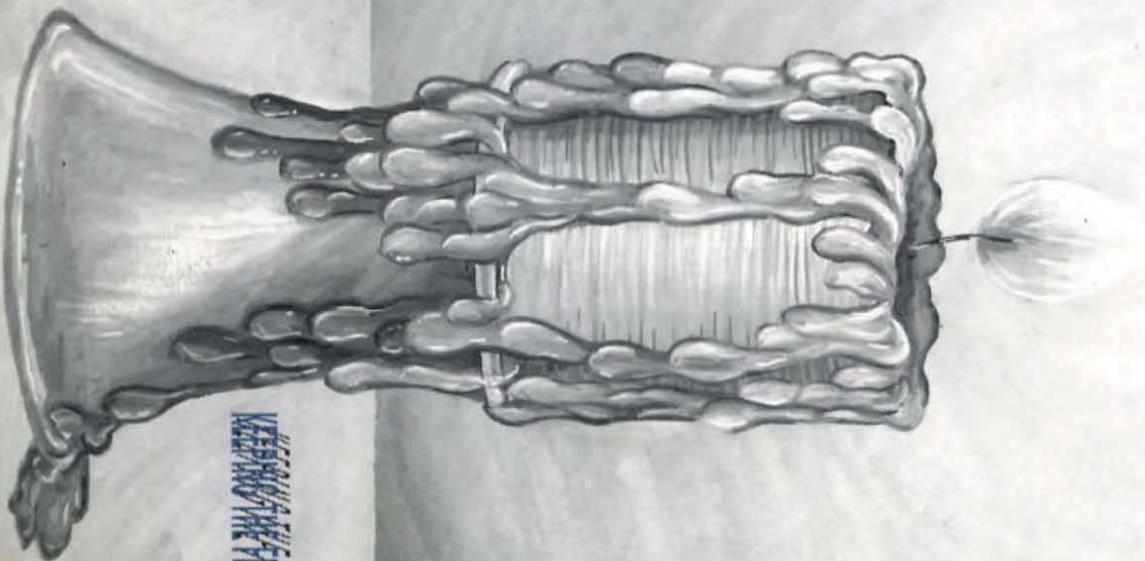


THE
NIA Way[®]
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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION
SEE PAGE 10

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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volume thirteen, number one

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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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SURPRISE!



This is a story of the therapeutic value of one addict loving, caring, and sharing the NA way of life unconditionally with another addict.

I came to NA several years ago. I was at death's door, a broken man. About three months into my recovery, by the grace of a loving, caring Higher Power, I met the man who became my first sponsor.

Thanks to the fellowship and this man, my life underwent a profound change over the next year. I admitted my need for help and began to be restored to sanity. I learned to have faith in a loving and caring Higher Power.

Well, how can you find the right words to say thanks to a man who shares a new way of life with you? Some days the best I can do is to just stay clean.

About a year and a half into my recovery, my sponsor moved out of state. I knew I needed to continue in my recovery and work the steps so I asked my Higher Power to put another sponsor in my life. He has shared the gift of recovery with me, and, thanks to him, I am capable of love today.

Last September, out of the blue, I got a phone call from my first sponsor's wife. She was planning a "this is your life" surprise party for her husband. She called different people from his past and had them fly in from all over the country.

At the party, she made introductions and then had each person come out from a side room and say something, surprising my old sponsor.

When I stepped out he almost fainted. I had flown across the country for this event. My cue to come out was, "What are you willing to do to stay clean?" It was one of the first things he ever said to me. As I came into the room I said, loud and clear, "Anything," and I meant it.

Today he is still my very special friend. If it were not for him and NA, my life would not be the miracle that it is. I am a very grateful addict.

LC, California

Secondhand recovery

My name is Kally, and I am an addict. My heart and spirit are full of love and gratitude for all the wonderful people who have shared with me and shown me how to walk the path of recovery.

I just returned home from the Washington/Northern Idaho Regional Convention of Narcotics Anonymous. As usual after attending a convention, I'm overwhelmed with new awarenesses. I want to share with you what I've learned about changing my attitude and about love.

About a year ago, my two children and I left their dad. Needless to say, we all had some adjusting to do. The mornings especially were very stressful and full of chaos. One night, I decided that maybe I could do something to make this situation a little better. I made a little sign with bright, cheerful pictures on it and wrote, "Today is a new day; how do you want it to be?"

I put up the sign on the bathroom door as a reminder (mostly to myself) because I realized that my attitude would set the tone in our house for the day. The sign was a daily reminder to live by the principles of this

program and—I hope—to help my children in some way, too.

In doing this, I was finally able to get out of myself a bit and see how my attitude affected my children. I was amazed at the impact my attitude has on everyone around me. Some days are better now.

When I came home from the convention and my children returned from their visit with their dad, they asked me what I brought them. I told them that I didn't "buy" them something, but I had a gift to give them that money couldn't buy: love. So I gave them both a big hug and kiss and told them that I loved and missed them.

Later, we looked through the items in the registration packet from the convention. I let the boys choose which sticker they wanted. My youngest son, who is almost eight, chose the sticker with the symbol. He hung it up and wrote inside the circle, "I love you no matter what you do."

This impacted me deeply, because a couple of years ago this same child screamed at the top of his lungs that he hated me. I realized that he has been learning—somehow—about the NA way of life: one of unconditional love and acceptance.

Of course, I want to take all the credit for this, but I can't. I learned how to live in the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous and, thanks to you, I have been able to carry these principles home to practice in my daily life. I am truly grateful.

KP, Washington

The velveteen reading cards

Recently, I chanced across some old, tattered group reading cards during an informal inventory of group property. We had moved our sixteen-year-old meeting in the central United States from one location to another, and the inventory came with the move.

Among the misshapen boxes of group stuff, I found the 8½ x 11 inch reading cards stored with dirty ashtrays, mucky candle holders, and the minutes from years and years of group business meetings.

I was in a throwing-away mode as I looked at the coffee-stained cards. Dust-covered napkins, torn coffee filters and broken coffee cups already had been chucked into a nearby trash can. I collected the cards and a few candle holders, which resembled "The Blob," and threw it all away.

As I reached for another candle holder, which was actually a green cup made from depression-era glass, I paused.

Who had lit the candles that melted and filled its green void?, I thought. What were the topics that addicts discussed by its light? Why were those addicts there? How many meetings did the layers of red, green, and brown scented wax represent? Had returning relapsers stared at its flickering flame, wondering if they could stay clean this time?

I turned to look at the trash can and pulled the old reading cards back out. How many addicts had these cards oriented into the Fellowship of NA? How much hope had they instilled when brought to life by a recovering addict's voice?

I thought of the popular story, "The Velveteen Rabbit," and realized these old cards had been loved into existence just like the stuffed rabbit in the story. Torn, stained, and with curled-up edges—they had become real.

Now I have some old, worn-out reading cards at home. My home group has new, slick cards, which are carrying on where these old ones gave out. The old cards deserve more than a trip to the dump. They have worth. For now they will rest in my home, as will the mucky candle holder. The cards still answer the questions they have always asked.

Who is an addict? We know.
What is the NA program? Love.
Why are we here? For each other.
How does it work? Very well.

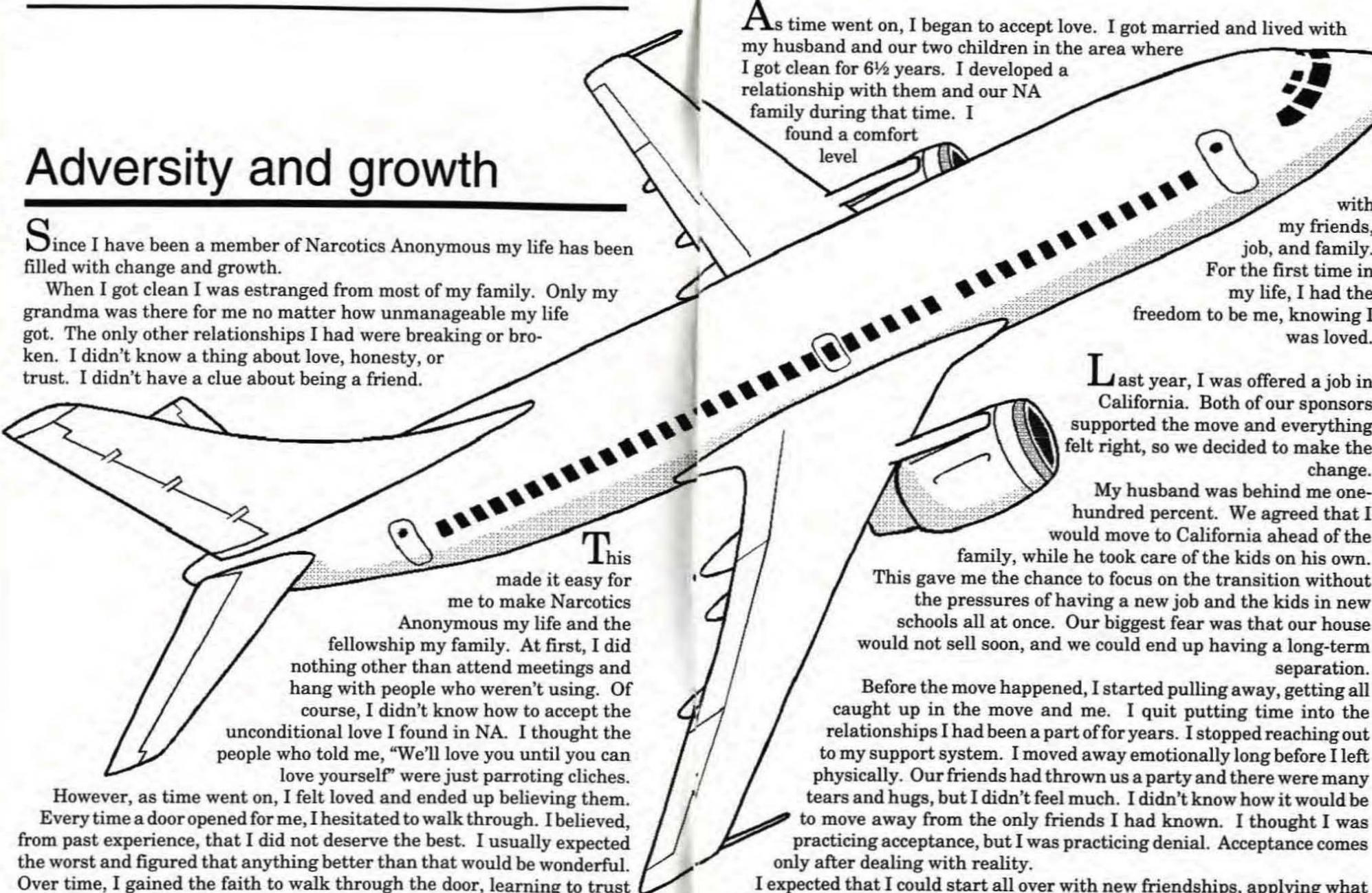
OG, Oklahoma



Adversity and growth

Since I have been a member of Narcotics Anonymous my life has been filled with change and growth.

When I got clean I was estranged from most of my family. Only my grandma was there for me no matter how unmanageable my life got. The only other relationships I had were breaking or broken. I didn't know a thing about love, honesty, or trust. I didn't have a clue about being a friend.



This made it easy for me to make Narcotics Anonymous my life and the fellowship my family. At first, I did nothing other than attend meetings and hang with people who weren't using. Of course, I didn't know how to accept the unconditional love I found in NA. I thought the people who told me, "We'll love you until you can love yourself" were just parroting clichés.

However, as time went on, I felt loved and ended up believing them. Every time a door opened for me, I hesitated to walk through. I believed, from past experience, that I did not deserve the best. I usually expected the worst and figured that anything better than that would be wonderful. Over time, I gained the faith to walk through the door, learning to trust that everything would fall into place. Things turned out better than I could have imagined.

As time went on, I began to accept love. I got married and lived with my husband and our two children in the area where I got clean for 6½ years. I developed a relationship with them and our NA family during that time. I found a comfort level

with my friends, job, and family. For the first time in my life, I had the freedom to be me, knowing I was loved.

Last year, I was offered a job in California. Both of our sponsors supported the move and everything felt right, so we decided to make the change.

My husband was behind me one-hundred percent. We agreed that I would move to California ahead of the family, while he took care of the kids on his own. This gave me the chance to focus on the transition without the pressures of having a new job and the kids in new schools all at once. Our biggest fear was that our house would not sell soon, and we could end up having a long-term separation.

Before the move happened, I started pulling away, getting all caught up in the move and me. I quit putting time into the relationships I had been a part of for years. I stopped reaching out to my support system. I moved away emotionally long before I left physically. Our friends had thrown us a party and there were many tears and hugs, but I didn't feel much. I didn't know how it would be to move away from the only friends I had known. I thought I was practicing acceptance, but I was practicing denial. Acceptance comes only after dealing with reality.

I expected that I could start all over with new friendships, applying what I had learned in my early recovery: how to be a friend, and how to be trusted. I thought that I wouldn't have to make the same mistakes twice. After all, I had learned from my mistakes with sponsorship and with my women friends. Now I could apply all of my growth and be a healthy, kind, and loving recovering addict.

The adjustment period seemed to be short and people in California were just as kind and loving as the people back home. People I hardly knew opened their home to me and treated me with love and respect. Everything was great!

I expected loneliness to be part of the transition, and knew that building relationships with others was vital to my recovery. Knowing was not enough, however. I didn't expect the feelings that came up. I missed my family and friends more than I have ever missed anything in my life.

*Acceptance
comes only
after dealing
with reality*

It wasn't very long before I realized that the adjustment period hadn't happened yet. I felt alone because I didn't have anyone in my life who had been there with me when I got clean, who knew my children since they were babies, and who knew my relationship with my husband.

I had grown a lot in recovery, but all of my character defects were still there. In fact, I was trying so hard to be a certain way, I ignored all the little signs that my character defects were gaining strength every day. I

was running my life and I was in charge. I finally realized that the only way I was feeling was detached and in denial. I was completely off-center and didn't know who I was.

Right about this time, the Northridge Earthquake hit. My denial left and the loneliness set in. I soon realized that I had been caught up with everything but my recovery for quite a while. I had to regroup and start all over with the steps and my new sponsor. After I admitted what was going on and shared it with my new sponsor, I started dealing with the pain of missing my friends and family. It wasn't long before I understood how much I needed all of my support system. I was thankful that my family did not have to go through the earthquake, but I needed their comfort.

I found myself reaching out for the comfort of new friends, and it was there. The quake was horrible, but relationships deepened and bonds strengthened. I found myself feeling genuinely cared for by members of the fellowship and I felt the gift that our fellowship offers: unconditional love.

Although members of the fellowship were very kind, I continued to feel a void. I knew how important it was for me to have a relationship with my Higher Power, but I couldn't seem to connect. I tried to fill the void with non-stop activity with my new friends, but I kept coming back to the same feelings when I was alone: uncertainty and fear. This was nothing new to me because I had felt this way many times in recovery. My lack of daily maintenance always ends the

same: life becomes more than I can handle.

Finally, I got on my knees and prayed, along with writing and attending meetings. The fear left, and I knew everything was going to be okay. It amazes me that I can get into fear and pain and still try to handle it myself, ignoring my Higher Power. Every time I surrender, my HP is right there for me. Then I feel good again, pray, and go to meetings, all the while feeling spiritually centered. I honestly believe that my Higher Power is there with me every step of the way and has not let me down yet.

Of course, everything worked out just the way it was supposed to. I have a wonderful new sponsor and the best home group in Narcotics Anonymous. Our old house sold and my family has joined me. When I look back, I can see that many positive things happened during our separation. We were both given an opportunity to grow. I am sure the loneliness I experienced was something I needed to strengthen my relationship with my Higher Power.

Now, I am looking forward to tomorrow. Life in recovery is a trip, and I haven't gotten bored with it yet!

CK, California



A Christmas wish

I don't know if God takes Christmas wishes more seriously than others, but I do know that wishes can come true.

In December of 1992 I hosted an annual Christmas party for a group of my women friends in the program. We had begun a tradition, four years earlier, of writing letters to God expressing our wishes for the coming year. We would then seal the letters, date them, and tuck them safely away. At the next year's Christmas party we would open them and read aloud what we had wished for the year before. We were always amazed that so many of us received everything on our lists, year after year. But the best part was that none of us could ever recall what we had asked for. We all truly enjoyed this ceremony.

That Christmas I was a very sick addict. I was in relapse, weighed about a hundred pounds, and my mind was so far out in left field I'm surprised I was able to look my friends in the face. But the disease is mighty powerful, thriving especially on dishonesty and deception. I pre-

tended I was clean and gave the party anyway.

One member of our group, the daughter of a very dear friend, was only two or three years old when we started having these parties. For Christmas in 1992 she gave me two extra special gifts. One was a rather dirty, but well-loved, Cabbage Patch doll. She had overheard me expressing a desire to have children, so she brought for me her very own baby.

The second gift was even more special. When it came to write our letters, my friend's daughter requested a pen and paper of her own. After we finished writing, we read our letters from the previous year. At this point, the little girl handed me her letter, asking that it be read, too. It was addressed to me and went something like this: "I hope you have hope, I hope you have food, and I hope you have gravity. Love, Lacy." When I got to the last line—the hope for "gravity"—the tension was broken by giggles from all of us grownups.

Lacy got very indignant. "Well," she said, "you have to have gravity to stay clean!" "Oh, you mean gratitude," her mom responded. Lacy looked confused and asked, "Then what's gravity?" None of us had an answer. Finally, one woman said, "Gravity is the force that keeps our feet on the ground." All the women turned to me and said, "She's right, you need gravity!"

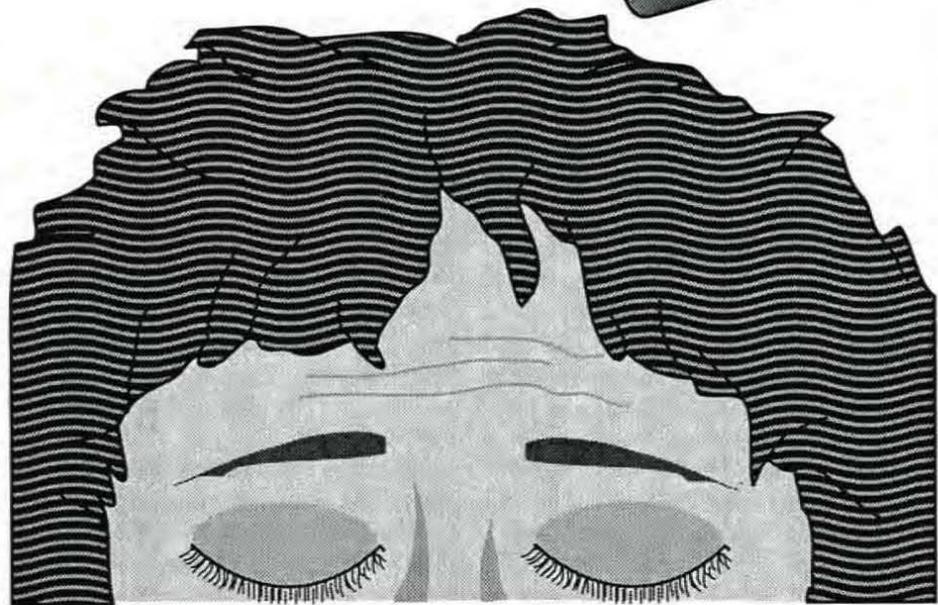
For the next year I proceeded to go the way of most using addicts: jails, institutions, thievery, panhandling, selling myself to strangers, and sleeping in dirty motel rooms or vacant lots. Christmas of 1993 was, for

me, a cruel reminder of all that I had lost.

Then, after the New Year, a wonderful thing happened. I awoke one morning to discover that Lacy's Christmas wish for me had come true. I had gravity! For the first time in what felt like forever, I had my feet on the ground; I felt at home again inside my body. My heart's desire to stay clean was a reality. I believe that as a result of all my pain and devastation, and the prayers of my family and friends, I was brought to a place of surrender.

I'm clean again. I'm in meetings every day and I have hope for a better way of life. My thinking has cleared enough for me to be able to follow direction. Thanks, Lacy, I needed that!

Anonymous



About face



Most of my family are addicts, myself included; the rest have been deeply affected by the disease.

I didn't understand about addiction when I was a child; I only knew that my father was sick. However, I didn't really accept this explanation. I blamed myself. By the time I was twelve, I had found an escape: drugs. No more insecurities! My drug experiences seemed to enhance every aspect of my life. I had arrived, I could do anything, and I would never allow myself to get messed up like so many I knew.

I believed that I actually improved with every new drug experience. More was better. I was impressed with my artistic abilities under the influence. My friends were the best. A dealer's son was my very best friend; I made sure of that.

By the age of fourteen I was hooked. School really cut into my party time so it had to go. My attendance worsened; so did my grades. I was a big disappointment to dad, as usual. He tried to ground me—until

graduation—for stealing a car, so I left home at the age of fifteen.

I had no address. I lived in a tent. I worked in an orchard, but I was not dependable. When I did show up for work, I was so messed up I'd fall off my ladder and damage the trees. Before long, the orchard owners would no longer give me work. The only way for me to survive was to sell and scam.

At age seventeen I was strung out, depressed, angry, resentful, sick, and disgusted. I lived to get high. It was all that mattered. I couldn't quit using. I had tried.

I took meals where I could but didn't really eat often enough. If not for my hippie friends who were somewhat functional, I would have starved.

By the time I was twenty I was suicidal. My artistic abilities had dried up. I was scared to live and scared to die. I was unemployable, and had lost the ability to distinguish a truth from a lie. I hated myself, and I was still a drug pig. I had no pa-

tience, imagination, or money. I hated talking to "straights" and went to great lengths to avoid them.

I was dangerous and paranoid. I lost friends fast; even my favorite source rejected me. I was incapable of maintaining any sort of relationship. I became a recluse. I lost good jobs, nice cars, and beautiful girls. My sanity was waning. I did many things I had sworn I would never do. I had become a scumbag and I knew it. Yet I didn't know I was an addict.

At twenty-four years old, I was married with one son, loaded, and a mess, when I found the first NA meeting in Prince George. There were seven of us. I was scared, but I kept coming back and I didn't use between meetings. I stuck with people who weren't using and avoided the rest—including family members.

Today in recovery, I am learning to be a friend to myself and others by trusting and sharing. Now I can recognize my own truths and lies. My memory and health are improving. I

do as much service work as I feel comfortable doing. My life has become strong, magic, and meaningful.

Now I have three sons. I have become healthy and functional in my life and relationships. I am no longer afraid to reach out for help. I have come to accept a Higher Power, which I don't understand, but I know it works in my life. I have me and I have recovery—one day at a time. I don't know it all, and I like it that way.

Everything I did that once seemed so appealing on drugs is now so much better. New things no longer seem so frightening. My artistic and creative abilities are flowing again. These days, I like to draw dragons because they are powerful and magical, and they promise positive change, like the changes that have happened in my life in recovery.

PH, British Columbia

Home Group



Newsletters



The forgotten principle

From *Gratitude Speaks*, the Phoenix, Arizona NA newsletter: Respect. Is this a forgotten idea? Or is it perhaps unknown? Or maybe, God forbid, it's just ignored.

Do we respect ourselves as individuals or as a fellowship? How much do we respect the belief that Narcotics Anonymous is a God-given program? Do we respect each other?

To find the answer to these questions, we only have to look at some of our behaviors.

An attitude has arisen among many of our members with substantial clean time that they have "done their time" in service to NA. But what is three to six hours a week of commitment to service next to the remaining 160-plus hours a week of freedom from active addiction? Are we just too busy, and our lives too important, to give away what has been freely given to us? What a view!

We dishonor Narcotics Anonymous and ourselves with this type of thinking. If anything, it is our duty to

be present to serve as examples to those who are new to service. Too often, no one is willing to do service work, except newcomers who really have no experience in service. No wonder service becomes the only link many members have to recovery!

Some problems with self-respect come from the therapeutic community. Individualism, self-determination, and other such notions have contaminated the personal programs of a number of our members. These ideas may be valuable for those who have a firm foundation in NA recovery, but are more likely to skew us into self-obsession and self-centeredness. Character defects are the mental and spiritual core of our disease. The best solutions for these are the Sixth and Seventh Steps, and the practice of spiritual principles such as selfless service to the fellowship and the addict who still suffers.

Too frequently, we see "recovering" addicts withdraw from service work and the fellowship to "work on me" or "get a life" when, in reality, doing a moderate amount of service work is part of working a program and leading a balanced life. Unfortunately, many of those who leave service go on to leave recovery itself.

Another form of blatant disrespect we seem to have around the fellowship is the rampant obsession and

compulsion with irresponsible sexual behaviors. It seems that we put down drugs and discover our genitals, at times with little respect for ourselves or our lovers. Some people would have us believe that this type of gratification is okay, and that those of us who object to sexual exploitation of others are judgmental, therefore unspiritual.

One would think that four deaths in the last five years in our area is a grim enough reminder that NA was not set up to be a lonely hearts club. Relationships between unhealthy addicts, clean or not, tend to be unhealthy and addictive relationships. Once again, we find that there is no amount of sex that will make us feel okay about ourselves. We all seem to know this, but just wait till a couple break up, then watch the gathering of scavengers who prey upon someone who needs to be left alone to heal.

Excuses like "That's just the way I am because my parents neglected me, etc. . . ." just don't cut it. And victim statements like "They're so abusive—all of them, all the time, in all situations . . ." are just the other side of the same coin, another sign of not living the program. Suggestions like "Go ahead and get laid, just don't get into any relationships early in recovery" encourage us to fix on each other as objects of gratification and continue the dehumanizing, destructive nature of our disease, robbing us of opportunities to build some self-respect.

There is no excuse for irresponsible behavior. We are lucky that AIDS is not widely found in our local

fellowship, because many of us would be dying or dead.

Most of us don't learn how to have healthy relationships until we have a number of years clean. Until then, we are likely to just substitute one relationship for another, a variation of our old insane addictive pattern. Not until we develop a healthy respect for our disease will these reservations against a more complete recovery ever be surrendered.

It's possible that if we branch out into society, we may meet people who are healthier choices as lovers, partners, or friends. Many people who aren't addicts can teach us about healthy relationships. The self-righteous insecurity that we display when we say things like "Normies are sicker than we are" can trap us into believing that only people in recovery are suitable to have relationships with.

I'm learning that when I live with high amounts of self-esteem, both healthy people and sick people may be drawn to me. What I need in relationships is the "wisdom to know the difference." God and the steps give me that wisdom.

Of course, weathering personal storms in recovery builds our character. This same thing happens for nonaddicts in our society. In NA, we do have a special bond of love, understanding, empathy, and acceptance that comes from respect for our disease and for our recovery. Hopefully, we will learn that practicing and encouraging respect will help us to better accept our assets and liabilities, and to be more fully human.

Anonymous

The banquet

From *Inside Connection*, the American River, California area newsletter: It's ironic to speak of dying in recovery. I'd guess that many of us have spent long, miserable hours contemplating our own ends, and most of us have known someone who has fallen victim to the viciousness of our disease.

Personally, I've witnessed a family member and many of my friends taken away too soon because of the power of death. It's unchangeable,

it's permanent, and it respects no human being. But the "death" I'm talking about here is not of the unchangeable or permanent type; it is, nonetheless, equal in its devastation of human life.

I'm talking about spiritual death—what I sometimes call "death by forgetfulness." How many of you can remember how empty you were on the day you walked into Narcotics Anonymous? Can you recall how every area of your lives was either in ruins or progressing toward hopelessness?

I've never heard anyone's story begin with, "I got here on a grand winning streak." Our experience tells us that the ends are always the same: "jails, institutions, and death."

I came through the doors a dead human being, and NA gave me back my life. In those first few months of recovery it was easy to be hungry for life. If you have nearly starved to death in the grip of a murderous dis-



ease, you have no qualms about pulling your chair up to the banquet and eating your fill. Only after your belly fills might you find yourself facing a "death of forgetfulness."

Perhaps you know some of the symptoms: You forget to pray. You forget to go to meetings. You forget to work with others. You forget you are an addict. You might even forget what brought you here in the first place. "Well and wonderful," you call yourself. It signals the death of an addict as clearly as tolling bells. This doesn't always mean the "well and wonderful" addict will run out and get loaded. Sometimes it just means that addict will wind up in the same misery as before.

How about the concept of five or ten years without using, but not working the steps? No need for God or the program, just you and your self-will on a white-knuckled adventure. It's pain you don't need. What's more, you should keep in mind that when the pain is too terrible, addicts use. Or they're motivated to change!

It seems to me that there is a difference between wanting not to die, and wanting to live! What I truly wish to convey to you is that you have a choice. By finding NA, you have found a program for living. The message that all you have to do is, "just don't use," might be equated with sitting at a feast and only eating the bread. There is so much more, and it's right there on the table in front of you. Dig in, my friends, and taste total life!

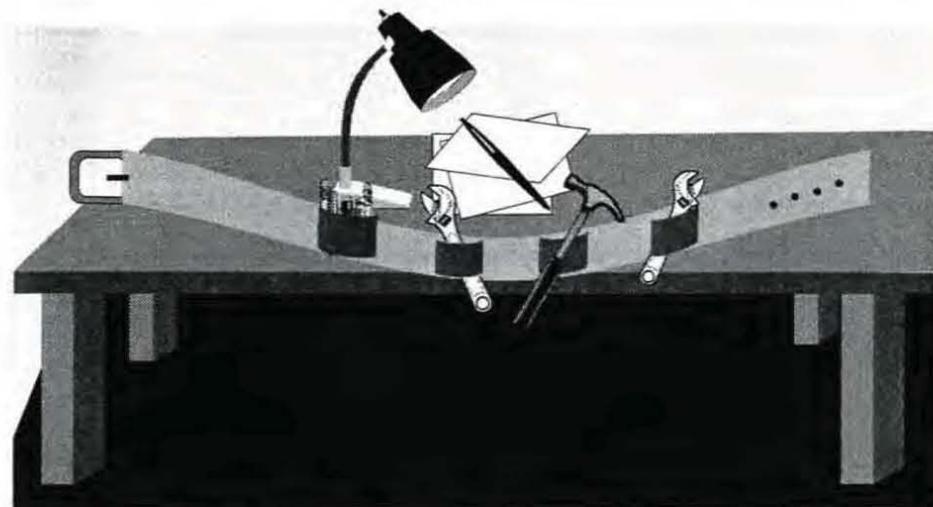
Anonymous

The pen and paper trail

From *Step Write*, the Edmonton, Alberta area newsletter: Very early in my recovery, someone suggested that I begin writing, keeping a journal of my daily activities and how I felt. My first thought was, "No way!" After all, at the time I could barely string together enough words to make a coherent sentence.

I decided to give it a try anyway, but not without my usual misgivings. I bought a cheap notebook and began writing. At first I wrote only about what I did during the day; I was too new to identify my feelings. I'm not even sure I was having any at that point.

Still, by writing down my thoughts and activities I found out that I had a permanent record of things that normally floated in and out of my mind. Those thoughts now existed in the real world, in black and white. I could draw conclusions from them. I could see what I wrote, keep the ideas that seemed right, and begin to change what did not work. That change was possible only because my thoughts had become real on paper.



Writing became a tool, an action that could lead me to right thinking. Over time, my writing began to include how I felt, because now I was able to identify what those feelings were.

For a long time, my writing was private, though not a guarded secret. It simply was not meant for public sharing, even though I often shared some of the general thoughts at meetings.

Then I heard about the area newsletter, and that it needed support. This made me think of sharing my writing. After all, NA is a program of sharing our experience, strength, and hope, as well as our pain.

After considerable thought about my ego and my fears of self-exposure, I decided to submit something to the area newsletter. I had to accept the possibility of rejection. Still, I felt the important thing was that I had taken the action of writing, and had ventured to share it.

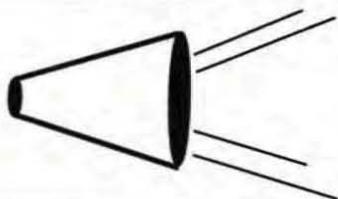
In writing, I have found a tool that I can use as often as I need, whenever and wherever I need, to help keep me

clean and to find some serenity in my life. I am free to write about anything, from my deepest fears to my greatest hopes, from my feelings of love to my anger and resentments. Nothing I write can harm me, although I may feel the pain. I can also feel the relief and joy of having gotten my feelings, thoughts, and words out of my mind and into the light of day, where the good flourishes and the bad withers away. I have discovered that it does not matter how I write—whether I make complete sentences, or write poems or phrases and thoughts that to others may seem unrelated. No one will judge or grade my writing. I can't pass or fail. But the action of writing helps me to win another day clean.

I thank my Higher Power, my God, for this ability to write, and I thank the program of NA for helping me to realize the value of this tool in staying clean and living just for today.

Anonymous

Forum



An update on the steps and traditions language issue

Quite a bit has happened in relation to the "Motion 39" discussion since WSC'94. For the past few months, *The NA Way* has printed a report on a plan developed at WSC'94 for dealing with this issue. The plan, which carried as Motion 88 at WSC'94, called for discussion of this issue during the coming year, created a group—known as the Motion 88 Ad Hoc Group—to help promote this discussion, and outlined a process by which the fellowship's conscience could be registered.

However, what was not clearly reported was a change in the philosophical approach to dealing with this issue. What was first introduced as Motion 39 at WSC'93 was actually altered quite a bit by the working group assigned to discuss it during that conference. The original motion referred only to the male gender assigned to God in NA's steps and traditions. However, the working group at WSC'93 felt that "the issues expressed in Motion 39 are bigger than the language used in Motion 39" and that those issues should therefore be discussed for an extended period of time. The work group recommended that the following two questions be committed to the fellowship.

1. Does the language of the steps and traditions truly reflect the principles of the program?

2. If not, what language does the fellowship feel would better reflect those principles?

The Motion 88 Ad Hoc Group chairperson has asked that it be made clear that, per conference action, these two questions are the issue the fellowship should be discussing. From now on in this report as well as in future issues of *The NA Way*, what was formerly known as Motion 39 will be referred to as the steps and traditions language issue. We hope that this clarifies this matter.

The ad hoc group has developed an issues paper and workshop guidelines that the fellowship can use to hold discussion forums. It was mailed to *Newline* recipients and is available to anyone requesting it.

The ad hoc group originally believed that after a year of fellowship-wide discussion, the fellowship would be ready to decide that if a change to the steps and traditions was desired, how that process would occur. However, due to a delay in preparing the above-mentioned paper and the fact that the range and depth of this issue has been misunderstood, the ad hoc group now feels that the discussion should be extended for another year.

The ad hoc group wishes to emphasize that the time frame set out for *discussion* means just that, not *decision*. In other words, please focus

your discussions on the principles involved in the above questions.

The NA Way Editorial Board is discussing whether or not this column should be extended for another year. We will keep you posted.

The straw

With the World Service Conference fast approaching, it may be too late for my thoughts to have any bearing on the decision our fellowship is facing. My concern is not only about this particular motion, but about the general direction our fellowship is taking. Motion #39 is, for me, the "last straw" that has prompted me to write.

Over the last five years I have observed a tendency in meetings and in *The NA Way* to avoid direct reference to God, using the term "HP" instead. I have seen our meetings switch from the Lord's Prayer to the Serenity Prayer to the Third Step Prayer, which makes no reference to God at all. I have observed a faction of our fellowship dispense with the word "Amen" at the end of our prayer and I have ended up feeling judged as insensitive to the nonreligious should I choose to say "Amen."

I believe that the rationale behind these things is a sincere desire to have our fellowship be all-inclusive, to emphasize that "anyone may join us, regardless of... religion or lack of religion." But the overall effect that I see disturbs me greatly. At the close of our meeting, when we join hands to pray—in what should be our moment of greatest unity—what often seems to occur is not only disunifying but sometimes confusing to the point of being embarrassing. In a large speaker meeting in my area, it is a regular occurrence for half of the

meeting to start saying the Serenity Prayer and half to begin the Third Step Prayer. Even if we are all in agreement that we will say the Third Step Prayer, usually the leader is not sure how to begin, often starting awkwardly with "Take..."

Even worse, at the end of whatever prayer we are saying, half the group says "Amen" and half does not, so that we are not in unison of either hand or voice when we all attempt to say, "Keep coming back, it works!" My thought is often, "Why would I keep coming back to a group that can't even get this together?"

The questions I think we need to ask ourselves are these: Have we as a fellowship set ourselves up to be so different than other twelve-step groups that we have become cliquish and no longer an attraction to the newcomer? Is our uniqueness of philosophy and language always of benefit to both the newcomer and the fellowship? Are we really clarifying our message or just tinkering for the sake of tinkering? Is our attention to such minutiae as the wording of our steps and traditions really denying much deeper spiritual principles at work? If it's working, do we need to fix it?

ML, California

Principle Maintenance

Recently, while sharing with another recovering addict, I mistakenly referred to my HP as "he." Remembering my feelings on Motion #39 I immediately corrected myself with "it," as silly as it may sound. I did not intend to make a statement, nor did I intend to take a side; I corrected myself because my concept of a Power greater than myself happens to be neuter. I am grateful that Motion #39 has helped me to recognize this.

When I first found NA, I had a serious problem with the concept of a supreme being or "God." This stemmed from my experiences with organized religion. I specifically remember hearing that I could devise a God of my own understanding. However, a double standard exists concerning this issue in Narcotics Anonymous. While our steps refer to a personal, subjective God, they also dictate what sex this being must be.

In a recent article I saw the quote, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Those whose understanding of an HP happens to be masculine might feel this way; it only confirms their belief. I would argue that the steps and traditions are "broke."

Yes, I really said that. The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous are contradictory, outdated, and blatantly sexist. This does not mean I cannot practice some open-mindedness and apply them as I always have; but should I have to compromise my values to be a member of Narcotics Anonymous? I heard somewhere that, "The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using."

Why are our steps and traditions gender-specific? The answer rests in outside issues. Someone who didn't work a Narcotics Anonymous program wrote them. The writers of AA's steps, which our fellowship adapted in 1953, were no doubt influenced by organized religion as well as by society as a whole. According to most sources, AA sprang from the Oxford Group, an organization based in religion. In major religions, God is consistently portrayed as an old, wise-looking man.

Narcotics Anonymous is not a religious program. Our Basic Text confirms that, "Our concept of God

comes not from dogma but from what we believe and from what works for us." The part of our steps where we assign gender to God endorses a belief system we claim not to support, contradicting the Sixth Tradition. The Basic Text tells us that true spiritual principles are never in conflict. Instead, they compliment each other.

Another popular argument is that the English language uses the pronouns "he" and "him" to refer to a noun that has no gender, especially an object deemed to be animate. While this may be true, English is a sexist language, handed down by a society of male dominance. We need not repeat the mistake.

As I stated earlier, I feel strange calling my HP "it," but this term best describes my understanding of God. To all those opposed, the proposed changes would not limit you or change your life as a recovering addict in any way. Sometimes clinging to old ways prevents us from trying new things in our recovery, stopping our individual growth. The same applies to our fellowship as a whole. If adopted in the spirit of open-mindedness, these changes would allow our fellowship to grow in unity, inviting in those who feel excluded. As a responsible member of NA (and a male), I believe it is our duty and our challenge to end the hypocrisy and make the necessary repairs to our steps and traditions. However, in the spirit of the First Tradition I will do my best to support whatever decision the fellowship makes. As implied in the Second Tradition, God knows best.

MK, Pennsylvania

Viewpoint



Recovering Youths or Recovering Addicts?

I am writing to bring up an issue that affects some members of our fellowship, and I would like to see it addressed. That issue is youth in recovery. We have a whole pamphlet on the subject, but I guess I wanted to talk about it a little, and from a different angle than the pamphlet does.

Our Basic Text says, and I believe, that "anyone may join us regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed religion, or lack of religion." It was a relief to hear that I could be a part of Narcotics Anonymous even though I was not in my forties or fifties. The disease of addiction affects people of all ages. NA has grown so much over the years—actually getting people of all ages into the rooms—that we are now better able to offer recovery to people of all ages.

I became a part of NA when I was fairly young, and I got involved in service work and some different things that NA offered me. When I first came around, there were not a lot of young people in my area. I wondered why.

Throughout my recovery I have heard lots of times: "I wish I had found this program when I was your age." And people keep calling me "kid." When this happens, I feel apart from the rest of NA. I don't go around calling other members "grandpa" and "grandma" or even nicknames, which I think set people apart.

The ideal of us all being equal has been realized for me over time, but the fact is that there *is* discrimination toward young people in the fellowship. Today, I don't feel offended by it, but I wonder how it affects young people who are just coming into the program. I try to pay attention to newcomers who look like they are having a hard time. I just want to say that although I am young, I have gained knowledge from other addicts because they felt the same way I did. Our ages didn't have anything to do with our ability to share recovery.

My motive for writing this was not to complain that the fellowship has done me wrong. I just wanted to let people of all ages know they have a place in the fellowship. You may feel

unwanted because of your age, but what is age anyway? Just a number. It doesn't say a thing about who you are. Learning to feel accepted is a personal thing that we all experience when we first find recovery, and getting past that barrier takes time, patience, and hard work on your part.

You might run into an older, closed-minded individual who says you are too young, but don't listen. Our fellowship is not represented by one or two people. We are all equal—from the person with one day clean to the person with many years clean. Feeling "a part of" may require faith in some unknown source, which you may not yet have found. But if you try, you will find it.

Can you imagine having a fifteen-year-old ASR or a seventeen-year-old trusted servant? How about a scenario which might scare you even more: a sponsor who is still in puberty? These are possibilities in our fellowship, since age has nothing to do with recovering from the disease of addiction.

We have an opportunity to reclaim life at a much younger age. Although we may use the excuse of not relating to the "older crowd," Narcotics Anonymous is a place where age makes no difference. We come together to experience the joy of recovery. No matter how old you are or what you have done in the past, Narcotics Anonymous has a place for all addicts.

AP, Iowa

Shhhhhh!

I just attended a convention. During the readings at the speaker meetings, the members (audience) all screamed out the numbers of the steps and traditions as the reader was trying to say them. In addition, comments were made for different words and statements in our steps and traditions.

I've seen and heard this before, and I've always felt uncomfortable when it was happening. I'll even cop to the fact that the first two or three times I saw this (when I had four or five years clean), I participated in this disrespectful behavior. I feel a lot different now at almost twelve years clean. This time, I felt very hurt inside because these very precious steps and traditions saved my life and they gave me such joy that I sometimes have difficulty believing I'm alive and not in a fairy tale.

After hearing the screaming, my thoughts turned right away to the newcomers. What did they think about our readings while hearing this mockery?

I believe that we as a fellowship need to start passing the message that these steps and traditions *are* the program and should be respected. We have practiced these principles, and we are recovering and

finding happiness in life. Please, think about how we as a whole and as individuals present NA and its important, life-saving principles. Thank you and God bless.

DW, South Carolina

Dangerous prayer?

I recently read an article by a fellow addict who wrote of his/her concern about using the Lord's Prayer at meetings. The concern seemed centered around the author's impression that using the prayer gives our program a Christian emphasis rather than a spiritual emphasis, and that it affects NA as a whole.

I must confess that this article raised many intense emotions for me, because I believe in using the prayer. However, after much thought, I realized that I should thank the writer of that article, for it stimulated me to think more about what that prayer means to me. Also, since that addict shared his/her experience, strength, and hope, I would now like to share mine on this topic.

Yes, the Lord's Prayer is found in the Bible and millions of Christian people have been using it for hun-

dreds of years to seek out "God as they understand Him." But I think it's a pretty neutral prayer that we addicts can safely use on our newfound spiritual path. Neither the name "Christ" nor the word "Christian" appear in the prayer.

If the concern is truly that NA is carrying a "Christian message," then let's look at something far more tangible. A vast majority of the meetings I've attended over the years have been held on church grounds. The truth is that us addicts probably spend more time at church than most Christians! I can't think of a stronger Christian connotation within our fellowship than this. And if being labeled a "Christian fellowship" is truly a growing threat to NA, then, besides using the Lord's Prayer, shouldn't we all move out of the churches to safeguard our spiritual emphasis? Of course not! The church is really only a meeting place and the Lord's Prayer is one among many prayers to use if we like.

Let's face it. In meetings there are going to be newcomers who, in their sharing, label our fellowship as "Christian" because they don't know the difference between their religion and the NA program. I think most of our long-term members have listened to a lot of this kind of sharing, without worrying about it affecting NA's future. My own reaction is usually a patient smile, because I realize the newcomer is just starting on the path and has lots to learn—just like I did when I came into the rooms. The real threat is from closed-minded members who feel they must address and somehow silence those who

share things that make them uncomfortable.

The article also suggested that we use "Just For Today" to close meetings instead of the Lord's Prayer. Well, "Just for Today" is not a prayer. It's more like a daily action plan. It's nice, but . . .

A prayer is a humble entreaty addressed to God. A prayer exemplifies the meaning of our Second Step, and clearly sums up the "we" of our program. I can't do it alone, but we can.

The program also suggests we turn our lives over to God as we understand God. The Lord's Prayer can work wonderfully for that. It is written in the first-person plural—in other words, a "we" version. Since we're trying in NA to find knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out, the words, "Thy will be done" in the prayer seem like they were written just for NA.

"Give us this day" speaks of a "one day at a time" approach to life. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us" emphasizes the importance of the Fourth and Ninth Steps. We should all be able to relate to the words, "Lead us not into temptation." I believe it's my Higher Power's will that I was led to NA and able to get clean. I see the personification of the words, "Deliver us from evil," in every clean addict sitting in our meetings.

In order to stay clean, I have to stay involved in NA and do all that it suggests. That means continual strengthening of my spiritual program, the results of which will be that temptations to use will have little or no hold over me.

Let us remember that we all come to NA as spiritual newcomers. There are lots of spiritual tools available for us to use. Many are going to adopt Christianity, or at least parts of it, and some will share about it. They have just as much right to as anyone else has to share his or her own spiritual experiences. Let us also remember that Christianity is one of many faiths that has been around a lot longer than NA. Who are we to turn up our noses at anyone or anything?

Believe it or not, I'm not writing this article to defend Christianity or even the Lord's Prayer. My desire is only to shed some light on a dangerous undercurrent that is flowing around in NA and show how silly it can be in light of the damage it's starting to cause. I'm seeing too much division and loss of faith in the program because of people taking sides and closing doors to the outside world. I've never heard of anyone getting loaded because they use the Lord's Prayer. That concept is too totally absurd to even consider. If you and your group don't like a certain prayer, fine, use another. But please spare us your personal crusades. Those generally do more harm than good for the whole.

GD, California

From our readers



Peace in NA, goodwill toward addicts

Christmas time is special to "regular" society, but for this addict, I have "Christmas" every day of my recovering life. If you're a member of NA, you can probably relate to what I'm saying. If you don't understand this yet, please read on.

At Christmas time, people think about and pray for world peace. Recovering addicts pray every day for inner peace. We want to practice spiritual principles. We strive to do so on a daily basis; much of the world thinks about spiritual principles only once a year. Gratitude is practiced yearly on Thanksgiving. We think about it and practice it every day.

Christmas brings people together. They embrace and talk of being closer to each other. They're more cheerful. We can get this at every meeting, function, or worship we attend in NA, whether it's winter, spring, summer, or fall.

We celebrate recovery from the disease of addiction every day we stay clean. The rest of the world mostly sets things aside to celebrate once a year. Making New Year's resolutions is a fantasy for most. Setting goals in recovery is a reality for us.

We express emotional highs and lows. We walk through obstacles and go on to achievements. We add up

our liabilities and our assets to get a better understanding of ourselves. Traditions bind us together and keep us from being self-willed or mean to our fellows.

Goodwill in recovery and peace to all who seek it.

BL, Illinois

Point of departure

Hi, my name is Jeff and I'm an addict. I live on an island off the coast of Puerto Rico. The island where I live has no NA meetings. To get to any recovery meetings, I have to take a boat or plane to Puerto Rico, then rent a car or take a taxi to get to a meeting. I get to a meeting once a month. Sometimes I can go twice a month.

I have been a recovering member of NA for four years now. My program of recovery consists of meetings through the mail, and practicing the Twelve Steps in my life on a daily basis. For me, the key to recovery is writing a Tenth Step daily, and practicing my reliance on my Higher Power.

I remember that when I had one year clean, I used to complain about some of the NA meetings in my area. Today I am grateful if I can go to any recovery meetings. The nearest meeting is a great distance away from where I live. I don't speak Spanish, and I don't have transportation.

I will be on this island for eight more months. I know that I am here for a reason. I believe that there is something my HP wants me to learn, and I can learn it here on this island.

I am writing this to let others know that it is possible to stay clean and recover from the disease of addiction in this type of situation.

JS, Puerto Rico

Keep reaching out—it works

I went to a one-year anniversary celebration last night and was reminded how I'm blessed with the Narcotics Anonymous program. Besides having the disease of addiction, I also suffer from a physical illness that causes me chronic pain. Just as I had to peel away layers of denial about my addiction, I have had to work to gain deeper levels of acceptance about this physical disease. Thank God for the literature, the phone, and the ability to be honest with my doctors.

It is very humbling to have to reach out and ask for, or accept, a ride when the meeting is just a few blocks away. I'm grateful to find that the love and caring I learned to give is returning to me, multiplied. Recovery has great rewards and it keeps me growing. It's now possible for me to focus on the positive, and I see the benefits.

As I work through Step Four, I notice there is a difference between a character defect and the effects of my physical ailment. My sponsor can help me work on this. I know my attitude affects the complete me.

If anyone can relate, please believe it's all right to receive support in NA. It helps us heal in more ways than one. So be courageous and reach out. It works.

JW, Canada

We need articles!

Remember that The NA Way Magazine is your meeting in print. Like any other meeting of which you're a part, you'll get the most out of this one by participating. Let your voice be part of the message that gets carried during the meeting. Write! We are in need of material right now, so don't wait.

Who writes these articles?

You do!

The articles you see in this magazine are written by NA members like yourself. You need not consider yourself a skilled writer. You don't have to know all the rules of grammar. We have an editorial team whose job it is to take care of those details. What we need is your unique perspective on the NA program. Without it, we don't have a message to carry.

What should I write about?

Write about any topic related to recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. Share with our readers the same way you would share with other addicts at any other NA meeting. Is there a topic you've enjoyed hearing or sharing about lately? Are you working a particular step, and having some eye-opening experiences? Has there been a turning point in your recovery? Tell us about it. We'd love to hear from you.

Comin' up

Calendar						
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		



CANADA

Ontario: 31 Mar - 2 Apr; 8th Ontario Regional Conv; Niagara Falls; rsvns (905)356-8444; info ORCNA, Box 23006, Niagara Falls, Ontario L2E 7J4

Toronto: 30 June - 2 July; 5th Canadian Conv; International Plaza and Conference Center; info (416)783-4393; CCNA, Lawrence Plaza, Postal Outlet, N Ontario M6A 3B7

INDIA

Maharashtra: 27-29 Jan; 3rd Bombay Area Conv; Khandala; fax 0091-492-26-87; info BACNA, PO Box 16489, Bombay, India 400 016

NEW ZEALAND

North Island: 3-5 Feb; 4th Regional Conv; Oratia; rsvns (09)4452665; fax (09)3022334; info Regional Convention, PO Box 6826, Wesley St., Oratia, Auckland, New Zealand

SWITZERLAND

Vaud: 24-26 Mar; Switzerland Area Conv; info. Convention Committee, CP 429, 1000 Lausanne 17, Switzerland

UNITED STATES

California: 10-12 Mar; 1st Western States Literature Conv; Huntington Beach; info (818)359-0084

2) 14-16 Apr; 4th Southern California Spring Gathering; Manhattan Beach; rsvns (800)333-3333; info (310)438-3902; Spring Gathering, Box 20247, Fountain Valley, CA 92708

Connecticut: 6-8 Jan; 10th Connecticut Regional Conv; info CTCNA, Box 2121, Middletown, CT 06457

2) 28-30 Apr; United Shoreline Area Conv; Mystic; rsvns (203)536-4281; info (203)437-7229; USANA, Box 1807, Groton, CT 06340

Delaware: 10-12 Mar; 1st Small Wonder Area Conv; Wilmington; rsvns (800)777-9456; info (302) 656-5903; SWACNA, Box 0808, Wilmington, DE 19899

Florida: 10-12 Mar; 6th Spring Service Break; Miami Beach; rsvns (800)327-6363; info FSSBNA, 5122 NW 79 Ave #108, Miami, FL 33166

Georgia: 13-15 Jan; 7th Peace in Recovery; Augusta; rsvns (706)855-8100; info (706)860-8784; Box 15863, Augusta, GA 30909

Hawaii: 24-26 Mar; 11th Oahu Gathering; info (808)942-3708; Gathering, Box 75271, Honolulu, HI 96836

Illinois: 10-12 Feb; 4th Rock River Conv; South Beloit; rsvns (815)389-3481; info (815)397-0911; RRC, Box 1891, Rockford, IL 61110

Indiana: 3-5 Mar; 2nd Indianapolis Area Conv; rsvns (317)244-6861; info (317)875-5459; ISNAC, Box 47496, Indianapolis, IN 46247

Kansas: 7-9 Apr; 12th Mid-America Regional Conv; rsvns (913)827-8856; info (913)823-3854; MARC, Box 242, Salina, KS 67402

Kentucky: 20-22 Jan; 5th Louisville Area Conv; rsvns (502)451-6463; info Box 37311, Louisville, KY 40233

2) 14-16 Apr; 9th Kentucky Regional Conv; rsvns (502)443-8000; info Box 1584, Paducah, KY 42002

Louisiana: 26-30 May; 13th Louisiana Regional Conv; rsvns (504)734-9794; info (504)733-2213; LRCNA, Box 1314, Hammond, LA 70404

Maine: 10-12 Mar; 3rd Learning Event; Alfred; info (603)432-0168; NEERSC, Box 1752, Portland, ME 04104

Massachusetts: 17-19 Feb; 3rd Boston Area Conv; rsvns (800)228-9290; info 398 Columbus #2, Boston, MA 02116

2) 3-5 Mar; 6th New England Regional Conv; Framington; info (617)648-3139; NERC, Box 393, Arlington, MA 02174

Michigan: 13-16 Apr; 3rd Detroit Area Conv; Detroit; rsvns (800)228-3000; info (313)361-4214; speaker tapes (5 yrs. clean) to: Box 241221, Detroit, MI 48224

2) 29 June - 2 July; 11th Michigan Regional Conv; Flint; rsvns (810)239-1234; info (810)544-2110; speaker tapes to: MRCNA, Box 7116, Novi, MI 48376

Nebraska: 25-26 Feb; 8th Fremont Area Campout; Lynwood; info (402)727-7351; 99 South Irving, Fremont, NE 68025

Nevada: 23-26 Feb; 9th So. Nevada Conv; rsvns (800)634-6713; info (702)656-7909; SNCNA, Box 4542, E Tropicana #101, Las Vegas, NV 89121

2) 14-16 July; 4th California-Arizona-Nevada Area Conv; Laughlin; rsvns (800)227-3849; info (602)754-4260; speaker tapes (5 yrs. clean) to: Box 21975, Bullhead City, AZ 86439

New Jersey: 3-5 Mar; 5th Cape-Atlantic Area Conv; rsvns (800)695-4685; info (609)391-2144; CAACNA, Box 7386, Atlantic City, NJ 08404

2) 31 Mar - 2 Apr; 1st Capital Area Conv; East Windsor; rsvns (609)392-8508; info CAC, Box 741, Trenton, NJ 08604

New York: 10-12 Mar; 1st Rochester Area Conv; rsvns (716)475-1910; info (716)482-8977; RAC, Box 485, Rochester, NY 14603

2) 26-28 May; 10th Greater New York Regional Conv; hotel (800)233-1234; info GNYRC, PO BOX 285, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

North Carolina: 13-15 Jan; Western North Carolina Conv; Asheville; rsvns (800)HOLIDAY; info (704)298-9562

Ohio: 6-8 Jan; 6th Central Ohio Area Conv; Columbus; rsvns (614)846-0300; info (614)252-1700

2) 4-6 Aug; 1st Tri-Area Conv; Cleveland; info (216)663-4025; speaker tapes (3 yrs. clean) to: Box 33372, North Royalton, OH 44133

Oklahoma: 20-22 Jan; 5th Winter Convention; info (405)447-4650; NWC, Box 1455, Norman, OK 73070

Oregon: 25 Feb; Regional H&I Learning Day; Eugene; info Learning Day, Box 262, Eugene, OR 97440

2) 19-21 May; 3rd Pacific Cascade Regional Conv; Bend; info PCRC, Box 40844, Eugene, OR 97404

3) 29 Sep - 1 Oct; 8th Pacific Northwest Conv; speaker tapes (3 yrs. min. clean) to: Box 80146, Portland, OR 97280

Pennsylvania: 3-5 Feb; 11th Mid-Atlantic Regional Learning Conference; Harrisburg; rsvns (717)939-7841; info (717)944-5905; MARLCNA-11, Box 4616, Harrisburg, PA 17111

2) 14-16 Apr; Greater Philadelphia Regional Conv; rsvns (800)822-4200; info Box 14170, Philadelphia, PA 19138

Puerto Rico: 21-23 July; 6th Unidos Podemos; Condado Plaza Hotel; San Juan; info (809)763-5919

South Carolina: 13-15 Feb; 6th Central Carolina Area Conv; Hilton Head Island; info (800)922-6587 or (803)254-6262

2) 27-29 May; 3rd Greenville-Anderson-Pickins Area Conv; Clemson; rsvns (803)654-7501; info (803)882-0200; info. GAPAC, Box 6031, Anderson, SC 29623

Tennessee: 11-12 Feb; 3rd Upper Cumberland Area Anniversary; Cookeville; info (615)498-2885; UCAA, Box 164, Rickman, TN 38580

Texas: 24-26 Feb; 11th Texarkana Area Conv; rsvns (903)793-6565; info (501)772-5014; TACNA, Box 6321, Texarkana, TX 75501

2) 14-16 Apr; 10th Lone Star Regional Conv; Fort Worth; rsvns (817)870-2100; info (800)747-8972; LSRCNA, 1510 Randolph # 205, Carrollton, TX 75006

Utah: 10-12 Mar; Northern Utah Area Conv; info NUACNA, PO Box 242, Ogden, UT 84402

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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.

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

What is Narcotics Anonymous

NA is a nonprofit 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

My Gratitude Speaks...

*When I Care
and When I Share
with Others
the NA Way*