

THE **N**A **W**ay[®]

M A G A Z I N E

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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

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A weekend in paradise

Yeah! After months of waiting, the time for the event had finally arrived. We all expected the function to be especially memorable because after seven years of having just a cook-out, we were now going to have a three-day camp-out. I had been waiting an entire year, ever since I first attended the Hawg-In last year.

I began getting ready two weeks early, purchasing supplies and renting gear. I drove across the state with only my three-year-old, Randy, and a speaker tape for company. Finally, I arrived. I registered, got some hugs, met a few new people, and bought a T-shirt.

I headed down to set up camp and stake my claim (temporarily) on good old Mother Earth. After sorting out the poles and laying out the tent, it became obvious that something was amiss: the directions made no sense! There were no "white" or "red" extensions to place in the center slot on my rented tent. No brown either. What was going on here? Did I have the wrong poles? Arghh! An hour and a half later, with the help of a few other addicts, my tent finally stood in all its glory. Problem: right tent, right poles, wrong set of instructions.

I milled around and met a few other addicts, most of whom recognized me immediately. After all, a raving lunatic waving poles around her head and screaming profanities is rather hard to miss. A few more campers arrived and I eased into familiar and typical addict conversation. "Where are you from? Been around long? Hold any service commitments?"

About the time I started to get comfortable, I had to drive to town (almost twenty miles away). On the way back it started—rain! A torrential downpour from the heavens above. I took comfort in the knowledge that all my gear was safe inside the tent. I had even remembered to put the flaps up. Back at the campsite I sought refuge under a tarp with eight or nine other addicts and a picnic table covered with wet gear, surrounded by an inch and a half of standing water. The rain will pass quickly, I told myself. Besides, I was really getting to know my new friends in such close quarters. The rain slowed to a steady drizzle but showed no sign of stopping. My sanity and serenity were fading fast.

"Stop it! Sit still! Quit squirming! Don't touch the stove! No, you can't go out! There aren't any hamburgers, want a chip?" I kept up a steady interchange with Randy. Drip, drip, wipe, spray, scratch—where were those bugs coming from? "No, quit, stop it. Sit down." Splash! (Sigh.) "Momma, I gotta go." So did I. Where was that primitive potty? I told Randy to stay put while I went to find a flashlight. My tent leaked. Several inches of water covered the entire

floor of the tent, except where the clothes and bedding had soaked up some of it. This was practically the last straw. How much more could I tolerate? "God, grant me the . . ." I muttered under my breath. I headed back to get Randy and was relieved to find him playing with other addicts. "We" were doing what I was incapable of at that time.

After some discussion we decided to head up to the pavilion to have a much-needed meeting and some coffee. The topic: gratitude. I decided that I had worked too hard to let a little rain send me home. I also got honest enough to let these people know that I was afraid. I was fighting against an invisible enemy (myself) in an attempt to meet some other addicts and make new friends. I was grateful to be clean for another day. I was grateful that other addicts would weather this storm with me, and together we could learn more about ourselves and each other. I shared about realizing the meaning of "powerlessness" and "accepting life on life's terms." (Even if that meant sleeping in a puddle.)

It was still drizzling next morning when I crawled out of my tent to find the "facilities." I headed up to the main kitchen to see who else had survived the night of flash floods. I needed a meeting (not to mention a break). I stumbled into the kitchen and found other addicts, a plate of fried sausage, two pots of coffee, and a stove to dry out by! By ten o'clock, a lot more addicts had shown up and I was beginning to enjoy myself.

I went back to "the swamp," gathered up everything wet, and headed

to town to find a laundromat. While putting the last of our stuff into the dryer I heard a voice behind me. "So where did ya'll say you were from?" I turned around and found two women addicts! We talked for a while about the rain, meetings in their area, service work, sponsors, relationships. I had new friends! My HP had sent me a meeting and the sun was coming out! Awesome! I made it back to the park and the rest of the day went all too quickly—games, food, auction, speaker meeting, campfire meeting, and sleep (in an almost-dry tent).

*"I was fighting
against an
invisible enemy
(myself)..."*

The next day, as we gathered for our last formal meeting, I was amazed. The sun was shining. The birds were singing. Everything seemed clean and new. I was surrounded by new friends. I thanked my HP for the opportunity to attend this event. I gave thanks for the food and fun and special thanks for the fellowship and the new friends. This had indeed become "paradise." It was a wonderful experience, one that I will never forget. Hope to see you there next year!

MS, Georgia

What we put into it

I am writing to share my experience, strength, and hope about my first NA meeting.

First, I think it is important to say what brought me to NA. Actually, it's very simple. All I wanted was to learn how not to use drugs.

My addiction took me to hospitals and emergency rooms. Four months before I got clean, I found myself again in an emergency room. I liked the attention of the ambulance, the chaos. I was sent to detox, where they allowed me to lay around for seven days until I was no longer "ill due to addiction."

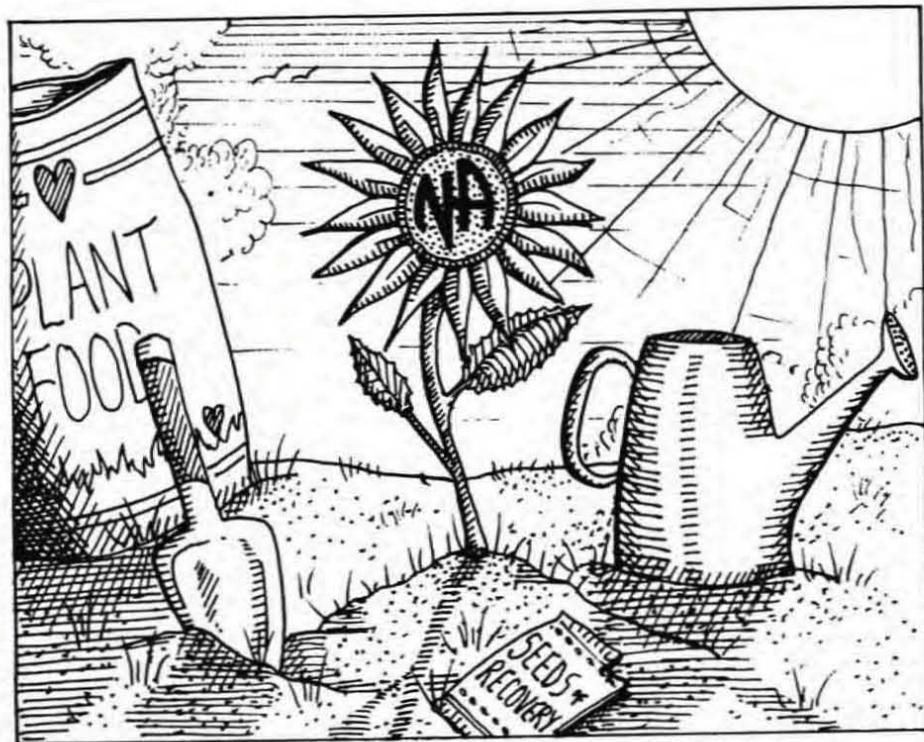
I returned to the hospital in an ambulance. The doctors suggested exploratory surgery. I didn't hear surgery, removal of body parts, or much of anything else except that if I signed on the dotted line I would get more drugs.

After my surgery, I left the hospital with the simplest of hopes and dreams. I planned to go grocery shopping, wash the clothes, or walk on the beach with my children. I didn't make it eight hours before I was again at the dope man's house, a little more desperate than the last time.

I knew by then that detox and treatment centers would no longer accept me unless I was hospitalized to be "medically detoxed." Four months later, I went to a detox center that would accept me if the only drug I used was the drug alcohol. I had to sign a paper that said that. Once inside, I was required to attend two in-house meetings a day. They were run by people from another fellowship who talked about how the drug alcohol affected their lives. It wasn't good or bad. I just thought that it had little to do with me. I couldn't relate.

I found out later that an NA meeting was held once a month. That meeting saved my life. Here were three people I understood. They had done what I had done. They knew the pain and struggle I was going through. They were just like me. They didn't have quite as much literature or as much clean time as the other fellowship's people, but they were just like me. They had learned to live without drugs. I listened that night. I knew that there was hope for me, too.

I had finally found hope. I took all of the pamphlets they offered (they only had one of each). I told the counselors that NA was where I was going to go when I got out of detox. I was told that there was "no good recovery in NA." That "NA isn't a strong fellowship." That "people in NA only want to dress in black and ride motorcycles." I was confused. The panel members who came in that night didn't seem anything like what my counselors said. I was at the "last house on the block," so to speak. I



knew that if I used again, I would die. I had nothing left to lose.

When I got out of detox I went to an NA meeting, then another, and so on. This last week I celebrated three-and-a-half years clean in NA. NA has taught me how to live life without drugs. It's the reason I keep coming back. This is it.

I think about how NA members came into the treatment center that night, how I found a spark of hope. It was nothing fancy or elaborate. It was simple. There was a place for me in NA. And I realize now that my group, area, or region will only continue to grow strong as long as I keep coming back.

In my time in NA, I have been very privileged to give back some of what

was so freely given to me. I am a responsible, reliable member of the H&I subcommittee in our area. I also write the newsletter for our area. I never thought that I would be a writer and love doing it.

I haven't had to use since that first NA meeting. I have changed. I have had a spiritual awakening as a result of the Twelve Steps. I am, very simply, learning to live life without the use of drugs.

Last week someone told me with pride how her fellowship recovers and that there is no good recovery in NA. Personally, I think that is a lie. Recovery is what we put into it. Keep coming back!

JM, Washington

Recovering in recovery

I never thought that the section about illness in the Basic Text would ever apply to me. Then I had a body surfing accident, nearly drowned, became paralyzed and in need of surgery, and spent several weeks in the hospital.

The first thing that went through my mind was, "am I going to die now?" Then I asked myself if I wanted to live paralyzed. I could suck up some water and check out. If this accident had happened while I was using, that may have been my solution. But my life has real value today and I try to deal with anything that comes my way. Besides, I could feel tingling in my arms and legs.

I don't think I have ever felt more powerless. From the time I was rescued from the water through my first two weeks in the hospital, I was nothing but powerless. I was more dependent on others than I ever had been. Fortunately, my legs came back within a couple of days, and that really gave me reason to hope and have faith. My arms were much slower to improve. I had only minimal use of them. I was unable to feed or bathe myself. I was confined to lying on my back with a collar brace on my neck.

I was powerless and had to turn my care over to the nurses, doctors, and my God. What choice did I have? I could whine and complain, get angry, and feel sorry for myself. But all that does is make me miserable. I have already tried that.

I'm not saying that I was not ever afraid or didn't have moments of frustration. At first, I was really afraid of being permanently paralyzed or not recovering fully. But with the practice of spiritual principles I learned from you, I have been able to trust in the process, maintain a positive attitude, and even develop some gratitude and take positive action. I think my physical recovery has happened so quickly because of the recovery we share. We are very lucky to have this program to free our minds and spirits, learn to enjoy life, and have the ability to spend time with people who truly love us any night of the week.

I was grateful for not drowning, and for having loving and caring professionals who always treated me with dignity and respect. I was grateful when my surgeon told me I had a spinal cord injury, but neck surgery and therapy could correct the problem and I had a good chance of fully regaining use of my arms and legs.

I am grateful for my physical therapist. I was honest with him and the nurses and told them about my addiction and recovery, and my concerns about taking medication. I told my doctor that I didn't want to use drugs that I associated with using. We decided to use an over-the-counter pain reliever as my primary medication and something stronger

(in minor doses) only when the pain was unbearable. The result was that the pain was made tolerable so I didn't miss therapy, and I didn't have to feel like I was "using." This was very important to me, since I had not needed to take anything stronger than headache medicine for the past few years.

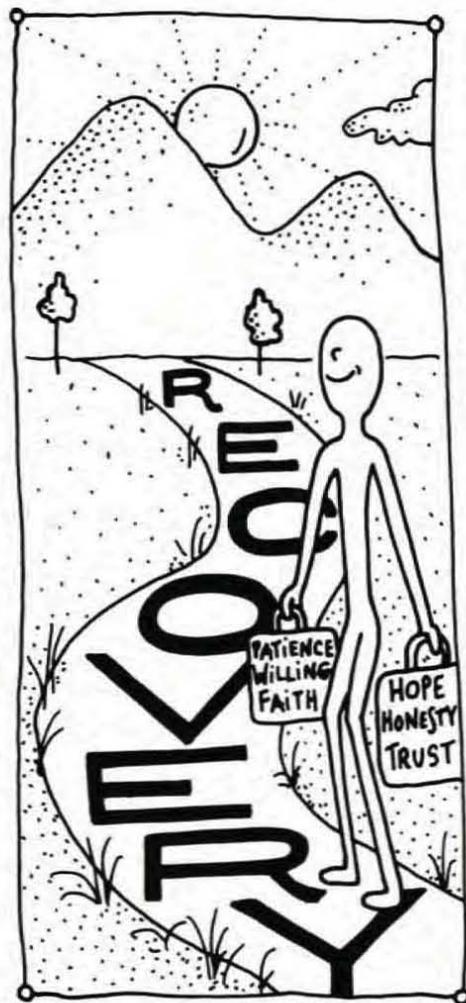
I am grateful for the role you play in my recovery. Whether you were able to visit, call, send cards or speaker tapes and NA literature, or pray for me, I believe it made a difference. Late at night, when I could slow down my mind, I could feel the prayers and love you sent to me. This brought tears of joy to my eyes. This amazes me. There I was, laid up in a hospital, five hours from home, and I felt okay about it. I could feel the love and strength of my God, and I believed that I was going to be okay. That is what I understand faith to be.

Because of this I was able to walk and feed myself after one week of therapy, and use the telephone and bathe myself after two weeks. After three weeks in therapy I was ready to go home, which I believe is miraculous because my doctor and the therapists estimated I would need four to five weeks of in-patient therapy.

I've been home for a few weeks, and I continue to recover. Program-wise, I have been able to attend a few meetings and go over steps with my sponsor and sponsees. Physically, I am becoming stronger by working out and going to out-patient therapy to regain strength and coordination in my arms and hands. I improve each day.

I have the opportunity to practice hope, faith, trust, surrender, acceptance, positive action, determination, patience, love, honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness. Every once in a while, I get frustrated because things aren't happening fast enough. But I get over myself. Without this fellowship, I could be very sick or even dead. Thank you for helping me recover.

WW, Florida



Recovery: crossing the barriers

I'm not sure to whom I'm writing these words, or even why I'm giving them birth. Probably because the labor pains I feel from the thoughts bouncing around between my ears are killing me. Metaphorically speaking, of course.

My name is Michael, and I'm a printer by trade and a recovering addict by fate. By no means am I a writer. I've wanted to write this letter to *The NA Way* for quite some time. Actually, I've started this several times, but I've never had the courage to complete it.

I am currently housed in California's correctional system, serving a twelve-year sentence for p.c. 211, more commonly known as armed robbery. Sadly, this isn't my first barbecue. My first term of commitment to the prison system was in 1987. I was released in 1989.

After my first visit to California's corrections system, I had every intention of not returning. I had one major problem with that game plan: it's called "action." It seems that my actions outweighed my intentions on the scale of recidivism, thus tipping

the scales and dumping me once again on the cold cement floor of a jail cell. When I awoke that morning in February 1991, I learned that I was being charged with seven counts of armed robbery.

I believe that most people in times of crisis—and this most certainly was by my standards—tend to look to the big guy for help. I know that I most certainly was doing my share of pleading, "God, if you just get me out of this one . . ." As time progressed, it appeared rather evident that I was going to serve time. So I figured it was time to change my plea. I started asking the big guy to please notice that if it wasn't for this damn drug problem, I wouldn't be robbing people anyway. And by the way, God, you wouldn't let 'em lock me up and throw away the key, now, would you?

The DA and I had two entirely different ideas about the amount of time I should serve for my aberrant behavior. The DA's opinion was that I should be locked up and the key should be destroyed. I, on the other hand, didn't consider myself among the "dregs of society." My estimation of just punishment, and my plea to the big guy, was that I get around six years and, with normal state half-time, I'd be out in three years. But as Murphy's law would have it, another glitch appeared in my game plan. I was so diligently praying for six years, I guess I forgot to mention the half-time thing. I was sentenced to twelve years, so I'm serving six. Watch what you pray for.

The blessings that have come out of all this are undeniable: my recovery of two years and eight months, all

the people God has put in my life, and the part they've played in my growth.

My recovery has been good, yet a bit bizarre in that it has been all through pen and hand. It started while I was awaiting sentencing in San Diego and I heard over the loud-speaker that an NA meeting was being held in the chapel. That's where I met R from San Diego H&I and began my journey of recovery once again. It's important that I say "once again" because I had been introduced to recovery several times before, in treatment centers. I guess I just wasn't ready to get real with the deal.

I'm not even sure that it matters. What matters is that I'm working a program today. After I got sentenced I was shuffled off to prison. In between transfers my property was lost and so was my contact with R, who had promised to be my sponsor through the mail. I got angry, frustrated, and was thinking *#@\$% it. Well, that night I went to bed and spent a minute with the big guy, asking him, "What's up here? I'm trying this recovery stuff. What's with all the road blocks?"

The next day I met a man while walking the yard and we began to talk. It turns out that this guy knew a guy who knew a guy who could probably get in touch with my sponsor. Maybe this time my prayers were heard because my request was more in line with his will for me, instead of my will. I mailed off a letter and I really didn't expect any response, but a month later I received an NA Basic Text and a renewed faith in recovery.

Since that day, my family of recovery has grown tremendously. I have pen pals all across the United States. R and his wife are now in Florida and our relationship is as strong as ever. RB from San Diego helped walk me through the first Three Steps. AM from New Hampshire has helped me through several rough times and been a true friend. I have BT, PG, JK, and, of course, J and K, who bought me a subscription to your magazine. There are so many others, too numerous to mention. There's recovery across the United States and all over the world. I still get goose bumps when I think of the people who care about this convict. I may be in prison with just over three years left to serve, but I am not alone and recovery is truly possible. I know that today and, more importantly, I am that.

I thank the big guy on a daily basis for this program and for the angels he's sent to walk me through this journey. To anyone who can, I suggest that you find an inmate and sponsor him or her through the mail. The rewards are unbelievable.

ML, California

Love from Turkey

Something has definitely changed in the February issue of *The NA Way Magazine*. It's probably me. You people started talking to me, and now I am here to share my experience, hope, and strength with you.

My name is Betul, and I am an addict. By the grace of God, I found recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. I am forty years old, and we started NA in Turkey when NA was in its fortieth year of existence. This is one of the countless details in which I identify with NA. God's will be done.

Narcotics Anonymous has made my life a reality. All I had to do is want what you have to offer me: recovery. I chose recovery in NA to better live my life, not so much to stop using because I had already exhausted all power over any form of drugs, the last but not least, being alcohol. I am grateful for this fact because I can see clearly now how my HP has led me to where I am today.

When I knew I was powerless over alcohol as well as any other drug, I did ask for help and was desperate enough to listen. AA was here in Turkey and they do, I deeply agree, an excellent job sobering one up.

However, once you start getting honest with yourself, you never know where you'll end up! The AA members shared their experience, hope, and strength with me and I started experiencing my own. I felt that being in that fellowship was a blessing. I still do. But it meant complacency for me. I wasn't sweatin' it out hard enough when I did the footwork. In fact, when I started doing the footwork, my feet brought me right into the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

You gave me the ultimate weapons—the recovering addict, the Basic Text, and all the work I needed to do: I wanted to work my steps in NA. Along came *It Works: How and Why*. Right timing! I asked the WSO for more information about NA in June 1993. There it was on the meeting's literature table on 11 October 1993 when NA held its first business meeting in Turkey.

I was elected secretary of the group. The only other recovering addict in NA at the time had to go off to military service. Now he has done his duty and has a job in Istanbul, where we hold NA meetings twice a week. How you kept him alive, with

love in his heart for NA, is the miracle he shared with me. I am grateful for all the love that's in this world today. I am grateful to be a member of this fellowship.

He and I tried to find a name for the NA group. He suggested KISS, but the acronym "KISS" doesn't mean anything in Turkish. I suggested ACTION.

We are examples of how to stay clean by doing the footwork for our own recovery, which includes working the steps and living the traditions. And one way to live the traditions is to get a group together and surrender to NA unity.

What is important is that the work gets done. This is what works for me. This work keeps the group clean and alive, keeps NA as a whole clean and alive, and so keeps me clean and alive. I enjoy what I am doing. I enjoy living life clean just for today. Service in NA is my way of serving the God of my own understanding. Simple, but not easy.

This is a "we" program. I can't, we can. At our meeting in Turkey, we have opened our doors to everybody. Our friends in AA have come and shared with us and are helping us

learn how to stand on our own. We found out for ourselves that only people with a desire to stop using stay clean. We have experienced the support of our friends in AA, and also the medical profession. This is living hope. Only when we come to believe in our own recovery will others begin to believe in our recovery. With hope and faith in a power greater than ourselves, we serve our primary purpose. We try to carry the message to the suffering addict. No addict need die without being given a chance to recover just for today.

Get to an NA meeting today. If I can do it, so can you. There are NA meetings in Istanbul, Turkey on Wednesdays and Saturdays. If you're ever here, we'd love to see you. We have only just begun. There is so much work to do. We love you all and we are grateful.

BB, Turkey

The most important person

Yes, I was the most important person for the first fourteen months of my recovery.

I first attended Narcotics Anonymous in January of 1990. I went to meetings every day for 280 days without missing. People gave me suggestions and I followed most of them. I got a sponsor after four months and began working the steps with his guidance. The program was exciting, and it made me feel better than ever before.

I caught on to this deal quickly, working steps One through Ten in fourteen months. I had lots of experience, superior strength, and a heap of hope.

The faith in my Higher Power came to me and stayed with me. I was "bullet proof" at nine months, chairing meetings and assisting our group treasurer. We have a good-sized fellowship here, with 200 meetings plus per month. At any rate, recovery was interesting, very seldom a dull moment.

I shared my wisdom and knowledge at every meeting. What a great productive feeling it was. I believed that any meeting without me was incomplete. My pink cloud expanded

to the limit. And then the unexpected happened: I got released from my two-year probation. I temporarily put my Higher Power on hold for a few weeks. I settled in for a safe celebration, which was drinking a "near beer" on the tailgate of a friend's pick-up truck. I was unaware that there is a small percentage of alcohol in most "non-alcoholic" beer. I became confused and soon returned to active addiction in full force.

The mere idea of drinking sent me straight to the store for a case of the full-strength liquid, followed by my drug of choice. My addiction took off like wild fire, driving me to consume drugs the quickest way known to man.

A friend of eight years observed me with disappointment and said, "Are you doing that again?" It seemed like everyone I came in contact with expressed their disapproval of me one way or another.

After a few months I achieved that unhealthy bottom I was looking for. I was physically exhausted and spiritually spent. Back to the NA rooms I went. I remember only one thing about that first meeting: The addict giving out key tags said, "If we're all clean, let's give our Higher Power a hand!" I was trembling. My stomach was in knots. I could not put my hands together. The meeting was over, and so was I. Straight for the door I went, without a hug, without a white key tag. I tried to get to my truck, avoiding everyone, only to be stopped by a suffering addict who had just picked up a thirty-day tag. She was not aware of my relapse and

was crying out for help. I put her off. I had yet to surrender. The pain in my heart, soul, and guts was killing me.

Later that day, at the 6 p.m. meeting, I humbled myself to the front of

the room. I finally accepted a welcome tag. After my friends stopped applauding, they announced that I was the most important person at the meeting. At last, as the pain began to subside, I felt acceptance.

JS, Texas

Why?

Why did I come to NA?

After twenty-three years of using and abusing drugs, myself, people, places, and things; after watching my mother die of this disease in the same way we both watched her father die; after talking to doctors, ministers, psychologists, and psychiatrists; after spending eleven weeks in mental institutions on two separate occasions; after a seven-year process of breaking through the denial of this disease to the point of admitting to myself that there might be some connection between the amount of drugs I put into my system and the rest of my problems, I came to NA.

I came and I listened to grateful members share with the fellowship about the help they had found here. I was willing to try some of the simpler ideas that were suggested to me. I tried them and they worked for me, so I came back and tried some more, and they worked, and so on.

Why do I keep coming back to meetings?

At five years clean I find myself pondering that question more and more often. I've had many rough times in recovery. Times I've been tempted to just stay home "for a while." Times when my recovery energy is low and I'm not very active in NA. Times when I place expectations on you and you don't live up to them. Times when you place expectations on me. Times when the group conscience goes against mine. Times when I get called on my bulls___. Times when people who care about me try to get too close.

Yes, I think about not coming back at times: when I forget that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using, or that our primary purpose is to carry the message to the still-suffering addict, and especially when I forget why I came to NA in the first place.

I'm a still-suffering addict, grateful to have meetings to go to!

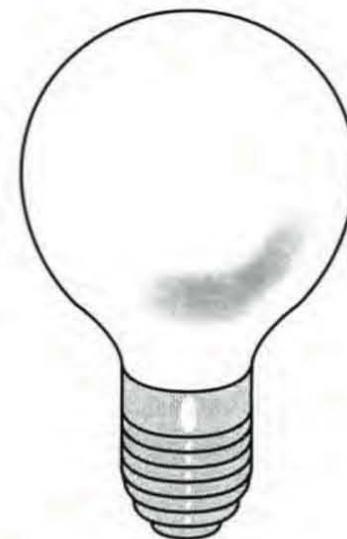
DG, Canada

Home Group

"The subliminal sponsor"



The lightbulb story— An NA world service parable



- Q: How many addicts does it take to change a lightbulb?**
- A: Only one—but the lightbulb must want to change.**

The year is 2010. When the burned-out bulb over the World Service Conference chairperson's podium is discovered, an ad hoc committee is appointed and given a budget of \$100,000 for its first year's work. It puts out a fellowship survey on the question, to which three groups respond out of the eighty thousand registered with WSO.

In 2011, the ad hoc committee returns to the conference proposing a \$360,000 budget to finance eight worldwide fellowship workshops on the issue, gathering input from our members on replacing or completely redesigning the burned-out bulb. The workshops are reported through the following year with glowing rhetoric in the *Conference Report*.

At WSC-2012, the ad hoc committee returns with the consensus developed from the workshops. An electrical engineer—who must, of course, be an NA member—should be contracted to design a new bulb. In the meantime, the chairperson's podium remains dark.

The WSC Policy Committee is given oversight of the project. They hire a fellow with a year and a half clean who's just completed a community college course in electrical engineering. The committee, chaired by a musician and vice chaired by a treatment counselor, asks its WSO project coordinator for an evaluation of the design. The coordinator, a genial fellow with a liberal education and tremendous background in NA service, gives his professional opinion that the design is acceptable. The committee approves the plan, and the engineer is paid a substantial fee.

At the 2013 conference, the policy committee delivers its redesigned lightbulb. A dozen RSRs troupe to the microphone, alternately expressing their region's concern about or support for the bulb. After a moment of silence for the still-benighted addict on the street, a vote narrowly approves the lightbulb. The RSR from the Group Conscience Region—now in his thirtieth year in that position—makes a motion to reconsider the previous motion, excluding the votes of trustees, conference officers, and committee chairpersons. The motion fails for lack of a second.

The chairperson of the World Service Board of Trustees is given the honor of turning on the new bulb. A hush falls over the conference floor. The old burned-out bulb over the chair's podium is removed, and the policy committee's newly designed bulb is installed. The trustee chair

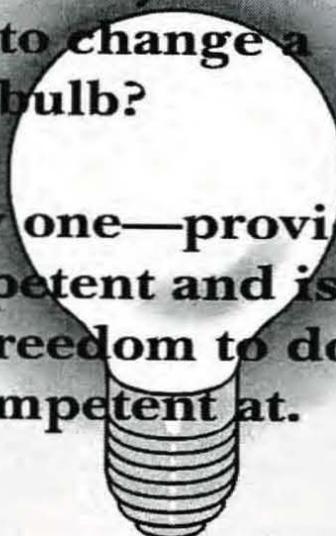
flips the switch. A massive explosion occurs, killing the conference chair and blinding dozens of other conference participants. Paramedics are called in. The casualties are hauled away in ambulances.

As the debris is cleaned up, the WSO janitor quietly approaches the podium. He unplugs the lamp, removes the molten remains of the policy committee's bulb from the fixture, and screws in a new one from the office supply closet. He plugs the lamp back in, turns it on, and quietly returns to the main WSO building to wash a dirty floor. The conference vice chair takes the now-well-lit podium and, reading from the agenda sheets gathered from the floor by the WSO janitor, reconvenes the World Service Conference of 2013 to its next item of business: consideration of the twenty-seventh edition of the Basic Text.

Anonymous

Q: How many addicts does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: Only one—provided he is competent and is allowed the freedom to do what he is competent at.



WCNA XXV

Paris, France – September 14, 15, 16, 17, 1995

Hotel Reservation and Convention Registration Form

Special discount travel packages are available from the following North American cities through our official travel agency, Travel Smart, Inc. For more information and booking, call Travel Smart, Inc. at (800) 278-3113 in the US or (619) 278-3113 outside the US. Their normal business hours are Monday thru Friday, 8AM to 5PM Pacific Standard Time.

CITY	*PER PERSON	CITY	*PER PERSON
Montreal	\$1029	Chicago	\$949
Boston	899	Indianapolis	979
Hartford	899	Kansas City	999
New York	899	St. Louis	999
Philadelphia	899	Dallas	999
Wash./Baltimore	899	Houston	999
Pittsburgh	949	San Diego	999
Raleigh	949	Los Angeles	999
Charlotte	949	San Francisco	999
Atlanta	949	Albuquerque	1079
Orlando	949	Denver	1079
Miami	949	Las Vegas	1079
New Orleans	999	Seattle	1099
Nashville	999	Toronto	1199
Cincinnati	949	Calgary	1429
Cleveland	949	Edmonton	1429
Detroit	949	Vancouver	1429
Minneapolis	979		

*Based on midweek/weekend prices.
For round trip travel on weekends add \$20.00 US.

Connecting flights from other cities are available for an additional charge. These packages include: round trip air transportation on US Air or Air France, 5 days/4 nights accommodations (based on double occupancy) at the headquarters, Hotel New York in Disneyland Paris; shuttle service between the Paris Airport and Disneyland Paris; and all taxes. All packages are based on availability.

All travel must occur between 8 September and 22 September in order to get the discount airfare. If you would like to stay longer than five days at the Hotel New York, add \$66.00 US per day to the cost of the package. If you would like to stay additional days at another hotel in Paris, Travel Smart Inc. can assist you with your plan. Travel Smart, Inc. can be reached at (800) 278-3113/(619) 278-3113.

While there is no deadline on reservations, we suggest that you book your package early, preferably by 15 April 1995.



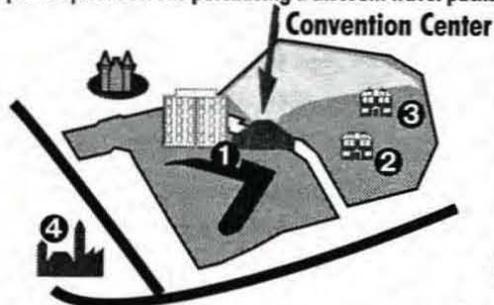
If you need any additional convention information please call the World Service Office, Inc.
(818) 780-3951 Ext. 120



Hotel Reservation for WCNA XXV

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION CLEARLY

IMPORTANT NOTE: Your reservation must be received **BEFORE THE AUGUST 14, 1995** cut-off date. Convention rates may not apply after above cut-off date and will be based on availability. Confirmation will be sent by the hotel to the individual named in Part I. If more than one room is required, this form may be photocopied. Persons purchasing a discount travel package must send this form to Travel Smart, Inc.



Send to:
Disneyland Paris Vacances
C.R.O. Convention/Service Reservation
BP 132
77777 Marne la Vallée Cedex 4, France
OR FAX TO:
+33 (1) 60-30-50-51
No telephone reservations will be accepted.

Part I

Name _____
Address _____
City/State _____
Country _____ Zip _____
Area Code () Phone Number _____

Part II

Select up to three choices from participating hotels. Enter names below.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
First Choice Second Choice Third Choice

Note: Rooms are assigned in date order received. If your first choice is not available, assignment will be made at next available choice. Changes and cancellations must be made directly with hotel.

Print or type names of occupants. _____, _____, _____, _____

Arrival date _____ Departure date _____

For all hotels, indicate: Smoking Non Smoking
For Hotel New York only, indicate: Single King/Queen Bed Two Queen/Double Beds

Part III

An advance deposit equivalent to one night's stay at the hotel of your choice is required for each room. Forms will be returned to sender if received without deposit. Checks must be payable in French Francs and made out to Disneyland Paris. Bank checks payable in French Francs are available at most commercial banks.

Enclosed: _____ FF or charge my: AMEX VISA MASTERCARD EUROCARD CARTE BLEUE
Charge Card # _____ Expiration date _____
Signature _____



Travel Information

- **The official currency in France is the Franc.** As of January 1, 1995, one US Dollar was worth approximately five French Francs. We have used this figure to give you approximate prices in US Dollars. However, the currency exchange rate may change at any time. Current exchange rates are printed regularly in the business section of most daily newspapers.
- **Paris is served by two airports:** Roissy-Charles de Gaulle and Orly.
- **A valid Passport** is required for all non-European citizens entering France.
- **Airport Shuttles** leave from both airports every 45 min. for Disneyland Paris. Approximately FF75,00 (\$15.00US).
- **Train (RER from Paris/Chatelet-Les Halles to Disneyland Paris):** Line A4, direction Marne-La-Vallée. The trip takes approximately 40 min. and leaves every 16 min. The last train from Paris to Disneyland Paris is at 0h35 am (12:35am) and the last train from Disneyland Paris to Paris is at 0h22 am (12:22am). Approximately FF 37,00 (\$7.50US) one way. Three day travel Pass FF200,00 (\$40.00US).
- **Taxi:** From Paris to Disneyland Paris, approximately FF400,00 (\$80.00US).
- **Rent A Car:** For the best rates, contact travel or car rental agencies prior to departure.
- **Parking** is free for hotels residents and FF20,00 (\$4.00US) per day for visitors.

Official Discount Travel Package

Official discount travel packages are available from most North American cities through our official travel agency for this convention, Travel Smart, Inc. These packages should be booked early due to limited availability. The packages include round-trip air transportation on US Air or Air France, 5 days/4 nights accommodations (based on double occupancy) at the headquarters Hotel New York, shuttle service to and from the airport, and all taxes.

For more information, see back panel of this flyer.

Travel Smart, Inc. can be reached at (800) 278-3113/(619) 278-3113.

Hotel Information

Note: All rooms are payable in French Francs. US rates are approximated.

- 1 **New York Hotel** — This will be the headquarters hotel and is adjacent to the Convention Center. It is a luxury art deco styled hotel which is situated on the shores of lake Buena Vista. Each room is air-conditioned and equipped with color television and mini-bar. Services included: health club, indoor/outdoor pools, tennis courts. Rates: FF650,00/\$130.00US per night (up to 4 people in one king or two double beds).
- 2 **Hotel Cheyenne** — This casual hotel is furnished and themed in the style of a wild west American town and is a 10 min. walk from the Convention center. Rates: FF495,00/\$95.00US per night (all rooms sleep up to 4 people in 1 double bed & 2 bunk beds).
- 3 **Hotel Santa Fe** — This hotel is decorated in New Mexico style and is a 10 min. walk from the Convention Center. Rates: FF495,00/\$95.00US per night (all rooms sleep up to 4 people in two double beds).
- 4 **David Crockett Ranch** — A 10 min. drive by automobile from the Convention Center, these bungalows, equipped with full kitchens including pots and pans and a microwave, are located in the middle of a small forest. Rates: FF495,00/\$95.00US per night (all cabins sleep up to 6 people in 2 double beds & 2 bunk beds).

WCNA XXV Registration

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION CLEARLY

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ Province/State/Country _____
 Zip Code/Postal _____ Telephone() _____
 Additional Registrants _____

All registrations must be mailed by August 25, 1995, after which on-site registrations will be accepted.

Event	Price	Quantity	Total
• Registration (before August 1st, 1995)	\$30.00	x _____	= \$ _____
• Late Registration (after August 1st, 1995)	\$40.00	x _____	= \$ _____
• Friday Midnight Boat Cruise on the River Seine in Paris <small>(transportation to and from Paris included; limited tickets available)</small>	\$20.00	x _____	= \$ _____
• Saturday Theme Dinner (approx. 2:00 PM-5:00PM) <small>(limited tickets available)</small>	\$25.00	x _____	= \$ _____
	Newcomer Donation	= \$ _____	
	Sub total	= \$ _____	
One day pass discount pass to Disneyland Paris: <small>(Not an organized convention event)</small>	Adult \$36.00	x _____	= \$ _____
	Child \$28.00	x _____	= \$ _____
	Total Amount Enclosed	= \$ _____	

Method of payment: Master Card American Express VISA Check/Money Order**

Card Number* _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

*All credit card payments are processed in the U.S.A. and may include a service charge. **Must be made payable to WCNA XXV.

If you live in North/Central/South America mail to:

WCNA XXV c/o WSO, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, California 91409-9999 USA

If you live in Europe/Africa/Middle East/Asia Pacific mail to:

WCNA XXV c/o WSO—Europe Avenue Winston Churchill, Laan 249/B15, Brussels, Belgium

For all registration information, please call: (818) 780-3951/Fax (818) 785-0923

To speak with the Convention Committee in Paris, please call +33 (1) 40-86-09-36

• The Convention will be held in English • Do you need translation? yes no

If yes, What language do you speak? _____

If you have special needs due to a physical challenge, please specify: _____

Programming Information

Wish to speak? • Main Speakers: 5 years clean time • Workshop Speakers: 3 years clean time

Send tapes to: WCNA XXV Program Committee, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999 USA

Tape deadline extended to May 1, 1995.

Tapes must include name, address, and phone number of speaker in order to be considered.

Anyone wishing to volunteer for the convention:

Volunteer's Name _____ Tel. () _____



Newsletters

Going on a treasure hunt

From *Inside Connection*, the American River, California area newsletter: Step Three says, "We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."

There I was, driving 350 miles a week. I drove from home to work, then from work to meetings, and in between, I drove other newcomers to and from meetings. Since I was going to seven or more meetings a week, all this driving meant I had a lot of time to think about what I was hearing at the meetings and what I was experiencing being clean for the first time in thirty years. I reviewed the first Three Steps, repeating them out loud, chanting them, talking to that unknown power greater than myself about them.

One day I asked a woman who had shared about having similar experi-

ences to mine—alcoholic parents, codependent behavior, and hope-to-die denial about her addiction before coming in the doors of Narcotics Anonymous—to be my sponsor. I figured that she would understand me, and she did. I'll never forget the first day we talked about the program together as sponsor and sponsee. We shared about the first two steps. As we talked, I realized that I had surrendered to the reality of my addiction. I fully believed that I was powerless and my life unmanageable. I also had no question about my need to be restored to sanity. In other words, I had worked Step One and Step Two. Now I needed to work Step Three. My sponsor was there to help me.

My vision of this step, as I first read about it in our Basic Text, was a long and complicated determination of God's will for me and a search for the instructions necessary to carry out that will. I thought of Step Three as a kind of treasure hunt, though I didn't have a map and I didn't know where to look for the clues that would tell me the exact location of God's will for me. Now with a sponsor, I thought, it would be easy! She would tell me where to look!

Instead she asked three questions. First, was I an addict, powerless over my addiction with an unmanageable

life? Second, had I come to believe in a power greater than myself and did I believe that power could restore me to sanity? These first two questions were easy to answer—Yes, I had “worked” the first Two Steps. It was the third question that surprised me. Had I made the decision to work a program of recovery based on the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous? I knew I wanted to work the steps and get this thing called recovery. Why else would I have asked her to be my sponsor?

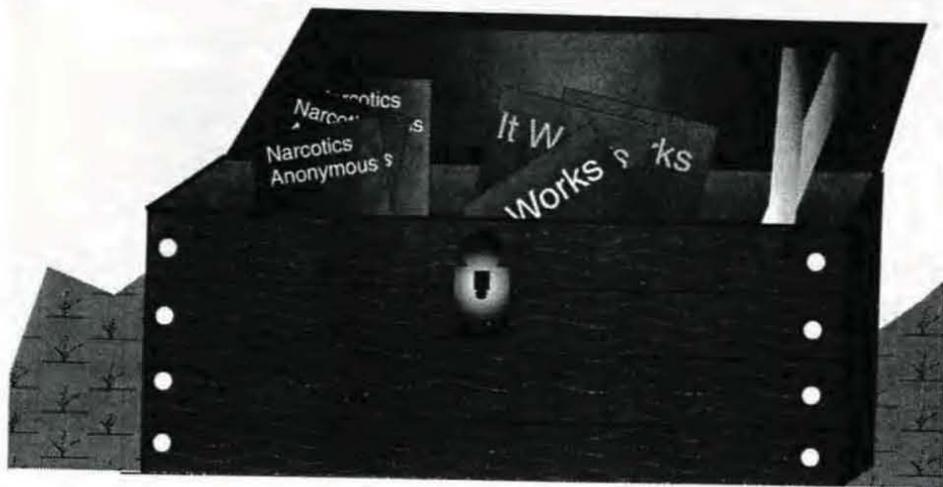
She pointed out that Step Three begins with the words, “We made a decision...” My sponsor told me that making the decision described in Step Three means deciding to work the remaining nine steps, since it is all these steps which lead to the spiritual awakening promised in Step Twelve. Yes, I wanted God in my life. I wanted to let go of my self-will and strive for a spiritual awakening.

Accepting the First Step meant giving up my illusions about myself

and my life, especially the possibility of ever managing my own life again. The Second Step opened the door to the possibility of living without denial of my disease and behavior. The Third Step gave me a chance to decide either to take the remaining steps of the Narcotics Anonymous program or to stay put with the familiar and the known.

I listened to the steps being read in each meeting. I listened to people share about their experiences with the steps and how those experiences changed their lives. The Third Step connected me with the recovery I sought. The unveiled world of my addiction provided me with the motivation to decide that I wanted freedom from active addiction and that I was willing to work the remaining steps to keep it.

SM



PERSPECTIVES

PERSPECTIVES

Articles appearing in "Perspectives" are at the request of the editors, but publication does not imply endorsement by Narcotics Anonymous as a whole, The NA Way Magazine, or the World Service Office. This month's article was written in Spanish and translated into English by WSO staff for the magazine's readers. Both versions are printed.

Planting seeds, harvesting fruit

*By Roberto, past RSR
for the Ecuador Region*

Ecuador is a small and beautiful country in South America, situated between Colombia and Peru. The NA message arrived here quite a few years ago. Little by little, groups were born: one, two, three... But it was 1990 when the program began gaining strength here.

The NA program asks that I be honest; therefore, I must recognize that a very important part of this gaining of strength was due to the influence of and contact with two world-level trusted servants whom I met in Colombia at the first regional convention of that country.

When I got to the convention, I was informed that two world service representatives had arrived. I thought I was going to meet two serious, cold, distant, and arrogant people. I was sure there was no way I would have the opportunity to speak with them about resolving some doubts and concerns in my region. Perhaps I'd have to make a very formal appointment so two rigid and stern-faced people could lend me their attention, I thought.

What a surprise! I met George H and Becky M, totally different from what I'd thought. They were profoundly human, unaffected, and accessible.

As soon as I met them, I told them that I was from Ecuador and that I needed answers to a series of questions concerning service work, the Twelve Traditions, etc. Their response was immediate. They said, "Let's talk tomorrow at 8 a.m."

At that time, we began to work. I had a list longer than a testament. I didn't consider them [George H and

Becky M] to be more or less than any of us. But could I deny the beautiful and strong inspiration, example, and energy that I received from them? No!

"Our Higher Power didn't give us the NA Way of recovery so that it could bear fruit in some places and not others."

Because a strong and beneficial relationship in service was born between the world service representatives and my region, I daresay the same goes for regions like Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Panama, and Brazil. I've had the chance to travel to conventions in two of those countries and to speak to trusted servants from all of those countries. We all know how beneficial those visits from world service representatives are to distant regions. I saw Becky and George again in Popayán and Medellín, Colombia. I also met other world service representatives, like Tim B and Jorge B, in Peru.

If a survey were done in these [the South American] regions as to whether or not world service visits are beneficial, I dare to speculate that more than ninety-five percent of the members would say they've been very beneficial. Not only beneficial,

but necessary and just. We need them! I'm not referring to any particular individual. We need world service representatives to share their service experience with us.

Our Higher Power didn't give us the NA way of recovery so that it would bear fruit in some places and not in others. Rather, we were given a message in the Fifth Tradition that asks us to share it with addicts who still suffer. And those addicts are all over the world. All of our regions need the message in order to grow. The visit by the world service representatives had a very positive and powerful effect.

At first look, we might consider these visits costly, but in the long run, NA will grow and multiply throughout the world and all of us will benefit. We will have NA meetings in every corner of the world.

That's what it's about!

Ecuator es un pequeño y bello país en América del Sur, situado entre Colombia y Perú. El mensaje de NA llegó hace pocos años. Poco a poco fueron naciendo—uno, dos, tres grupos. Pero es el año de 1990 cuando empieza a coger fuerza el mensaje. El programa de NA me pide ser honesto, por tanto debo reconocer que parte importantísima de esa fuerza provino de la influencia del contacto con los servidores mundiales, a quienes conocí en Colombia en la Primera Convención Regional de NA en dicho país. Cuando llegué a Cali a dicha convención me dijeron que habían llegado dos servidores mundiales, pensé que iba a conocer a

dos personas frías, distantes y muy serias y arrogantes. Pensaba que seguramente no tendría oportunidad de hablar con ellos para resolver dudas e inquietudes de la comunidad NA de mi región. Tal vez había que conseguir una cita muy formal para que me den audiencia con dos personas de aspecto rígido y mal encarados. ¡Oh sorpresa! Conocí a George H y Becky M, totalmente diferentes a lo había pensado, profundamente humanos, sencillos y asequibles.

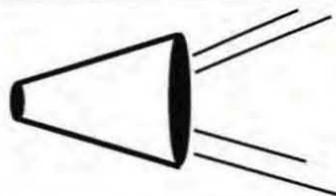
Inmediatamente que los conocí les dije que venía de Ecuador y que necesitaba respuestas a una serie de preguntas acerca del servicio, tradiciones, etc. La respuesta fue inmediata, conversemos mañana a las 8 a.m. Y a las 8 a.m. en punto empezamos a trabajar, llevé una lista más larga que un testamento. No los considero ni mas ni menos que ninguno de nosotros Perú. ¿Podría negar la bella y fuerte inspiración, ejemplo y energía que recibí de ellos? ¡No!

Porque nació allí una fuerte y beneficiosa relación de servicio entre los servidores mundiales y mi región, y me atrevo a decir que también de regiones como Colombia, Perú, Argentina, Panamá, Brasil. Pues tengo la suerte de haber viajado a convenciones de dos de esos países y conversado con servidores de todas esas regiones, y sabemos de lo beneficioso que son las visitas de servidores mundiales a regiones lejanas.

Los volví a ver después en Popayán y en Medellín en Colombia, también conocí otros servidores

mundiales como Tim B y Jorge B en Perú. Si se hiciese una encuesta en estas regiones acerca de lo beneficioso que es para el crecimiento de NA la visita de estos servidores, me atrevo a calcular que más del 95% de los miembros de NA de estas regiones dirían que es beneficioso. No solo beneficioso sino necesario y justo. ¡Los necesitamos! Y no me refiero a tal persona en particular, pero si que servidores mundiales compartan su experiencia de servicio con nosotros. Necesitamos que esa vibración producto del servicio y del contacto con las regiones mas grandes y desarrolladas se comparta con las regiones más aisladas, y seguramente pasará lo mismo con regiones de otras zonas.

El Poder Superior, tal como lo concebimos, no nos entregó este mensaje de recuperación de NA para que ciertas regiones lo fructifiquen y otras no. Sinó que nos entregó un mensaje que en la Tradición Cinco nos pide que lo compartamos con los adictos que todavía sufren, y esos adictos están repartidos en todas partes del mundo. Todas las regiones necesitamos que llegue y se fructifique el mensaje, y la visita de los servidores mundiales a regiones lejanas de la WSO logra un efecto multiplicador muy fuerte y positivo. A corto plazo lo podemos ver como un gasto excesivo, a mediano y largo plazo NA crecerá y se multiplicará por toda la tierra, y todos nosotros seremos beneficiados. Tendremos un grupo de NA en cada rincón del planeta. ¡De eso se trata!



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. The editors have learned that what we have been referring to as Motion 39 actually became Motion 88 at the 1994 World Service Conference. Motion 88 proposed a plan by which the fellowship could address the steps and traditions language issue. The plan called for discussion of this issue during the coming year and outlined a process by which the fellowship's conscience could be registered.

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 has developed an issues paper and workshop guidelines that the fellowship can use to hold discussion forums. That package was mailed to *Newsline* recipients and is available to anyone requesting it.

The ad hoc group originally believed that after a year of fellowshipwide discussion, the fellowship would be ready to decide if a change to the steps and traditions was desired and how that process would occur. However, because of the significance of this issue, the ad hoc group now feels that the discussion should be extended for another year.

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

More important issues to deal with

I came to Narcotics Anonymous because I had no place else to go. I was so desperate I would have prayed to Mr. Porcelain if someone had suggested it. When I was welcomed by other addicts, I felt that I belonged. One addict said, "Welcome

home." Those were words I'd never heard before, and I will remember them always. No one ever pointed out to me that a Higher Power was masculine. They just told me to sit down, have a cup of coffee, and listen. So I did.

Here I am, a little more than a month away from my third recovery anniversary, and not once have I had a conflict with myself or any other person about the word "He." If God scares someone back to the streets, the streets will scare the person back to the rooms of NA. We can only thank God for that.

I think we have more important issues to deal with than a pronoun. How about money, property, and prestige? Our regional convention is an example. *Money*: Our regional office relies on profits to operate. Let me also state that a percentage of these profits are passed down to the world. *Property*: The region now owns audio and video equipment, a computer system, and a \$3,000 air-conditioning unit that is affixed to a building we lease. *Prestige*: You should have been at our last RSC meeting to hear the controversy over convention responsibilities and duties.

Can you tell I'm against changing the steps? What's happening to this fellowship? Come on, folks; get *with* the program, not against it.

I just looked up the word "he" in the American Heritage Dictionary. The second definition states: "used to refer to any person whose sex is not specified: Ex. He who hesitates is lost." I also looked up the word "his" and was referred back to the word

"he." My disease has been fed enough. I have hope that God sees fit to let us let Him run the show.

Anonymous

What you see is what you get

I was one of those people who had great difficulty with the wording of our steps when I first came to NA. In fact, my first reading of them convinced me that, yes, I was being severely punished for my addiction. Clearly, I thought I would now have to spend what looked like the rest of my life in a religious sect that subscribed to the God I was raised to believe in and had abandoned with relief many years before.

I tried to do what members told me: listen, keep coming back, your God can be anything greater than yourself. But back then I was more of a reader than a listener or a socializer, and what I studied in print did not have what I wanted.

So I quit coming to meetings, believing that this couldn't be the only game in town. After I relapsed, I figured that maybe it was. I canceled out the references to a Christian God and began putting together pieces from what members shared to create my own sense of what a Higher Power could be. I don't need to tell you that it worked, but throughout this time, I kept wishing that I could have been one of those church-going newcomers for whom this language worked so well.

Because of my own experience in early recovery, when Motion 39 first appeared in the *Conference Agenda Report*, I thought it was a non-issue and that it would of course receive a

nearly unanimous affirmative vote. Obviously, I was living in the world of the terminally optimistic. All I have to do is read my *NA Way* or bring up the subject with a few addicts in my area to see how controversial this concept of "degenderizing" our steps really is.

There's a point related to my experience as a newcomer that I haven't yet seen expressed in our magazine: Most of us learn visually; we see what we read.

When I read "He" or "Him" or "His," I see male. I know that we have unlimited spiritual freedom in Narcotics Anonymous, but when I read these words in our steps, I know to whom they refer: a male God, our Father, the Man upstairs. This clearly is not unlimited spiritual freedom, but guided direction about who my Higher Power should be. So if I choose to believe in a female, neuter, dual-gender, totally non-personified, or multi-layered energy source, I'm not following the "guidance."

There is a good reason why sexist language is being eliminated in our schools. Educators understand that people absorb what they read, so they guide students toward using inclusive rather than exclusive language. If I hand a paper to a professor, I get it back marked in red ink if I write "he" or "him" when referring to an unspecified individual, or if I use words such as "draftsman." There's a good reason why books and newspapers are moving away from what were once considered "generic" masculine nouns and pronouns. Publishers know that we visualize what we

read, and therefore strive to make their publications applicable to the widest possible audience. Our culture is evolving into an increasingly non-sexist environment, at least as far as language is concerned.

Substance follows form; when the form of our language evolves, the substance (the way we think) will change. Could it be that there is some sexism lurking behind the doors of NA meeting rooms? The only way to combat this attitude is to first change the way we communicate. Masculine pronouns are not androgynous; they cannot substitute for a female or neutral reference in our language. Tell me what you see when you read about God in the wording of our steps.

I hope we can make this change for the sake of the newcomer so that language is not a barrier to recovery. Having changed our language, I believe that we also will have taken the first step toward evolving into a non-sexist society of men and women who offer unlimited freedom by allowing equal treatment, both in the printed word and in the spiritual atmosphere of our meetings, for whatever God we understand.

Anonymous

Viewpoint



The case against conventions

When I first got clean in NA, I learned some valuable things. When life seemed to wrap me up in a trap that I couldn't escape from, I was told to "let go". When life seemed to be all work, and the responsibilities of being clean were demanding a lot of my time, I was told to "have some fun."

I can still remember our first dance. An hour before the blessed event was to start, and we were locked out! All the grass-roots efforts, all the scrimping of money to make a deposit on the room—it seemed to be going down the tubes. Yet, as if by magic, we got into the facility, held the dance, and made enough money to order fifty White Booklets. Plus we had outrageous and safe fun to the accompaniment of confetti and loud music. The speak-

ers were awe-inspiring with their sharing, and I was wearing my bell bottoms.

That was then. And this is now.

I went to a convention a few years ago. I watched in dismay as one of the men I sponsored had his camera confiscated on Friday. On Saturday, I watched his dismay as the convention committee sold video tapes of the main speaker. I confess, I tried desperately to explain why this was happening, but I could see in his eyes that he wasn't buying any of it. He was too hurt by the apparent injustice of it all.

That was then. And this is now.

I'm in a meeting. There is a newcomer standing up (shaking with uncertainty and drugs) with one day clean. I watch as she sits down without getting a keytag, any literature, a White Booklet, or even a hug. But if she had come thirty-nine days earlier, during the convention, she would have gotten deafening applause, lots of hugs, and a Basic Text. What a difference a day makes!

Are we doing this for the newcomer? Or just to put on a show, to look good to ourselves as we do a token Twelfth Step to the accompaniment of a thousand cheering people who have paid for the right to be there—not only with their pain, but with their credit cards?

This is now. And I'm angry that such a huge percentage of our Seventh Tradition is spent, kept, and often wasted on these conventions. In one region alone, the money earmarked for the convention was five times the amount put aside for RSC operating expenses.

"Just because something is partly good doesn't mean we can ignore the problem."

I remember the time the regional convention committee elected a non-addict to a position on the committee. I had to confront them. I was attacked by some, ignored by others, and loved by many. "He has the desire not to use, so he should be able to serve," they told me. Later, the convention chair committed convention money toward preventing a neighboring state from "stealing" the convention banner during a raffle. This incited controversy that lasted half a year. I've seen convention committees lavish expensive ribbons, T-shirts, hats, and even catered meals on themselves. And I thought ASCs could be a war zone!

I know that many of us like to party now that we're clean. Life wasn't a party when we were using.

Now, we crave the intensity recovery brings into our lives. Conventions seem to compact a lot of recovery strength into a few short hours. For some of us, this is the ideal getaway from the routine of our productive lives. We get to let our hair down, bad hair days or not. We put a lot into these events, but at what cost? And to whom?

I'm not discounting the good that these functions bring. I know that God always is running the show, whether we want to recognize this or not. But how can we even out the inconsistencies? Just because something is partly good doesn't mean we can ignore the problems. My personal step work involves getting at the core of my disease, not treating its symptoms. If the stove is on low heat, I still don't put my hand on it. If I have been partially honest in talking with my sponsor, I don't congratulate myself and deny the dishonesty that is lingering.

Regarding conventions, I have to ask myself, "Is our fellowship mature enough to have these events?" We invest a lot of time, service, and money in these weekends. But is this in balance with the effort we commit to other services? I don't want to belong to a fellowship that throws great parties, but doesn't reach into jails and rehabs to help the still-suffering addict. I think we need to improve the quality of our conventions and bring them back into focus with the steps and traditions. Too many of them have a life of their own.

Why is it that when newcomers show up at a convention they get a book, but at a meeting they don't?

Why is it that a lot of members seem to come out of the closet for these events, amass huge T-shirt and coffee mug collections, but never show up to serve on an H&I panel? Why is it that a lot of members cannot even attend these events because of the cost, or childcare issues, or disability? In a more humorous vein, why is it that several hundred members attend the relationship workshop while a dozen attend the First Step workshop? What about NA golf balls, condoms, toothbrushes, pogs, bangles, glow-in-the-dark bumper stickers, and kites?

Part of being responsible in recovery is looking realistically at ourselves and others. At times, it necessitates asking the difficult questions. Going against the grain. Advocating the unpopular views. I may sound like a grumpy member, but I think some of these questions have merit.

I love NA, and I see a lot of potential for us. I just don't know if that potential is being channeled into our primary purpose. For me, when I attend a convention, I see a massive service effort. The whole thing is geared toward celebrating recovery and carrying the message. Do our convention committees see it that way? Some do, and some don't. The ones that do can show newer members that NA can reach beyond itself and pull in loads of spiritual joy. The ones that don't . . . well, I hope they read this and re-examine why they're here in the first place.

CM, Hawaii

Editorial replies

In response to "On Conventions and Financial Responsibility" July 1994: Like ED from Pennsylvania, my experience with conventions includes both joy and despair. I've made lots of friends at conventions that I probably wouldn't have met otherwise. On the other hand, I've seen conventions create disunity among regions, areas, and even groups, not to mention individual members.

Our regional conventions are very small compared to others. This makes it nice, because we get an opportunity to meet everyone attending and create and build friendships, some of which are long-distance.

I feel that the fellowship as a whole needs to be less grandiose with our conventions and keep things simple. We're taught in this program to live within our means as individuals, and the same principles should be practiced at our conventions. So let's tone down conventions and stop overspending.

Anonymous

From our readers



Replanted and blooming

Hi, my name is Leslie. I am a grateful recovering addict. I have more than nine years clean. Today I know there are no coincidences, just God working in my life. I know my HP takes care of me, but sometimes I don't understand why things happen. I am writing this for me because I need to see things in writing, just as I need to hear myself say things.

Drugs brought me to NA, but today I know I am powerless over my addiction, not just drugs. And even today my life is unmanageable. When I first came into the program, a lifelong dream came true for me. I had always wanted to be a nurse so I went to school and became a licensed practical nurse. Life was good.

Then, boom! I got sick, and now I can't do anything strenuous because it is life-threatening to me. Boom! There went my lifelong dream.

After getting sick and not being able to work, I moved from a two-bedroom condo to an efficiency apartment where I pull out a bed to sleep. I am not alone in this. I have a man that loves me and four cats, and we are all okay. But I wondered why God took my nursing from me. I would get really depressed.

One morning, while I was meditating, my HP said to me, "I am the only NA book somebody might see," and, "This is a program of attraction rather than promotion."

Well, I live in a place known as crack alley. One day, a woman came to me and said, "You used to use drugs, didn't you?" She then told me something about herself. Now we go to NA meetings together. Even if she doesn't stay clean, a seed has been planted. Everyone who lives in my apartment complex knows that I am a recovering addict, and I hope more seeds have been planted.

I want everybody to know that even with nine years clean I don't use just for today, I call my sponsor, go to meetings, talk to my HP, meditate daily, and still read NA literature.

LN, Oklahoma

Comin'up

Calendar						
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CANADA

British Columbia: 19-22 May; 15th Spring Clean; Gambier Island; info: VASC, PO Box 1695, Station A, Vancouver, BC V6C 2P7

New Brunswick: 9-11 June; 5th New Brunswick Area Convention; Fredericton; rsvns: (800)561-7666; info: Convention, PO Box 20064, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada E3B 6Y8

Ontario: June 30 - July 2; 5th Canadian Convention; International Plaza and Conference Center; info: (416)783-4393; CCNA-5, PO Box 54023, Lawrence Plaza Postal Outlet, North York, Ontario, Canada M6A 3B7

FRANCE

Paris: 14-17 Sept. 1995; 25th World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous; Paris; info: (818)780-3951, extension 120

GERMANY

Hesse: 21-23 July; 12th European Convention and Conference; Burgerhaus Nordweststadt; Walter-Moller-Platz 2; Frankfurt, Germany 60439; rsvns: (49) 69 580 930 or by fax: (49) 69 582 447; info: (49) 61 9828; ECCNA-12, Postfach 10 16 62, 60016 Frankfurt, Germany

UNITED KINGDOM

England: 21-23 Apr.; 6th London Convention; Holland Park School, Airlie Gardens, London; info: (71) 229-0630; LCNA 6, PO Box 1980, London W8, England N19 3LS

UNITED STATES

Arizona: 26-28 May; 9th Arizona Regional Conv.; Tempe; rsvns: (602)894-1400; info: (602)955-4050

Arkansas: 30 June-2 July; 7th Central Arkansas Area Conv.; Little Rock; rsvns: (501)445-8667; info: (501)661-1301; CAACNA, Box 250516, Little Rock, AR 72225

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

2) 18-21 May; 17th Northern California Conv.; Santa Clara; rsvns: (800)228-3000; info: NCCNA, Box 417511, Sacramento, CA 95841

3) 9-11 June; 11th San Diego/Imperial Regional Conv.; San Diego; rsvns: (619)232-3121; info: (619)229-1219; SDIRNAC, 2260 El Cajon Blvd. #184, San Diego, CA 92104

4) 30 June-2 July; Western States Unity Conv.; Redding; rsvns: (916)221-7500; info: (916)243-6900; WSUC, Box 993381, Redding, CA 96099

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

Florida: 18-21 May; 8th Alabama/Northwest Florida Regional Conv.; Fort Walton Beach, Florida; rsvns: (800)732-4853; info: (334)598-3234; Conv., Box 691, Daleville, AL 36322

2) 26-29 May; Gold Coast Area Conv.; Fort Lauderdale; rsvns: (800)343-2459; info: (305)761-8036; GCCNA, Box 5341, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33310

3) 18-20 Aug.; 1st Uncoast Area Conv.; Daytona Beach; rsvns: (800)767-4471; info: (904)375-9624; Convention, Box 12151, Gainesville, FL 32604

Georgia: 13-16 Apr.; 14th Georgia Regional Conv.; Savannah; info: (706)253-8442; GRCNA, Box 1653, Monroe, GA 30655

2) 21-23 Apr.; Hawg-In Campout; Reed Bingham Park, Adel; info: (912)386-5980

3) 4-7 May; North Atlanta Area Fun in the Sun Weekend; Panama City; rsvns: (800)224-4853; info: (404)729-0595; Weekend, Box 1332, Lilburn, GA 30226

Idaho: 19-21 May; Southern Idaho Regional Conv.; Boise; rsvns: In Idaho (800)821-7500, Out of Idaho (800)233-4611; info: SIRCCNA, Box 44824, Boise, ID 83711

Illinois: 5-7 May; 10th Mid Coast Conv.; Oakbrook; rsvns: (800)233-1234; info: Mid-Coast Conv., c/o CSO, 212 Marion Street #27, Oak Park, IL 60302

2) 9-11 June; Show-Me Regional Conv.; Quincy; info: 2901 Broadway #120, Quincy, IL 62301

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

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

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

Maine: 9-11 June; 4th Nature of Recovery Campout; Camp Mechuwana, Winthrop; info: (207)377-6895; Nature of Recovery 4, Box 120, Winthrop, ME 04364

2) 22-24 Sept.; 12th Southern Maine Area Conv.; Alfred; info: Box 5309, Portland, ME 04101

Maryland: 7-9 Apr.; 9th Chesapeake/Potomac Regional Conv.; Ocean City; rsvns: (800)654-5440; info: Box 7835, Washington, DC 20044

Massachusetts: 5-7 May; 8th Martha's Vineyard Area Celebration; Martha's Vineyard; rsvns: (800)225-6005; info: (508)677-4916; MVCCNA-8, 477 Milford Road # 273, Swansea, MA 02777

2) 28-30 July; 3rd Western Massachusetts Area Conv.; Springfield; rsvns: (413)781-7111; info: (413)538-7479; Convention, Box 422, Chicopee, MA 01021

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

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

3) 27-29 Oct.; 4th Annual Kalamazoo Area Conv.; Kalamazoo; info: (616)649-4738; KACNA 4, Box 50822, Kalamazoo, MI 49005

Minnesota: 12-14 May; 2nd Minnesota Regional Conv.; Rochester; rsvns: (507)282-2581; info: 207 9th Ave SE, Rochester, MN 55904

2) 2-4 June; Southern Minnesota Area Recovery Blast; Camp Patterson on Lake Washington; info: (507)455-9091; SMARB, Box 69, Owatonna, MN 55060

Missouri: 28-30 July; 16th Ozark Area Conv.; Truman Lake, Clinton; info: (316)856-4277; send speaker tapes to: 2038 Chocteau Street, Baxter Springs, KS 66713

Montana: 9-11 June; 7th Montana NA Gathering; Boulder; info: (406)933-5723; Gathering, Box 133, Jefferson City, MT 59638

Nebraska: 18-20 Aug.; Wyobraska Area Unity Days; Scotts Bluff; info: (308)783-2560; Unity Day, Box 262, Minatare, NE 69356

Nevada: 9-11 June; 5th Sierra Sage Regional Conv.; Lake Tahoe; rsvns: (702)588-6211; info: SSRCA, Box 11913, Reno, NV 89510

2) 14-16 July; 4th CAN Area Conv.; rsvns: (800)227-3849; info: (602)754-4260; Box 21975, Bullhead City, AZ 86439

New Hampshire: 8 Apr.; H&I Learning Day; info: (603)432-0168

2) 23-25 June; Granite State Area Celebration; Bethlehem; info: (603)432-0168; Box 4354, Manchester, NH 03108

New York: 26-28 May; 10th Greater New York Regional Conv.; rsvns: (800)233-1234; info: (212)242-8140; GNYRC, Box 285, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

North Carolina: 14-16 Apr.; 10th Greater Charlotte Area Conv.; rsvns: (800)843-6664; info: (704)529-1165; Convention, 1620 South Blvd. #A, Charlotte, NC 28203

2) 21-23 July; 2nd New Hope Area Conv.; Durham; rsvns: (919)683-6664; info: NHACNA, Box 25043, Durham, NC 27702

Ohio: 21-23 July; 7th North Coast Recovery Roast; Tri-County Camp Inn, Thompson; info: (216)585-0485

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

Oklahoma: 7-9 Apr.; 9th OK Regional Conv.; Tulsa; info: (918)747-0017

2) 23-25 June; Mirror of Miracles; Sycamore Valley Camping Area; Wynadotte, Oklahoma

Oregon: 19-21 May; 3rd Pacific Cascade Regional Conv.; Bend; info: Box 40844, Eugene, OR 97404

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

Pennsylvania: 14-16 Apr.; Greater Philadelphia Regional Conv.; rsvns: (215)448-2000; info: (215)424-2979; Box 14170, Philadelphia, PA 19138

South Carolina: 26-28 May; Greater Anderson-Pickens Area Conv.; Clemson; rsvns: (803)654-7501; info: GAP, Box 6031, Anderson, SC 29623

Tennessee: 26-28 May; 7th NA in May in Memphis; Meeman-Shelby Park; info: (901)452-1091; Box 111105, Memphis, TN 38111

Texas: 14-16 Apr.; 10th Lone Star Regional Conv.; Fort Worth; rsvns: (817)870-2100; info: (214)245-8972; 1510 Randolph, # 205, Carrollton, TX 75006

Washington: 7-9 Apr.; 10th Washington/North Idaho Regional Conv.; Tacoma; rsvns: (800)325-3535; info: (206)382-0534; Box 3396, Kent, WA 98032

2) 23-25 June; Camp Silverton Weekend; info: (360)321-1595; Box 5393, Everett, WA 98201

West Virginia: 5-7 May; Mountaineer Regional Service Conv.; Cedar Lake; info: Box 2381, Morgan Town, WV 26502

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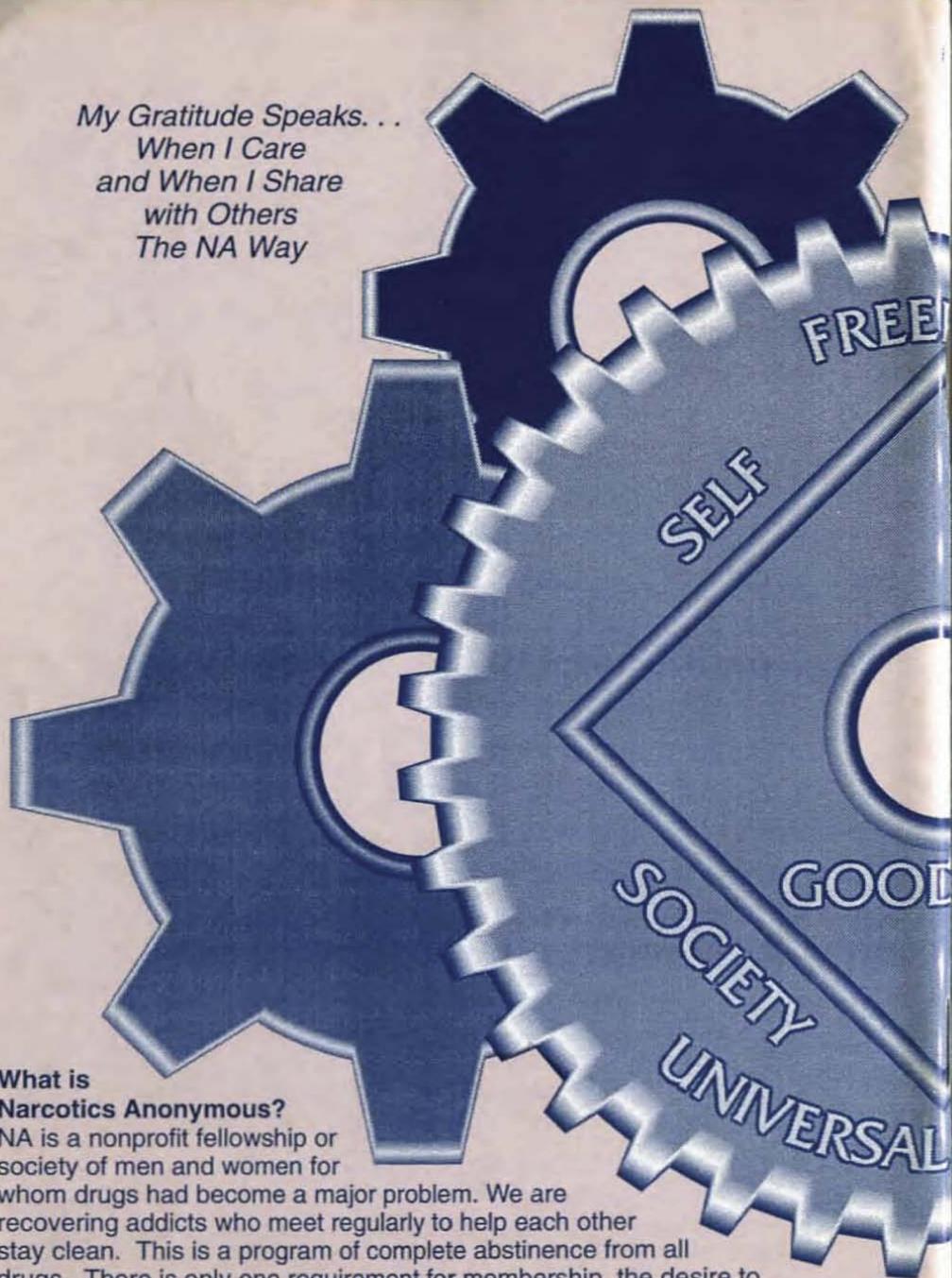
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The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

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

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*My Gratitude Speaks...
When I Care
and When I Share
with Others
The NA Way*



**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 that they work.