

Editor's note: We'd like to extend our sincere appreciation to those who responded to this survey. The results of this survey are being considered by staff and trusted servants responsible for the magazine. We've already put some of your suggestions into practice and hope to be able to implement others soon. For those who missed the opportunity to participate in this survey, please feel free to write us at any time. Without you, there wouldn't be an NA Way.

Newsletters

From: *Free Spirit*
The Calgary, Alberta Area newsletter

Welcome

I have never really had a problem stating that I am an addict in meetings. When I first came into the Fellowship of NA, I just accepted this opening line, never really, truly believing it. One night I thought about what this way of identifying ourselves really means to me. What does it mean when a person says, "Hi, my name is _____ and I'm an addict?"

At a meeting, I identify myself as an addict but don't really listen to what I am saying. By saying this short sentence, many things happen. First, I am letting everyone know my name so that they can call me by it later, and it feels good to have someone call me by name—especially people I have never met before. I am also freely and honestly admitting to myself and the people around me that I have a living problem and I used drugs to try to solve that problem. The major meaning has to be that I have no control over my drug use. All this in nine very basic English words! Wow!

And what of the response from everyone else: "Hi _____!"?

When everyone acknowledges my introduction I am getting feedback, the lifeline of good communication. To me, everyone is saying, "It's nice to see you here. We are ready to listen to what you have to share, in a nonjudgmental and completely accepting way. Whatever you share is okay; you can't say anything 'wrong' here. Welcome!" Pretty amazing for two kind words!

More and more in recovery I am finding that the simpler something is, the more it seems to mean to me.

JM

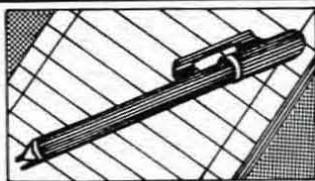
From: *Free Spirit*, The Calgary,
Alberta Area newsletter

Twenty things to do before taking that first rug!

1. Go to a meeting.
2. Phone other members in the program. *Always* have phone numbers available.
3. Talk to your sponsor.
4. Talk to your Higher Power.
5. Read some NA literature.
6. Avoid slippery places and former using buddies.
7. Tell yourself to wait. Put it off and stay clean for the next two minutes, five minutes, ten minutes.
8. Do something constructive: a job, an errand, a hobby, a sport.
9. Change your living pattern; go to work by a different route.
10. Work the Twelve Steps.
11. Hang around clean people.
12. Deal with feelings, especially resentment and fear. Talk or write about them.
13. Stay aware of your addiction problem.
14. HALT! Don't get too hungry. Eat! Don't get too angry. Express your feelings. Don't get too lonely. Call or be with clean people. Don't get too tired. Rest or sleep.
15. Think through the consequences of taking the first drug.
16. Remember your past patterns and where using got you. Read your First Step writing.
17. Beware of prescription and over-the-counter drugs. When in doubt, call your sponsor.
18. Be grateful and have a positive mental attitude.
19. Work with others, but don't put yourself in danger. If working with someone who is using, meet at a neutral location and bring someone with you.
20. Ask yourself: Will I go to any lengths to stay clean? Will I go to the same lengths to stay clean as I went to use?

Anonymous

Viewpoint



Priorities change

A couple of months ago, I was asked to lead a discussion meeting of my home group. I started to speak about gratitude, but gradually my focus shifted to finding balance in recovery. I realized that I was feeling a bit uncomfortable, having been away for several weeks, and shared that in the meeting. I explained that I had been out of town for work, and then had been involved in helping my daughter choose a high school for next year. Clearly, responsibilities and priorities have changed in my life to the point where I twice missed the only meeting that I still attend on a regular basis.

After working late the following week, I joined a friend for supper before heading over to the same meeting. Later, I got a ride home with a couple of good friends. The time spent with these people was important and valuable to me. But I left the meeting feeling disappointed, feeling that my needs had not been met there. This is certainly not the first time I've had such an experience, but it has been

happening with increasing frequency. The topic that evening related to feelings, an important subject indeed. There were many people, most of them relatively new, who appeared to benefit greatly from what they heard and shared, and that is truly wonderful. But I have been to and shared at hundreds of similar meetings for almost eight years now. I am not intending to be critical of anybody or of the meeting. It's just that it seems my needs have changed; or, perhaps more accurately, the ways in which I try to meet my needs have changed.

When I came into NA, I did everything that was suggested in treatment. I went to five or six meetings a week, joined a group, found a sponsor, wrote steps, and became active in service. I continued to do what worked, although I began to attend fewer meetings; as I started to heal, other priorities emerged. However, I remained very active, serving at the group and area levels in a number of positions for over five years. Then life, as they say, happened. Feeling drained from dealing with the illness and/or death of several loved ones, I decided not to seek any other service position when my last term expired. Nonetheless, I remained, and continue to remain, committed to the steps and to the emotional and spiritual growth they provide.

I identified strongly with a recent article ("Urging Acceptance," November 1992) in which the author reminded us that NA is not a place in which to hide from the world. I frequently hear that we are somehow different from "normal" people. Either we are worse, suffering from an incurable disease and numerous character defects, or we are better, involved in a fellowship that proclaims unconditional love, acceptance, and other spiritual principles. But we risk becoming dogmatic and rigid, believing that ours is the only "true" way to recover, that people who stop attending meetings inevitably relapse, and that those who do not remain abstinent forever are doomed to jails, institutions, and death. I speak from personal experience, having believed all of the above earlier in my recovery. Today I am no longer convinced, having witnessed otherwise.

It is important for me to critically evaluate my recovery program, and this is clearly a dynamic process. It involves developing an awareness of what works for me, what doesn't, and finding ways to change or let go of what is no longer useful. I am concerned this may be regarded as taboo if it means doubting the relevance of continued attendance at meetings. I am concerned that we are reluctant to question who we are, what we do, and why, for fear of change. In other words, that the old argument for maintaining the status quo, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," will impede these important efforts. In our readings we identify an addict as "a man or woman whose life is controlled by drugs." That definition worked just fine for me when I first got clean. But

I don't want the rest of my life to be organized around the fact that I once had a problem with drugs. There are times when I wonder what I am doing here. The truth is that I often feel healthier in the outside world.

My observations in the past few years indicate that addicts are not essentially different from other people. We don't have a monopoly on emotional difficulties and destructive/self-destructive behaviors, nor do we have one on healing, spiritual principles, and caring and sharing. Two weeks ago, an old friend of mine died of cancer. We had mostly lost touch in recent years, and it was a shock to see her dying in her hospital bed. At the memorial gathering, I was intensely moved by fond reminiscences shared with people who were once important in my life. I realized that I missed them, whether or not they "use." I can no longer divide the world into us/them categories. One of my goals is to expand my social network, to develop a more diverse set of friends—or renew contacts with old ones—based on common interests unrelated to addiction or recovery in NA.

I have never made a commitment to stay in NA forever. I think that has made some people uncomfortable, especially since I was so active in a newly formed area. I have always maintained that I would stay as long as my needs were being met. I don't wish to minimize the importance of NA in helping me turn my life around. I am grateful to this program for everything it has made possible; I also recognize that I have given back much in return. The fact is, the NA Fellowship is no longer the center of

my life. I don't think this is necessarily good or bad; maybe it's just the way things evolve.

I realize this article will be viewed as unorthodox, perhaps even as heresy. As such, it may provoke strong reactions. I do not believe I am writing from denial or a sense of superiority or complacency. On the contrary, my recovery encourages me to accurately identify my needs and make healthy, autonomous choices. I do not wish to be disloyal or undermine anybody's commitment to NA. I am simply sharing my experience. I know that I am not alone. Needs and priorities change as we do recover.

PW, Quebec

Out there?

Would someone please explain something to me? Where is this place called "out there"? I've heard people talk about it. I've listened to people at meetings saying something about not having enough time for the program because they're "out there" living life.

Does this mean those of us who go to lots of meetings, sponsor people, get involved in service, and work the steps aren't living a life? Is there some magical place where we don't have to practice these principles in all our affairs? I don't understand.

Does a time come in recovery when the program is not a part of my life? What does page 93 of our Basic Text mean when it says, "This program is a vital part of our everyday living"?

How can I separate my program from my life? Where is this place called "out there"? And if life is so great "out there," why do some people come back? I mean, I work for a living, I'm in a relationship, I pay bills and taxes, I sponsor people, I got to school, I go to meetings, I have a family, I have friends, I do service work, and I work the steps daily. I really don't understand.

Where is this place called "out there"? And where do you people get off telling me you're "out there" living? What am I doing? Please explain this to me! "We learn that the program won't work when we try to adapt it to our life. We must learn to adapt our life to the program." (Basic Text, p. 55) If I work this program, where does the separation come so that the program becomes "here" and everything else becomes "out there"? I really have no idea what you're talking about when you say, "I don't have time for the program any more because I'm too busy 'out there' living." Could you please help me? Explain this to me.

Neither here nor there,

Dan

Diversity is the key to unity

When NA members throughout the world gathered on World Unity Day to join hands and pray, I found something else to do. (This activity took place during our Toronto World

Convention.) While I hope people enjoyed the occasion, I don't think an event centered on prayer should be named "World Unity Day." When we gather to promote unity, we need to make sure that all members will want to join us, not just those in the majority. Perhaps we should look at how we encourage unity.

NA works because together we can do what we could never do alone. The principle of unity makes the NA program—and our most important recovery resource, the NA member—available to any drug addict who wants help. Social activities and service work opportunities give our members the chance to learn and grow. Unity is not as crucial to individual relationships as it is to the things we do together as a fellowship.

Unity does not mean the absence of controversy, although an understanding of controversy plays an important part in our quest for unity. Whenever we do something unusual, we risk appearing controversial. When this happens, we need to look at our motives and our actions. Controversy is usually a matter of appearance because controversy is mostly in the mind—that is, mostly in the way people see things. This does not stop controversy from taking a fierce toll on our fellowship.

Unity is not uniformity, either. When people "agree on absolutely everything, chances are that only one person is doing the thinking" (*Just For Today*, p. 272). If someone is different from the rest, we cannot expect that person to "just surrender" or to "look only at the similarities." We

make room for you no matter what we think about your recovery. When we unite against our addiction, we shouldn't need to have anything else in common.

Like most people, I like to think I am trying my best. I haven't had an easy time in NA, however, because I do not believe in God. Sometimes I appear divisive because my religious beliefs contradict the program. I cannot work all the steps because I do not pray. Why pray if no God listens? I need to reinterpret much of the NA philosophy for it to make sense to me. Sometimes it's a struggle just to keep coming back. I want, more than anything, to be welcome in NA and still be myself.

The benefits of NA membership include the right to practice every aspect of the NA program. That didn't seem important until I made some painful sacrifices to keep the peace. I've had to pass up many opportunities in NA, including several service positions. Occasionally in our zeal to protect the common welfare, we shield ourselves from NA members who do not have what we call "good recovery." We probably could find sensible reasons to reject everyone if we looked hard enough. And it can't be very hard to think of valid arguments to write me off entirely. I'm just too far out of step.

When I feel I've been left out, I cannot remain silent. At times like this, I am not trying to be controversial; I'm just trying to fit in. When people console me by saying it doesn't matter what others think, they are not being realistic. If I remain isolated, feeling alone in a crowded meeting or

a social function, I might as well go home and try to stay clean on my own.

I don't think I'm closed-minded for refusing to believe in God. Twelve years ago, I was so desperate to quit using that I joined a religious cult. After three years of intense religious training, I realized I was in the wrong place. It took years of hard work to deprogram myself from the religious indoctrination. This ordeal did more damage to me than fourteen years of active addiction.

Four years after leaving the cult, I was back on drugs like never before. I sought help several times but never liked NA's emphasis on divine intervention. There just had to be a way to get clean without God. Finally, I told a drug counselor what I thought about God, religion, and the Twelve Steps. He asked, "Have you tried a meeting recently?" No, I hadn't. I went to a meeting and saw that God is not the topic of every conversation. I knew I probably could stay quiet about my beliefs without drawing much attention.

For over a year I played this game in NA, keeping my beliefs to myself and just trying to fit in. Later I continued my deceptive pattern out of loyalty to NA, knowing it contradicted the principle of honesty. As I began to mature, I had to start being truthful; the need for honesty outweighed my desire to fit in. For openly expressing my approach to the program, I got some vicious opposition.

I finally decided to stay out of the closing prayer circle. Avoiding the prayers can quiet the physical trem-

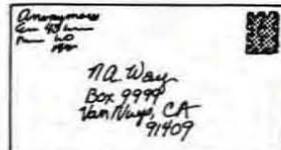
bling I feel when they pray in our meetings. People still urge me to join the prayer anyway, "for the sake of unity." Others believe I am making an editorial comment of some sort. I think most people accept that I have carefully considered my actions and intentions. In many ways, though, I still feel like I'm on the outside.

My experiences trying to get along in NA have given me a profound sense of tolerance toward others. If I look for reasons why you should leave, I might find just the right reason for me to leave. When we set standards for "correct" beliefs, language, or behavior, we don't give people the freedom to do their own growing. Also, we don't give the NA program much credit for its ability to change people. Ultimately, we deny ourselves the chance to learn something that may someday save a life. That is a steep price to pay for what turns out to be false unity.

I don't feel right about World Unity Day—an NA-sponsored event that has prayer as its central activity. Prayer is a religious rite that degrades my religious beliefs and experience. Where, then, is unity? With World Unity Day, the NA Fellowship has again left me standing on the outside. If we want unity, we can start by identifying ways we inadvertently leave addicts out of the picture. Make room for everyone with activities anyone can enjoy. We must accept, respect, and be sensitive to the diversity that walks through our doors each day.

CW, Oregon

From our readers



Never alone again

Over the Thanksgiving holiday, my children and I traveled from Arkansas to California to enjoy the festivities with my belly-button family. Due to car trouble, I found myself in a town in northern Arizona for a prolonged period. The first thing I did upon entering my hotel room was check the white pages for a Narcotics Anonymous listing. I can barely describe my relief when I saw that there was a phonenumber. I knew that no matter what happened with my car, my NA family was there. With their support, I could handle anything.

The next morning I found out that my children and I would be delayed a day or so. I called the NA phonenumber. I found out where there was to be a meeting that night. How important was that to me? Very. The strength of this program and the fellowship has allowed me to change old behavior. Instead of fretting, worrying, and generally making my family miserable over something that I could not control, I was able to make an unexpected delay into a fun vacation day, an adventure instead of a calamity. I was able to work my program, using the steps in the midst of difficulty. I did not use, nor did I make life miserable for myself or my children. We all experienced living sanely and serenely.

At the meeting that night, I was able to share the gifts of recovery that I've received from my Higher Power and the fellowship. The miracle of recovery in my life! I experienced the love of the fellowship, especially when an addict at the meeting told me that if my car wasn't repaired in time I was welcome to spend the holiday with his family. The phrase we speak so glibly at meetings, "never alone again," has taken on a new meaning. It has become real.

I was able to continue on to Los Angeles and spent the Thanksgiving holiday with my natural family, but the real spirit of the holiday had been embodied a couple of days earlier in the mountains of Arizona with the people in NA, who I have chosen to call my family.

MJ, Arkansas



Lessons learned

Recently, I sent a letter to *The NA Way* called "On the Move." My husband and I had just moved from West Virginia to North Carolina. I had asked myself in the writing if we had made the right decision by moving. First of all, I believe no decision we

make is the wrong one, as long as we learn from it. Well, as it turned out, my husband and I are back in West Virginia, and I did learn some important lessons while we were away. When we left, I had a bad attitude about my home town and state, my recovery, and the fellowship. I was getting tired of everything and thought I needed a change. In essence, what I did was make a geographic change. I heard in a "lead" one day that, as addicts, sometimes we have to repeat old behaviors in recovery in order to learn. I made several geographic changes while I was using and they didn't work. I've learned that they do not work today, either. I have to learn the hard way sometimes. I learned a lot about myself while I was there, some good and some not so good.

I have to always remember that to recover in the Fellowship of NA I must remain teachable. When I think I have all the answers, I'm in trouble.

We were only in North Carolina for five months. I went to a lot of meetings and met a lot of neat addicts. I even got a chance to go to the Serenity Fest in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, which was a miracle and a true spiritual experience for me. I was able to experience things I would not have had the chance to do if we had not gone, so I don't regret the move totally.

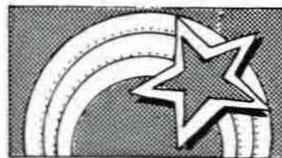
During our fourth month there, our home state was having a convention and I wanted to go. After calling a friend to get more information, I was on the way home. When I arrived and went to the convention with my recovering friends, the desire to move home became overwhelming.

I looked at things in a whole new light. I knew I belonged there. I became more willing to get involved with my recovery. I had a new appreciation for it. I was more willing to let people into my life and to make myself more available to them, especially the newcomer. I didn't always feel welcome at every meeting I attended, so I asked my Higher Power to help me be receptive to the new person, because that was done for me. I have learned in this program that in order to keep what I have, I have to give it away. I have worked more closely with my sponsor and others with whom I am close. I am back to writing on a daily basis, making more meetings, and praying. If nothing else, I learned that I appreciate life and home. I no longer drive down the road and think, "I don't like this place." Today, I love it. It is not perfect, nor is any place, but maybe that is why I moved: to get a better perspective on just how good my life really is today. I want to say also that I'm very grateful to the addicts here at home who read my letters and listened to me whine on the phone when I called. Most importantly, I'm grateful for their love because I could never have made it without that love.

CS, West Virginia



Comin' up



ALASKA: May 7-9, 1993; 9th Annual Alaska Regional Convention; phoneline (907) 277-5483; ARSCC IV, PO Box 110738, Anchorage, AK 99511

ALBERTA: May 7-9, 1993; Calgary Area Convention; Rehabilitation Society, 7-11 Street NE, Calgary

ARIZONA: May 28-30 1993; 7th Annual Arizona Regional Convention; rsvn.s (800) 972-8886; info (602) 942-1628

ARKANSAS: Jul. 2-4, 1993; 5th Annual Central Arkansas Area Convention; helpline (501) 982-1928; CACCNA, PO Box 24223, Little Rock, AR 72221

BRITISH COLUMBIA: May 28-30, 1993; 13th Annual Lower Mainland Spring Clean; helpline (604) 873-1018; LMASC, PO Box 1695, Station A, Vancouver, BC V6C 2P7

2) Jul. 2-4, 1993; 3rd Canadian Convention of NA; rsvn.s (604) 685-7210; info (604) 431-6453; CCNA, PO Box 102, 1470 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC V5L 3X9

CALIFORNIA: May 1, 1993; 916 North Unity Day; info (916) 934-3303; Unity Day, PO Box 703, Willows, CA 95988

2) May 8, 1993; 6th Annual Lower Desert Area Spring Splash Clean Bash; info (619) 347-2406; LDAACNA, PO Box 373, Indio, CA 92201

3) May 21-23, 1993; 916 North Campout; info (916) 934-3303; 916 Campout, PO Box 703, Willows, CA 95988

COLORADO: Jul. 2-4, 1993; 9th West States Unity Convention; rsvn.s (800) 228-9290; info (303) 755-5253; Convention, PO Box 6176, Denver, CO 80206

CONNECTICUT: May 15, 1993; 10th Annual Pig Roast; Quassy Amusement Park; info (800) FOR-PARK

FLORIDA: Apr. 30-May 2, 1993; 3rd Annual Twelve Traditions Retreat; rsvn.s (407) 952-4532; info (407) 631-HELP; Spacecoast Area, PO Box 02-007, Melbourne, FL 32902

2) May 6-9, 1993; 17th Annual Fun in the Sun Weekend; rsvn.s (800) 633-0266; info (404) 296-9871; PC Weekend, PO Box 47848, Doraville, GA 30362

3) May 13-16, 1993; Alabama/NW Florida Region Convention; info (904) 456-4355; rsvn.s (904) 453-3524

4) May 14-16, 1993; 3rd Gold Coast Convention; rsvn.s (800) 433-2254; info (305) 485-0650 or (305) 772-6415; Gold Coast Convention, PO Box 23325, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307

5) Jun. 4-6, 1993; Spiritual Retreat; Marathon, Florida; info (305) 743-9246

6) Jul. 1-5, 1993; 12th Annual Florida Regional Convention; rsvn.s (800) 422-5333; info (407) 897-2003 (RSO); FRSO, 709 Brookhaven Drive, Suite 3, Orlando, FL 32803

HAWAII: May 28-31, 1993; 7th Annual Big Island Gathering; info (808) 967-8518 or (808) 322-1607; Big Island Area, PO Box 10842, Hilo, HI 96721

ILLINOIS: May 28-31, 1993; 7th Annual Kickapoo River Run; info (217) 373-2063

2) May 28-31, 1993; New Beginnings Area Memorial Weekend Retreat; info (217) 429-1705 or (217) 422-8559; Pre-Reg Only, PO Box 3214, Decatur, IL 62524

3) Jun. 25-27, 1993; 9th Annual Flight To Freedom; info (618) 283-0086 or (618) 326-8890; Flight to Freedom, 22630 Kentucky Road, Ashley, IL 62808

4) Jul. 4, 1993; 3rd Annual Picnic; South Sandusky Recreation Area Picnic Shelter #2, Rend Lake in Southern Illinois

5) Sep. 2-5, 1993; 23rd World Convention for Narcotics Anonymous; info (818) 780-3951; WCC, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409

INDIANA: May 15, 1993; 11th Annual Spring Fling Burger Bash; German Park, 8600 S Meridian, Indianapolis, IN; Central Indiana ASC, PO Box 661, Indianapolis, IN 46206

2) May 28-31, 1993; North Central Indiana Area Convention; info (219) 259-9384 or (219) 293-3159

3) Jun. 18-20, 1993; 10th Annual Campout Retreat; Central Indiana ASC, PO Box 661, Indianapolis, IN 46206

KANSAS: Jul. 1-4, 1993; 15th Annual Free Campout; info (913) 357-7024; Mid-America Region, PO Box 8732, Wichita, KS 67203

LOUISIANA: May 21-23, 1993; 11th Annual Louisiana Regional Convention; rsvn.s (318) 235-6111; info (318) 856-7351 or (318) 235-7945; LRCNA XI, PO Box 796, Lake Arthur, LA 70549

2) Oct. 29-31, 1993; 1st New Orleans Area Convention; rsvn.s (800) 627-4500; info (504) 254-2791; need speakers (minimum five years clean) workshops (three years clean) send tapes by June 1st; New Orleans Convention, PO Box 52212, New Orleans, LA 70152-2212

MAINE: Jun. 11-13, 1993; The Nature of Recovery II; info (207) 375-4935; Central Maine ASC, PO Box 8068, Lewiston, ME 04240-8068

MANITOBA: Jun. 11-13, 1993; 3rd Winnipeg Area Convention; 294 Ellen Street; info (204) 338-5850; Area Service Committee, PO Box 25173, 1650 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2V 4C8

MASSACHUSETTS: Jul. 23-25, 1993; 1st Western Mass. Area Convention; info (413) 747-1679; WMASCNA, PO Box 5914, Springfield, MA 01101-5914

MICHIGAN: Jul. 1-4, 1993; 9th Michigan Regional Convention; info (800) 233-1234; MSO (313) 544-2010; MRCNA IX, PO Box 1480, Berkley, MI 48072-1480

MISSOURI: Jun. 18-20, 1993; 8th Show-Me Regional Convention; info (314) 739-2346; Show-Me Convention, PO Box 689, Bridgeton, MO 63044

MONTANA: Jun. 25-27, 1993; 5th Annual Montana Gathering; info (406) 245-8229; Gathering, PO Box 80761, Billings, MT 59108-0761

NEVADA: Jun. 18-20, 1993; 4th Sierra Sage Regional Convention; rsvn.s (800) 648-3361; info (702) 324-2302; SSRC IV, PO Box 11913, Reno, NV 89510

NEW BRUNSWICK: Jun. 18-20, 1993; 3rd Annual New Brunswick Area Convention; info (506) 451-8492; New Brunswick Area, PO Box 20064, Fredericton, New Brunswick Canada, E3B 6Y8

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Jun. 25-27, 1993; 3rd Granite State Area Campout; info (603) 622-4761 or (603) 644-2651; Campout, PO Box 4354, Manchester, NH 03108

NEW JERSEY: May 28-30, 1993; 8th New Jersey Regional Convention; info (908) 257-4534; New Jersey Convention, PO Box 272, Somerville, NJ 08876

NEW YORK: Apr. 30—May 2, 1993; Heart of New York Area Spring Retreat; Cleveland, New York; NA Retreat, PO Box 772, Syracuse, NY 13201

2) May 29-31, 1993; 7th Annual Buffalo Area Service Committee Retreat; info (716) 878-2316; BASCNA, PO Box 14712, Buffalo, NY 14215

NORTH CAROLINA: May 14-16, 1993; Sand Fiddler Campout; Rogers Bay Campground, Topsoil Beach, NC

OHIO: May 28-30, 1993; 11th Ohio Convention; rsvn.s (216) 499-9410; OCNA XI, PO Box 80228, Station C, Canton, OH 44708

OREGON: May 14-16, 1993; 2nd Pacific Cascade Regional Convention; info (503) 682-2211; PCRCNA 2, PO Box 12664, Salem, OR 97309-0664

PENNSYLVANIA: Jun. 11-13, 1993; 2nd Reading Area Campout; info (215) 373-0241 or (215) 378-7954; Reading Campout, PO Box 6483, Wyomissing, PA 19610

PORTUGAL: May 7-9, 1993; 3rd Portuguese Regional Convention; In the Sea-Side Resort of Sesimbra, South of Lisbon; Host Committee, Apartado 21785, 1138 Lisboa Codes, PORTUGAL

SOUTH CAROLINA: May 28-30, 1993; 1st GAP Area Convention; info (803) 225-4747 or (803) 226-8128; GAP ASC, PO Box 6031, Anderson, SC 29623

SWEDEN: Jul. 23-25, 1993; 10th European Conference and Convention of NA; info 46-8-7652700; helpline 46-8-6002707

UNITED KINGDOM: Aug. 13-15, 1993; 7th Annual United Kingdom Convention; info (071) 272-9040; UKCNA 7, PO Box 1980, London, England, N19 3LS

WEST VIRGINIA: May 7-9, 1993; 10th Annual West Virginia Convention; rsvn.s (304) 373-7860; info (304) 343-8143; Convention Committee, PO Box 2381, Morgantown, WV 26502-2381

WISCONSIN: Jul. 15-18, 1993; 4th Annual Freedom by Choice Campout and Cruise; info (414) 476-4984; Campout, 1534 S 65th Street #2, Milwaukee, WI 53214

2) Aug. 6-8, 1993; 9th Mid-Coast Convention; rsvn.s (800) 552-5121; info (414) 435-8957 or (414) 866-2379; MCC-9, PO Box 9186, Green Bay, WI

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CMBT

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.

Twelve Traditions reprinted for adaptation by permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

The background features several thin, parallel blue lines slanting downwards from left to right. Interspersed among these lines are several blue, curved, brushstroke-like marks. At the bottom of the page, there are soft, light blue clouds. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

My gratitude speaks
when I care
and when I share with others
the NA way

What is Narcotics Anonymous?

NA is a non-profit 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. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only one requirement for membership, the desire to stop using. We suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. 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.