

*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.

THE
NA Way
MAGAZINE

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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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from the editor	2
Letters to the editor	2
meeting in print	
Zing!	5
Dispelling the myth	7
Recovery on the road	8
May we offer you freedom and hope?	9
Last chance	11
Step Nine spells relief	13
Coming home	15
A good place to start: Step One	16
home group	18
newsletters	
You know you need a meeting when	19
Unity, not uniformity	20
Admissions and solutions	21
viewpoint	
The announcement	22
What can we do?	22
Editorial replies	23
from our readers	
A collection of letters and short articles	26
comin'up	
NA calendar of upcoming events	29

The NA Way Magazine welcomes the participation of its readers. You are invited to share with the 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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From the editor



Curious about the conference?

A summary of events at the conference, called the *WSC'95 Report*, is available free of charge to anyone requesting it. Please write to:

World Service Office
PO Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409 USA

WSO relocation and you

Whew! We're here in our new quarters and do we have some work to do!

First of all, we wanted to let you know that the address and telephone number for subscriber services has not changed. It is printed in the back of the magazine on the subscription form. This is the place to call when you want to change your address, or you're experiencing difficulty with your subscription.

The upheaval may have more of an effect on you if you're calling me at the office. We are very likely to be behind in the manuscript approval process, so I may not be able to tell you the status of your story. Also, we may be a little slow in getting letters out notifying you of your story's progress through the approval process. Orders for back issues were placed on hold as of 15 March, but they will be available again as of 1 June, however, there may be some

delay in getting your order in the mail.

I expect the worst of the disruption to be over with by the time this issue reaches your mailbox, but if not, please be patient. We'll be back on track as soon as humanly possible. And for all those who have put up with delays and unanswered questions these past few months, I apologize and thank you for being so understanding.

CT, Editor

Letters to the editor

In response to "Banned!"

Dear Editor,

I felt a sense of hopelessness after reading "Banned!" in the November 1994 issue. *The NA Way Magazine* was, to me, feelings, feedback, ideas, and different beliefs from people with the disease of addiction. I have found a lot of good reading in the magazine. People expressing their views, beliefs, and opinions gave me food for thought and helped me, at times, to readjust my attitude.

First, I strongly disagree with only five addicts [The *NA Way* Review Panel] having so much power and control over what can and cannot be published.

Second, I agree with the writer of "Banned!" All my life I was banned from having the right to express my feelings, concerns, and thoughts. Since I've been in recovery that has changed. I may not be able to express myself at work, or in other so-called normal situations, but in recovery I've heard that no question is stupid. I have the right to express myself as long as I don't injure someone else. After reading this, I feel there are limits being imposed on what and how much I express.

Third, just for myself, I need to hear what other addicts have to say about unconditional love, principles before personalities, and any specific step or tradition. I have had the problem or character defect, if you will, of rigid thinking. I need feedback from other recovering addicts to expand my own realm of thinking. I need to be allowed to make my own decision about what I want to "ban." And I felt and believed *The NA Way Magazine* and the organization as a whole gave me that freedom.

My intent in writing this is not to be controversial or ugly, but just to express my opinion. I appreciate and need the feedback from others. Thank you for allowing me to share.

PS: In your column, you say, "Anything goes except profanity or inaccuracies." Who and what makes the judgment regarding "inaccuracies"?

CL, Texas

Editor's reply: Your above "PS" refers specifically to our invitation to write to us regarding the editorial policies and practices of the magazine—letters we'll print here. You've taken us up on that and your letter is most welcome.

The quote, "Anything goes except profanity or inaccuracies," refers only to letters to the editor. Submissions to other parts of the magazine are subject to the review process, which considers an article's relevance to NA recovery, its tone, etc.

In answer to your question about judging inaccuracies, it is part of an editor's function to check facts. For instance, if someone states in an article that a service committee made a particular motion during the 1988 World Service Conference, the editor will check the minutes of that conference to see if the statement is accurate. If it is, fine. If not, we'll either check with the author to see if he or she is aware of the error and is willing to delete that statement, or we won't publish the article. We should also note, just to avoid giving the impression that everything printed in The NA Way is one hundred percent accurate, that we don't always catch these kinds of things. Sometimes, a writer will make statements about the actions of members or groups of people within his or her local NA community. We don't usually have any way of confirming such statements, so we generally delete the name of the area or city and state in order to be as fair as possible to all concerned.

More on editorial policy

Dear Editor,

I have in the past submitted articles to *The NA Way Magazine* and been informed that they would not be published due to their not being in keeping with spiritual principles. But I have read published articles that seemed to be either controversial or not truly spiritual in nature.

I was angered by the two-faced attitude of the World Service Office, especially those who decided what was and what was not fit to print. I feel that as long as the language is that of the NA Fellowship (not using words such as "sober," "sobriety," "AA," "cross-addicted," "alcoholic," "alcohol," etc.), anything and everything deserves to be printed, even if controversial.

This magazine should be a worldwide method of discussion on issues/topics important to the fellowship as a whole. It would allow varying views and opinions to be expressed as members see fit, without having to fear their words being edited or dumped just because three out of five individuals don't like it. And who do these five individuals think they are? Better than everyone and anyone else when it comes to writing?

I had a newcomer submit an article—one that I believed to be in very good taste—about recovery and what the newcomer experienced, and it also contained only NA language. It was not published and no valid reason was ever given.

If we can allow addicts to have the freedom to express themselves as need be in our meetings, then why do

we limit that in a publication that is supported by the same addicts? Again, there seems to be a contradiction between what we say and what we do. This is not good for any of us, especially the newcomer.

Over and over again, I hear and read that *The NA Way* is not getting enough articles to print. You keep asking for addicts to write—and they do, only to have those articles turned down. Due to their disappointment, they never have the incentive to write again and maybe not to subscribe to the magazine because of the narrow-mindedness of the panel.

All of us like to know that what we have to say is valid, since that is where we may currently be in our recovery. If we only present the idea that, once you get clean, everything is rosy and everyone is happy, joyous, and free, then we are giving newcomers the wrong picture.

So I am suggesting that the review panel be dissolved entirely and just let the editor of the magazine make sure that the articles do not have any language that reflects anything of any other twelve-step fellowship, and then allow it, after those changes, to be printed as is. And I strongly agree with RE of California who wrote in the November 1994 issue.

DF, California

Zing!!!

One of the lessons I have learned in recovery was to get a sense of humor. Not only do I sometimes see myself as an object of humor, I focus my sense of humor on my character defects. I find that this allows me to let go of them much more easily.

I learned my first lesson in humor at one of my very first meetings. My life was a mess. My wife had thrown me out. I had just been fired again, and there I sat with a bunch of (I thought) losers. My attitude was less than pleasant. My self-obsession ran rampant. While looking around, I saw a little sign on the wall that read, "Don't take yourself so damned serious." I immediately thought, "That should be serious^{ly}." Within seconds, I saw the silliness of my attitude, picking at details while missing the overall message. I started laughing out loud at myself, and have continued that practice throughout my recovery.

Recently, I learned another lesson that brought my self-obsession into very clear focus. About four years ago, I was fired from a job selling consumer electronics. I was relatively young in recovery and, while goofing around on the sales floor, I goosed another salesman. He was not amused by my "friendly" antics,

and, instead of paying me back with some other "friendly" gesture, he went directly to management and demanded my dismissal, threatening to sue for sexual harassment if I didn't disappear pronto. I was fired. I contested it and lost, appealed and lost, and received no unemployment compensation.

I copped a major resentment against this guy. I hated him. In my mind, he had ruined my life just when it was starting to come together. I started talking bad about him behind his back. I even went so far as to go to the store where he worked and say insulting things about his wife to his co-workers. I wanted to make him suffer.

This went on for three years. I was able to compartmentalize the resentment in my mind so that it didn't affect the rest of my recovery, or so I thought. About three years later, I was talking trash about him to a guy who had worked with both of us back then, and with him currently. The man I was talking to wasn't in the program, but he was astonished by my remarks and said to me, "Geez, it's been three years! Let it go!"

I felt my face flush. I saw clearly what I had done to myself and to him for three full years. Far from practicing the principles of the steps in all my affairs, I had discarded them in respect to this resentment. I was ashamed of myself.

I resolved to make amends. However hard I tried, I could not convince myself to call him on the phone or write a letter. After talking to my sponsor, I decided I had to do this face-to-face. For a year I went to his

place of work to see him and he was always either not there or unavailable. Finally, one day he was free. I just spilled it, blurting out, "Ever since we worked together four years ago and had our disagreement, I've had a huge resentment against you and said some very awful things about you to your co-workers. I don't know how much you've heard, but I want you to know that I was wrong. I was out of line. And I'm very sorry."

He looked at me for a couple of seconds with a dismayed smile. Then he shook my hand and said the most unexpected thing, "Well, thanks (long pause). What did you say your name was?"

I felt kicked in the stomach. We made small talk for a few minutes and I left. I thought that I had really

hurt this guy. It was important for me to make face-to-face amends because I thought direct amends were the only way in this case. All of a sudden I began to giggle. I had just spent four full years of my life and an incalculable amount of energy trying to show this guy what for, and he didn't even remember me. How ironic.

I like to think of myself as a relatively intelligent person, but sometimes I'm really slow to learn a lesson. When my Higher Power decides to teach me, I get taught in a big way. Valuable lessons cost a lot. I purchased this one with a great deal of pain and grief. I hope I've got it down. The main person that my resentments hurt is me.

Spense, Minnesota



Dispelling the myth

I can remember the morning of my first NA anniversary. I woke up in a state of complete and total bliss, reflecting on the major transformation in my life over the past year. I had just completed my second quarter in college and, as a result of recovery, made the dean's list. I was living in a peaceful, serene, spacious house, surrounded by country air and nature's finest plants and greenery. I felt wonderful about myself, the steps, and my relationship with God and other people. It was almost like a dream. I remember imagining that if life could get this good after only one year, then utopia must surely await me down the road.

Unfortunately, it hasn't quite turned out the way I envisioned. In fact, I didn't come even remotely close in my projection of the future.

I did have some great years in recovery. But as the years passed, I started to experience tremendous pain and suffering as major issues that I didn't even know existed began to surface. All of a sudden, when I had around nine years, I started seeing my abusive childhood in front of me, and it became inescapable. With

ten years clean, I fell into a paralyzing depression from which I couldn't emerge for a year.

Today, with twelve and a half years clean, I experience a completely different kind of recovery than I ever did in the past. Learning to be gentle with myself and love myself with greater depth and care than ever before is the focus of my program now. I have also been forced to apply the steps to the current issues in my life from a broader perspective.

So what happened to me for the past few years? Did I stop working the steps? *Not for one minute!* What became clear is that I brought an excessive amount of emotional baggage into my recovery, and that my Higher Power, in its infinite love and compassion for me, made sure that I didn't have to deal with much of this until the time was right, which required the building of a strong and powerful foundation beneath me. Like many old-timers I speak with across the country, I came into NA with a reservoir of shame-based issues that had walls of defense built around them to protect me from having a nervous breakdown. Honestly, I didn't start using drugs as an adolescent because I was thrilled with my existence. My life sucked royally, and using was a way out with immediate results.

Sooner or later, I have to come to terms with all that plagued me prior to my using. This seems quite clear to me today. I have to learn to forgive myself, not only for the improprieties I committed in my past, but also for the abuse I suffered at the hands of

others, much of which happened when I was a powerless kid—and a frightened and confused one at that. Today, recovery for me is about mastering this difficult lesson.

I am writing this article to dispel some of the myths that currently exist about clean time in our fellowship, especially among newer members. I am doing this so that others

don't have to suffer the pain of uniqueness I have known in an area of the world where NA is young.

We often talk about reaching out to the newcomer, which, of course, is valid. But every now and then, it might not be a bad idea to reach out to the old-timer.

GR, New York

Recovery on the road

Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of attending the Eleventh European Conference and Convention in Amsterdam, and having spent an additional ten days visiting with recovering addicts in Bremen, Germany and Paris, France; we were able to carry the NA message to other addicts and practice these principles in all our affairs. What a blessing!

Recovery in NA is always so amazing. The most amazing thing is how good it feels when we add service to it. While in Bremen, two members of the area H&I committee and myself had the opportunity to go into the local jail and carry the NA message to a small group of incarcerated addicts. Two were staying clean and two had never attended an NA meeting before. The message was clear and the connection was strong. Although our cultures are different, the disease of addiction remains the same. Fortunately, so does the message of recovery.

I made a good friend there who reminds me very much of a dear friend who recently celebrated four years clean (biker trash make some of the most loving and caring recovering addicts). We exchanged addresses so we could stay in touch through the mail—something not recommended by the *H&I Handbook*—but my concern about this addict being released, returning to active addiction, flying to the states and vandalizing my home, is nil.

Two days later, fourteen addicts from Bremen piled into four cars and drove 150 kilometers to Hamburg, Germany. Hamburg is a larger city than Bremen, but there was only one clean addict in Hamburg attending that meeting. I hope it was as good for him as it was for me.

This is a great example of addicts carrying the message and, for me, one of the best ways I have ever been involved in carrying out our primary purpose. I know without a doubt, that at some time not far down the road, addicts will be piling into cars to drive to Hamburg for an NA convention put on by the recovering addicts there.

Recovery and service in Paris was no different. It was inspiring, purposeful, and fun. I was able to attend an H&I Committee meeting where familiar issues were discussed: ensuring our primary purpose and following our traditions.

I also had the opportunity to share at the first twelve-step-oriented, disease-concept treatment center in France, which opened only three months ago. NA is alive and well in Paris.

Traveling through Europe was a fabulous experience for me. The openness and warmth of the people were consistent wherever I went. While staying with addicts and visiting their cities with them, I never felt like a tourist. I always felt at home, as we do in this program.

A few days before I returned to the States, I began to feel sad because I had to leave soon. I was projecting and not enjoying the moment. Then I realized, that further down the road, I would return to Paris for the 1995 world convention. This made me happy, and I was able to let go and enjoy the moment again.

See you there!

IF, Ohio

May we offer you freedom and hope?

My most gut-wrenching hour and a half each month is during the H&I meeting we take into a locked adolescent chemical dependency unit in a local hospital. That's why it's so important for me to participate.

Riding up in the elevator, my nose wrinkles at the hospital smell and my hand reaches for the medallion in my pocket. My forefinger caresses its raised surface, reminding me of the solid foundation upon which we build our recovery: self, God, society, and service. This symbol suggests to me that my program is based on healing my relationships with self, God, and society through action—through service.

When the hospital staff finally buzzes us through the locked door, I know only one thing for sure: I'm in for an emotional roller coaster ride. We try to mingle a bit before the meeting begins. Some of the youngsters are full of fear, some full of bravado, some totally disconnected on the emotional level. This one is in for an armed robbery; that one has repeatedly run away from a home where incest is a way of life.



The feelings get huge for me when we go around the room introducing ourselves, because I'm always stunned that people barely into their teens identify themselves as addicts. Seeing them in a locked chemical dependency unit at such young ages, it is obvious that they are fast approaching their bottoms. They have suffered as much pain in an incredibly short period of time as most of us take years, or even decades, to accumulate. How they have survived this long, I can't imagine.

Although we have in mind a general outline of how the meeting will go, we take care not to be rigid. We always begin by encouraging the participants to tell us what they need. Sometimes they want to hear our stories; other times they will select a topic like anger. Steps Two, Three, and Four come up regularly as they try to gain understanding of our principles.

You and I have seen too many addicts die from our disease. That's why, after eleven years in Narcotics Anonymous, I look around that room

and know I'm looking into the face of death. There are people in that room who will never outlive their teens.

Yet, without fail, after every meeting, one or two or three of these kids hang back as the rest rush from the room. Hesitating, they pick one or another of us to share with on a personal level. Because I'm openly gay, they often choose me to talk to—in hushed voices—about their confused sexual identity and how it relates to their addiction.

That's why I go back month after month. The Fifth Tradition teaches us that each group has but one primary purpose: to carry the message. The message we carry is freedom and hope. And each month I leave knowing we have carried this message to people who have not heard it before. They may reject our message, but they can never say that Narcotics Anonymous didn't care enough about them to offer them a different way. They might throw themselves away, but we who go there won't. And, oh yeah, I've stayed clean another day.

Kit E, Minnesota

Last chance

I want to share a little of my gift of recovery with my fellow recovering addicts. My story is a little different, but I know I'm not unique. I'm in my very late forties and used for more than thirty years.

I knew I had a problem that was killing me, but I was powerless to fight it by myself. I had heard of another fellowship, but knew I just didn't belong there.

I have always been a professional escapist; my life is one long story of running from myself trying to find a way out of just being me. I tried different professions, different cities in different states, different wives, and every drug known to man.

Going to any lengths has special meaning for me. After I quit living as a professional hippie, and decided that I had to go back to the source of my pain, I returned to my home area. I met a man who knew me when I was young, and I took a job in his profession: law enforcement. I thought I would go to the extreme to find my cure. I managed to stay clean for two months. When I started using again, my progressive disease picked up right where it left off. I found out it

was acceptable to use alcohol, so I drank to hide my excessive use of other drugs.

Thirteen years later, my employer asked me if I needed help with my drinking problem. I broke down and cried. My Higher Power, I believed, had let me cause enough pain and misery, and was offering me possibly my last chance before I came to ultimate ends: jails, institutions, or death.

I was introduced to NA like many other addicts: by a treatment center. I made every mistake that I could there: almost getting thrown out, still trying to do things my way—the addict's way. I stayed an extra week and, by the grace of my HP, finally realized I was on my way to death again. I had, what I call, my first spiritual awakening when I wouldn't leave the treatment center on my discharge date.

I had gotten a sponsor while in treatment; a man who carried the message by bringing in an H&I meeting. He sent another recovering addict to pick me up and stay with me until he could take me to a meeting. I had convinced him how helpless I really was. I couldn't stay clean on my own. That was the beginning of my life in NA.

I got involved with H&I when I had enough clean time and started carrying the message. I was told I never had to be alone again, and that I was loved, and that I was a valuable human being—and that was the message I carried. NA loved me when I couldn't love myself. I got involved with my home group, became a trusted servant, and went to

area meetings. I attended NA functions and became a part of the fellowship. I finally found a place where I belonged; a place where I heard other people share their miracle of not using drugs on a daily basis. Using a sponsor, the steps, and every other suggestion I heard, I found myself with two and a half years clean.

Eventually, I got so full of myself that I thought I was untouchable by this disease. My ego and self-righteousness got out of control. I stopped taking suggestions and started doing things my way again. I was sponsoring myself.

I had just returned from a short speaking tour when I made up my mind that I needed something else. I broke up with my girlfriend and found myself in the middle of feelings that I couldn't stand. I never stopped

going to meetings, but I lost the ability to be honest with myself.

I used over my inability to live with my feelings. I kept it a secret from everyone for as long as I could. I couldn't stand the guilt that I felt; I had to go to my home group and get honest. It was the hardest thing I ever had to do in my recovery: to tell my friends that I had become, once again, a liar, cheater, and thief. They gave me a hug and welcomed me back.

That was five months ago. Today I realize that my HP has given me another chance at being a miracle, an addict that is trying to live life on life's terms without using drugs. I know I have a long way to go in my recovery, but I am not alone. Today, I am trying to learn how to live with my disease, not die because of it.

Anonymous



Step Nine spells relief

How well I remember the overwhelming fear that engulfed me. I had just completed my Eighth Step list and my sponsor informed me that it was time to make the appropriate amends. I immediately became panic-stricken. My sponsor gently assured me that I had done the necessary preparatory work in Step Eight, so I simply needed to trust my Higher Power and the NA program.

I knew in my heart that if I wanted to stay clean, enjoy spiritual growth, achieve freedom from the wreckage of my past, and finally be relieved of the guilt I had been carrying for so long, I would have to take the action suggested in Step Nine.

Today, I am grateful I took that action, because the miracles that occurred truly changed my life.

It is said that learning to live successfully means we have to learn to recognize when we need help. My sponsor's guidance was critical to me in the process of making amends. He suggested that I first write out my amends to each person. This really helped me understand what the spiritual principle of forgiveness is all about. The writing made me real-

ize my need to be forgiven, increased my willingness to make amends, and allowed me to forgive others for harm done to me. It was an incredible experience.

Upon completing my "written amends," I talked about each one with my sponsor. He was able to guide me on whether my amends should be direct or indirect in each case. In many instances, making direct amends would have resulted merely in spreading my disease or causing further harm. I had to make those amends indirectly, through my Higher Power. Making direct amends to my wife for certain harm done would have accomplished nothing except cause her further harm. Step Nine is not about relieving myself of guilt at the expense of someone else.

I learned that the definition of "amends" is "to change, modify, or make better." "I'm sorry" may or may not be included in that. I can make amends to my wife by not repeating the behavior that harmed her. I can treat her with the love, kindness, compassion, and trust that she deserves. Doing this has allowed our relationship to really blossom and grow more beautiful with each passing day.

I also learned that in certain cases I was one of the "others" who could be injured by making specific amends, and that it wasn't God's will for me to be harmed further. In certain situations, direct amends could have possibly resulted in my being terminated from my job, being sent to jail, divorced, etc., which would have done myself and my family great

harm. My sponsor insisted that in time God would provide me with the opportunities to make indirect amends in such cases; and that is exactly what happened.

I was finally free of the guilt and fear that caused many sleepless nights. I experienced a tremendous sense of well-being. Today I realize that I may not be responsible for all the things I did in my past, but I certainly am accountable. The NA program is teaching me how to accept personal responsibility, live in the solution, and be freed from the destruction of my past.

A line from the essay on Step Nine in our Basic Text states: "Timing is an essential part of this step. We should make amends when the opportunity presents itself. . . ." It simply amazed me how God provided the opportunities by bringing people whom I hadn't seen in years into my life again so I could make the necessary amends. I've come to believe that these "coincidences" were really "God-incidences" that allowed me to fulfill my spiritual aim. It was important for me to remember that, in spite of the fear, I was really making amends for myself, and I simply had to do it to the best of my ability. It's true that "a lot of courage and faith goes into making an amend, and a lot of spiritual growth results."

I approached the people I had harmed with as much humility as I was capable of, explained what I was doing and why, requested their understanding, and asked them sincerely if I could do anything more to correct the situation. The positive reactions I received simply over-

whelmed me. I felt a sense of security such as I have never before experienced.

I will never forget the sense of peace I felt the day I went to the cemetery and read my amends letters to both my parents, who had passed away in my active addiction. I believe in my heart that they received my amends and forgave me.

And I'll never forget making amends to my father-in-law. We sat there, with tears streaming down both our faces, and he said to me, "It's okay. I always loved you like one of my own children."

Even the amends I made to all five of my brothers and sisters resulted in heart-warming, emotional experiences that have allowed me to bond with them like never before. The unconditional love I received rejuvenated my will to live, and it reinforced my faith in God and NA.

It's true that "in the process of our recovery, we are restored to sanity and part of sanity is effectively relating to others." Like most addicts, all I ever really wanted was to be loved and accepted. The action I took in working Step Nine has helped me achieve that goal. Although there are still amends to be made, God has already done a lot of healing in my relationships with others. This has allowed me to appreciate the gift of recovery even more today. Step Nine has taught me that I may have to live *with* my past, but I don't have to live *in* it. That's a great relief!

NC, New Jersey

Coming home

I was clean nine years by the grace of God and the Twelve Steps. My wife and I, both in recovery, separated and divorced for the second time in recovery. I didn't feel comfortable going to meetings she attended. She was dating other people I was in recovery with.

So in January of 1989, I started attending NA meetings in my own home town, across the street from where I once lived. I had attended some NA meetings before, so I was familiar with the format. I even knew some of the people there. I listened to other addicts share about their active addiction and their very deep feelings and emotions. I identified right away. About a week later, I shared something I learned in my recovery, and one of the other addicts pointed out, in a nice way that what I shared was an outside issue. I learned real fast.

That summer I bought a Basic Text, and while on vacation I read the whole book, underlining and highlighting all that interested me, especially the stories. I went to three step study meetings a week. I learned about the traditions from the other addicts, especially the "Real Tuff Clean Puffs." Thank God NA has them. I was asked to share at other groups because people liked what I

had to share about my spiritual experiences.

One day I met a girl at a recovery dance. We became friends, and she invited me to come and speak at her NA home group. I shared my using story, my spiritual experiences, and how I found my Higher Power. It was a good experience because I started to feel hope. I joined an NA home group and became a trusted servant of that group. I became a GSR and attended the area meetings. I was increasing the flow of my life and I was accepted. I got an NA sponsor. I started working with other addicts. I began writing on the NA steps and traditions. I was on a new road to recovery, addressing my own addiction. I was asked to do a couple of workshops at our area conventions. I was overwhelmed and honored to have the privilege. I have found a lot of love in NA that I had never before experienced.

In the past three years, I lost my business and had some real tough times, but I didn't use. So I decided to move to California in November 1992. It took a while for me to adjust, but I'm still in contact with my NA friends and a few sponsees on the East Coast. I joined a home group here in California and became a GSR. I still attend seven to ten NA meetings a week. Now I know addicts on the East Coast and West Coast.

What I have found is that NA is a very flexible program. Now when I share, it's because I care about others the NA way.

GL, California

A good place to start: Step One

I was in active addiction from the time I was thirteen or fourteen years old. I wasn't very different from the other kids in my area. I played sports on the streets, rode my bike, fantasized a lot, and waited for something big to happen. I smoked like my friends and always wanted to be grown up. I stole booze from my parents' supply. Then my "friends" introduced me to pot.

After that, with behavior I had already developed, I became an addict. It didn't take long at all. As other drugs came along, I fell into the full-blown addict lifestyle.

I joined the army after high school so I could get away from my parents. The army did drug tests often while I was in training. I did the normal addict thing and switched to booze. It may not have been my drug of choice, but it got me okay.

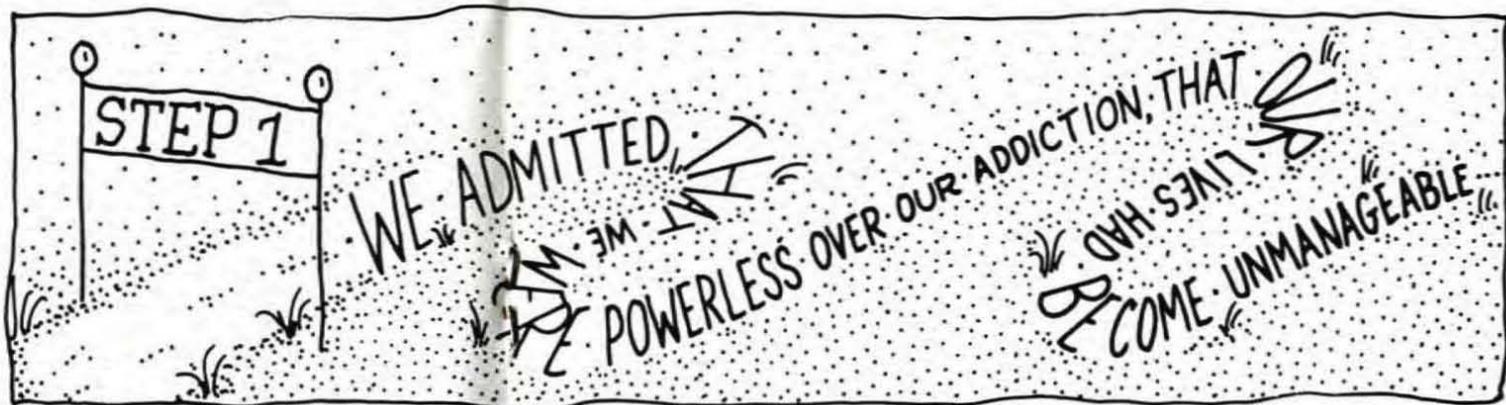
I was about twenty when the army started getting in the way of my using. I was in a bar in a local town, and I bought some acid from someone I didn't know at all. I paid for it and took it on the spot. I could say it was because I was drunk or my usual contacts had dried up, but the real rea-

son was that I'm an addict. My using was out of control. I called for a ride to take me home, and they took me to the hospital on the base. It was my first detox.

I was a good liar in my using. I lied to sergeants, counselors, doctors, friends, and even my family. I can't say the drugs were doing the lying, but I can say I lied a lot when I was using drugs.

I did not get clean until after my twenty-first birthday, when I was introduced to Narcotics Anonymous. When I first went to NA, I had doubts. I had no idea what the fellowship was about, or what I had to do. My first NA meeting was with another addict and myself. The counselor I saw the day before told me about it. I went to the meeting and told him the stuff I told the counselor. I thought if I lied in that meeting, the army would not let me into rehab. I was paranoid, going through true terror, and withdrawal. I had to stay clean before I could go to treatment. I had to work Step One.

I was shown by the Twelve Steps that I had to start with Step One. I saw where I was powerless. If I took



any drug, that drug owned me and I had no control. If I didn't take a drug, I had to deal with life. I always thought life was for wimps who couldn't handle drugs. I didn't know that the drugs had handled *me*.

When I came to that understanding, I had to accept the fact that I had a disease. The symptoms of the disease were a compulsion to use something outside myself so I could feel okay, combined with an obsession to keep using it, no matter what. This was my way to deal with pain. Pain was anything that didn't go my way.

I was lucky to be by myself a lot in my first month of being clean. I was on an annual army exercise that I had to go to, unless I was dead. I was close, but not close enough. I slept a lot. I read some NA literature. I thought a great deal about my past and present. I stayed away from people whenever I could. I smoked a lot of cigarettes. I am not and was never religious, but for some reason, praying made life easier to deal with. So I did that, too.

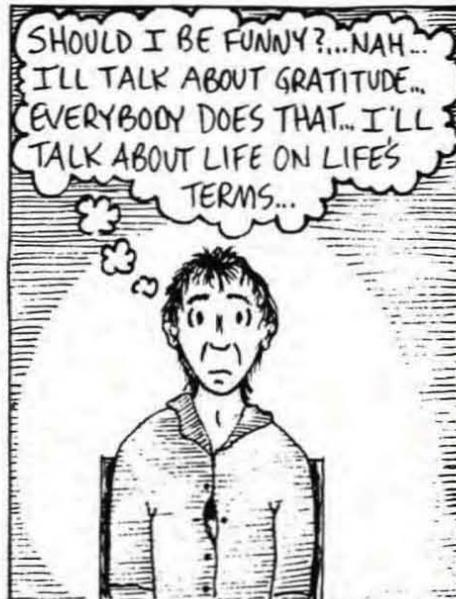
I came to see my reservations also. They were as bad and as painful as the isolation and the shame. Some

people like that pain. I despised it. I was not ready to live my life alone anymore. My only way out was to stay clean and hang out with the real winners in life. For addicts like us, to use is to lose.

My eighth anniversary is coming up in two months. I remember what it was like so I can keep myself new and green. As long as we do this together, we have a good chance of staying clean together.

JF, Pennsylvania

Home Group



Newsletters

You know you need a meeting when...

From *Treasure Coast Today*, the Treasure Coast, Florida area newsletter

- ... you're wondering if you need a meeting.
- ... you don't know who is in the mirror looking back at you.
- ... you forget where the meeting is.
- ... you call your sponsor and he says, "Who?"
- ... the newcomer you gave a white keytag to at your last meeting is celebrating her first year.
- ... you forget what step you're on.
- ... you forget your primary purpose.
- ... newcomers are asked to introduce themselves and everyone looks at you.
- ... you feel like using drugs.
- ... you've forgotten your sponsor's name and phone number.
- ... your three-year-old tells you to go to a meeting.
- ... your dealer tells you to go to a meeting.
- ... you know "Robert's Rules" better than the Basic Text.
- ... you haven't found a sponsor yet.
- ... you've lost everything, but hope.
- ... you are an addict.
- ... when? regularly!

Anonymous

Unity, not uniformity

From *The Bottom Line*, the Gold Coast, Florida area newsletter:

"Anyone may join us, regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion, or lack of religion."

Well, that's what they said, but that's not how I felt hearing it.

I was seventeen years old when I got clean, which was a task to begin with. I went to my first meeting all dressed up, and right away I felt out of place, not only because of my age, but because of how I was dressed. Everyone else had on jeans and T-shirts.

I had gone to private Catholic schools my whole life, and in that environment it was always more important how you looked on the outside than how you felt on the inside.

I thought the people in NA were low-class. The way they dressed, the way they spoke, and how they acted—just everything about them turned me off. I didn't think I needed to be around low-class people just to get clean.

My ego and pride took over because I thought I was better than them. I ended up relapsing every day for two months straight. Meanwhile, I'd still go to meetings almost every night to pick up a white chip.

I never told anyone how old I was because, along with the class issue, I also felt that they thought of me as a little child because of my age. As time went on, questions would come up about how long I used and what I used. These issues always made me feel less than, because I never shot up and I used for five years, not twenty-five years.

I kept the thoughts of being different from everyone else in the back of my head, and I came to learn that if you took away the masks people wore, everyone spoke exactly the same language and no one knew anyone else's age, that each and every one of us are just human beings with the same feelings. At least that is what it took for me to realize it.

I used to be ashamed at how old I was and how I used, but now I am extremely grateful about these things.

I got over the class issue when I realized that I am no better and no worse. I am just another addict seeking recovery, and they really did mean it when they said, "Anyone may join us, regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of religion."

Anonymous

Admissions and solutions

From *Free Spirit*, the Calgary, Alberta area newsletter: This is as simple as I can make it: Powerless means, to me, I can't figure it out. Being powerless over my addiction, as I see it, is not knowing how to stop my obsessive thinking, my compulsive actions, and my self-centered behavior. I can't figure out what to do to stop acting on these influences in my life. Having obsessions and acting on them has caused my life to become unmanageable.

Unmanageable, to me, means that I lack peace. When my life is unmanageable I feel depressed, confused, stressed, uneasy, excessively sensitive, unfocused, useless, and unworthy. When I feel like this, I'm usually bitchy, resentful, flaming, angry, inconsiderate, self-absorbed, and my life is running on fear. Although fear is always the last thing I notice, it is always there if I open my eyes.

I don't like to admit that fear is part of my life. I like to believe that I'm still in charge, and if I admit I can't manage my own life, I'd have to admit that I don't know what I'm doing. If I admitted that, then I'd have to admit that I haven't figured out what the game plan is, and, what the heck, this is my life, I should know. Not knowing is frightening.

So there you have it. I'm afraid to

admit I don't know what I'm doing or why I'm doing it, so I continue to do things the way I think they should be done. And because I keep doing things my way, I have to constantly and obsessively think about what to do, how to do it, what it will cost me, what drug or combination of drugs will change my predicament, how to get you to see or do it my way, and if there is a softer, easier, quicker, or cheaper way to do it. With all that going on in my head all of the time, I miss the simplest of details and my life is unmanageable, totally lacking in peace. While I'm obsessively thinking about everything, I'm acting and reacting all over the place on my own compulsion and not taking into consideration the consequences of my actions, or how they might affect anyone else.

What do I need to do now—now that I've seen how obsession, compulsion, and self-centeredness rob me of my peace?

Well, Step One in the NA program gives me two things I can do. First of all, Step One starts with the word "we." This means the very first thing I have to realize is that I don't have to do this alone. There are others just like me.

Second, I have to admit that we are powerless over these things that are the core of my addiction. Because I lack power over them, my life is unmanageable. I can't figure it out.

Okay, I've admitted my powerlessness and unmanageability. I've gotten together with others who have admitted their powerlessness and unmanageability. Now what do I do about the void in my life? What is the solution? Step Two!



Viewpoint

The announcement

The sharing has just ended. The meeting is about to close. The chairperson asks if there are any NA announcements.

"Yeah. I got an announcement," says a former group service representative.

"The area service meeting will be held next weekend. If you want to get crazy, I'd recommend you attend.

"I mean, those people are *insane*. The committee saves its minutes, but wastes hours.

"They spend an endless amount of time haggling over nothing, and then voting on the same thing.

"Don't get me wrong. I mean, it's all for the suffering addict, right? Surely you can donate four or five hours of your time for the still-suffering addict. I mean, most addicts who attend that meeting are *suffering!* That's a joke, okay.

"I can't do service work. It makes me too damn crazy. All that bickering and fussing. But you're welcome to try. They sure need new victims, er, uh, I mean, volunteers.

"And I'm sure that service is a needed thing. I'm not exactly sure what it needs. . . ."

"Anyway, that's my announcement. The area meeting is next weekend. Are there any volunteers to attend?"

The former GSR scans the room, but no one raises his or her hand. A pouty expression forms on his face. He sighs deeply.

"Why won't anyone get involved in service work," he cries.

OG, Oklahoma

What can we do?

The Greater Waterbury Area Literature Subcommittee of the Connecticut Region gave a copy of Motion 39 to the GSRs at an area service committee meeting, and asked that

they take it to their groups for input. The intent was to send this area's input to *The NA Way Magazine* and to participate in dialogue and unity with the NA Fellowship.

The pros were in the minority. Approximately twenty percent of the participating addicts felt that the suggested language would be more universal, and if it brought more sick and suffering addicts to the NA Fellowship, it would be worth it.

The cons were the majority. Approximately eighty percent felt that "the steps and traditions have been working, so why change them."

It should also be noted that a small number of groups in our area participated in the dialogue about this motion. And so we try to carry the message. Thanks for letting us share.

Greater Waterbury Area Literature Subcommittee, Connecticut Region

Editorial replies

In response to "One Addict's Experience with Prescription Medication" September 1994:

I was sitting in an airport, actually early for my flight, with some time to read the magazine before I got on the plane. Lots of thoughts and feelings came up in response to the stories I read.

This is my viewpoint as one addict who has experience with prescription medication. If we follow the suggestions given in our literature (the Basic Text and *In Times of Illness*), and stay close to our sponsor and other recovering addicts, using prescription medication does not have to release our addiction all over again.

After a severe motorcycle accident that I had at nine years clean, the necessary use of medication was a part of my recovery, not my addiction. However, it did interfere with my spiritual program, and I had to reach out extra hard for a while to allow other recovering addicts to help me in my recovery.

As to the article I just read, it is apparent to me that the individual in question did not follow the suggestions. He or she had already released his or her addiction all over again before the actual use of drugs. Using medication does not automatically lead to relapse, unless you ignore the suggestions.

IF, Ohio



In response to "Small Change" November 1994:

I agree with PK that the name "Narcotics Anonymous" doesn't reflect our approach to addiction. The general public considers "addicts" to be IV drug users. At least that's what I thought before joining the fellowship. We need a name that reflects our focus on addiction, not any specific substance.

"Addicts Anonymous" is an improvement over the name we have now, and maybe with a little thought

we can be even more descriptive in our name. However, "Addicts Anonymous" sounds like a good idea and I'll relate an incident to illustrate that.

Last night, a newcomer, who didn't identify herself as an addict, but said she was looking for spirituality, came to our group. After the meeting, a group conscience was held to discuss ways to exclude anyone from our meeting but addicts. It seems that lack of spirituality is a serious addiction these days, and you can imagine how I felt when the person was told, "you violated me," by another recovering person. I felt that the newcomer was in pain, and, let's face it, NA is not exactly entertainment or a place to kill time. The newcomer was accompanied by another person who identified herself as a recovering addict.

I know we need closed meetings, but someone who needed help got turned off by someone else's sharing.

Maybe I'm too close to this right now, but I had to write when I read PK's letter.

Bob, New York



In response to "Dangerous Prayer?" January 1995:

Hi, family. I'm an addict. I truly enjoyed the "Meeting in Print" section of the January issue of *The NA Way*. In the "Viewpoint" section, the article titled "Dangerous Prayer?" provoked me into writing and sharing what I feel and believe.

Though the article makes a strong argument for the use of the Lord's

Prayer in NA meetings, in the last paragraph it stated, "Believe it or not" the article was not intended "to defend Christianity or even the Lord's Prayer." But given the statement the author made in the second paragraph, "I believe in using the prayer," my response is that I don't believe you. Get honest. The article was clearly a defense of the prayer, if not Christianity, too.

Early on in my recovery, I learned that the core of my disease is self-centeredness. Even today, I can still become obsessed with my personal program of recovery. When my program is challenged by the spiritual principles in the steps and traditions, I seek to rationalize, justify, or minimize my self-seeking behavior or attitude.

My question to the author of the article is, "What happened to the Sixth Tradition?" Are groups so locked into Tradition Four that Tradition Six does not apply? The Basic Text (yes, I still read that book) says, "Group autonomy has been used to justify violation of the traditions." A group should never forget that it is the Twelve Traditions that bind all groups together as one fellowship called NA. Only when we include the traditions in service do we have a clear message for the newcomer.

The essay on Tradition Six in our Basic Text goes on to state, "An outside enterprise is any agency, business venture, religion . . ." It's easy for me to see Christianity as a religion; the problem is, how does Christianity apply to the Lord's Prayer? Well, the first thing that Tradition Six says is that "An NA group ought

never endorse . . ." The essay clarifies this: "The use of literature, speakers, and announcements from other fellowships in our meetings constitutes an implied endorsement of an outside enterprise."

Whether the Lord's Prayer is read from a book, a paper, a card, or said from memory, its use in NA is a violation of the Sixth Tradition. It's from the Christian religion. Even when some addicts are made aware of this violation, they still try to justify, rationalize, or minimize their self-seeking, self-centered behavior—the core of our disease.

The traditions were formulated to further and protect our primary purpose. The essay on Tradition Six clearly spells out what can go wrong when we allow addicts to violate this tradition: "When we, as a group, waiver from our primary purpose, addicts who might have found recovery die."

Our Basic Text says, "If a contradiction exists, we have slipped away from our principles."

Thanks for letting me share.

OB, Louisiana



In response to "Recovering Youths or Recovering Addicts?" January 1995:

When I came to NA, I was attending meetings every day just trying to stay clean. One night at a meeting, the speaker was a young person I knew from my past. He was sharing a message that I could really relate to. I spoke to him after the meeting, and then we started going to meet-

ings together. After a week, I asked him to be my "temporary" sponsor; he shed tears of joy and gladly said yes. I've never had to use since, and I'm celebrating two years clean in February. This young person is still my sponsor, and we have both grown continually through the Twelve Steps of NA.

At the time, this "recovering youth" was eighteen years old and I was twenty-eight. The age didn't play a part in my decision at all. Today, I see a lot of humility in our relationship. He's now twenty and I'm thirty. We talk on a feeling level. After all, I've been married and divorced and he's never had a long-term romantic relationship. We can't afford to get caught up in the details and outside circumstances.

I believe I was blessed by the God of my understanding to have this sponsor. We had to somehow get beyond the issue of age difference right away and search out the common bond, or maybe neither one of us would have made it. Today, I can see a lot of growth from our sponsorship relationship. And I welcome all—regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion, or lack of religion—to NA. Thanks to NA, I'm clean another day and growing in the process of recovery.

I don't believe it's necessary for everyone to travel the road of active addiction for half their lives. NA provides a new life for all.

JN, Florida

From our readers



Out of denial

I have heard people say that "meetings keep us clean, but working the steps is how we recover." I believe this. The reason is that writing on the steps breaks my denial. Presently, I am working on another Fourth Step.

It isn't that I am writing hundreds of pages, or that I am writing daily. Instead, I am practicing honesty with myself. I am taking my inventory constantly. And with my Higher Power's help, I am learning about my patterns and behavior. Some of these are assets and some are defects. Some I just need to experience.

Learning how to live life on life's terms is the trick of recovery in NA. When I learn how my defects of character affect my life, my recovery in those areas begins. I always thought I was a victim of this cruel world. I did not understand why people didn't trust me when I lied to them. I didn't understand why people did me wrong after I abused them.

Now that I am in recovery, things are different. Now, when I say that I am going to do something, people believe me, although I might be a little slow. I seldom steal any more. Now that I am constantly working on honesty, I am not lying as much. You see, it isn't that I lie so much, it is just

that my denial is so strong that I don't know what the truth is.

Experiencing life is a new concept to me. I used to say, "I need to get out of here," or, "If I can only get through this." I was placing conditions on my recovery, expecting to feel good all the time. I would forget that recovery is living in the moment, one day at a time.

The gift of recovery is that I have become the person I was meant to be. I'm grateful to be the person the program and my Higher Power have allowed me to become. I'm so grateful for the Twelve Steps, my sponsor, my friends who understand me, and most of all for the God of my understanding.

JC, Wyoming

A grateful addict is a clean addict

I am writing to share some of my experience, strength, and hope. I was very lucky to receive one of your magazines. Just to let you all know, I am in an institution. I've been here for about three to four months.

My life hasn't been smooth. I spent about six months homeless before I got arrested. I was on the run from cops and I still continued to do drugs. I was in the Narcotics Anonymous program for about three years,

then relapsed to continue my five-year using spree.

Before today, I never really utilized the program to the best of my ability. I never had a sponsor for more than four months and I never got past the Third Step. In all honesty, I never really wanted to change. I gradually learned that if I don't do every step, I just won't live every day (clean).

Now that I am out of juvenile hall and living at a youth recovery center, I realize that NA is the only way. I just wanted to say that if I can do this program, then anyone out there can. I could go on for days with plenty of war stories, but that's not what I'm here for. I'm here to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. I'm a seventeen-year-old kid, and I'm proud to say I'm an addict. For me to do this is just my way of admitting the unmanageable life I have led. I found my way into the rooms of NA when I had lost just about everything I owned and didn't own.

I am writing just to let all other addicts know this program works. I wanted to say thanks for my family, friends, freedom, and especially, for me and my life. Always remember, a grateful addict is a clean addict.

GE, California

Anxiety equals distance

My name is Brenda, and I'm an addict. By the grace of God and Narcotics Anonymous, I haven't had to use in eleven months.

In twelve days, I'll start to serve time in prison for my actions while actively addicted. I have to tell you that I'm angry, lonely, and scared.

I've been having one hell of a pity party for myself. My ego and self-will have been hard at work.

I was just sure that the whole world would fall apart without my guidance. I haven't been able to eat, sleep, or slow myself down long enough to get on my knees and talk to who is really running the show. My HP has a heck of a sense of humor. He saw that I was wearing myself down and driving everyone around me half nuts.

I finally stopped and asked God to help me accept. That was a week ago, and since then I've had this overwhelming feeling that my HP is laughing, shaking his head, and saying, "All you had to do was ask. I'll always be here for you."

From that very moment on, I've had this wonderful peace come over me. All of a sudden I have time on my hands—time to go to meetings, talk to my sponsor, and get to know my Higher Power better.

It's been so cool, I can hardly wait to get up in the morning so I can see what God is going to show me next. The very first thing that he guided me to was this saying: "It is wise to pray for the future, but not to worry about it because we can't live it until it becomes the present. The depth of our anxiety measures the distance we are from God."

All I could say was, "Okay. Turn it over. Turn it over." It is so easy to get trapped in my own self-will that I forget to just keep it simple. I can honestly tell you that today I have some of the serenity I've seen in other people in the fellowship. I know that everything that is happening in my

life is happening exactly the way it's supposed to happen. Absolutely nothing happens in God's world by mistake.

For this I am grateful.

BD, Idaho

Three spiritual assets

Hi! I'm an addict called B. I'm writing because of a Power greater than myself, the God of my understanding, who I believe spared me the jails and death, but allowed me to go through the horrors of addiction so I could be grateful to be alive and clean in the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

The fellowship, which is us, the men and women who are members, helped me understand and practice the program. I've come to believe in our steps and traditions and the spiritual principles we practice. For me, these things are my blueprint to living life on life's terms. Without three spiritual assets—a power greater than myself, the fellowship, and the program—I would not even be alive to know this.

My Higher Power gives me the ability to be honest with you about me; to be open-minded enough to listen to the fellowship's suggestions about staying clean a day at a time; and willing enough to write the steps with my sponsor; and practice principles in my home, job, and community.

Even when no one is looking I need to live this program, because I'm doing it for me. If I don't work the program of NA in all my affairs, I will start to live the life I lived for twenty-plus years. That's lying, conning,

and playing one person against the other. That's when I start to hate me. That's when I give in to the symptoms of this disease and then begin feeding the disease with drugs. And the horrors of addiction start all over again.

I know my "yets"—jails and death—are waiting for me. Thanks to NA, I never have to have my "yets."

Today I know if the drugs don't kill us, the lifestyle will. So, with the help of my Higher Power, the fellowship, and the program of NA, I will live this way of life a day at a time.

RS, Massachusetts

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			



CANADA

Alberta: 14-16 July; 4th Northern Lights Area Campout; info: (403) 790-0426 or (403) 790-9187; Campout, PO Box 5813, Fort McMurray, Alberta T9J 4V9

British Columbia: 16-18 June; 1st Sunshine Coast Campout; Gibsons; info: (604) 885-5272; Sunshine Coast Campout, Box 140, Port Melon, BC V0N 2S0

2) 21-23 July; 6th Central Vancouver Island Campout; Taylor Arm Provincial Park, Port Alberni; info: (604) 752-1418; Campout, 1678 Admiral Tyron Blvd., Parksville, BC V9P 1Y1

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

Nova Scotia: 4-6 Aug.; 6th Nova Scotia Area Convention; Teuro; info: (902) 477-1983 or (902) 457-3014; NSACNA-6, PO Box 65, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2L4

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, Toronto, Ontario M6A 3B7

Quebec: 23-25 June; Montreal Area 10th Anniversary; Montreal; info: (514) 645-6692; Area Anniversary, PO Box 23, Montreal North Basin, Montreal, Quebec H1H 5L1

Saskatchewan: 7-9 July; Freedom Campout; Estevan; info: Estevan Dragline Group, Box 299, Estevan, Saskatchewan S4A 2A3

FRANCE

Paris: 14-17 Sept.; 25th World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous; info: (818) 773-9999, extension 120

GERMANY

Hesse: 21-23 July; 12th European Convention and Conference; Burgerhaus Nordweststadt, Walter-Moller-Platz 2; 60439 Frankfurt am Main; rsvns: 49/69/580 930; fax: 49/69/582 447; info: 49/6198/28 58; ECCNA-12, Postfach 10 16 62, Frankfurt 60016

Nordrhein-Westfalen: 18-20 Aug.; 5 Years of NA in Bochum, Germany Celebration; info: (49) 0234/3 40 53; Narcotics Anonymous, c/o Haus der Begegnung, Alsenstrasse 19A, Bochum, Germany 44789

UNITED STATES

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

California: 9-11 June; 11th San Diego/Imperial Regional Convention; San Diego; rsvns: (800) 327-5029 or (619) 232-3121; info: (619) 229-1219; SDIRNAC, 2260 El Cajon Blvd. #184, San Diego, CA 92104

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

3) 4-6 Aug.; 16th Southern California Regional Conv.; Palm Springs; rsvns: (619) 322-6000 ext. 2708 or (800) 872-4335; info: (818) 396-1882 or (909) 824-9104; SCRCNA, 1935 S Myrtle, Monrovia, CA 91016

Connecticut: 2-4 June; 9th Greater Waterbury Area Campout; Lone Oak Campsites, Rte. 44, East Canaan; info: (203) 729-7999 or (203) 482-4340; GWANA Campout, Box 1075, Woodbury, CT 06798

2) 18-21 Aug.; 3rd Greater New Haven Area Campout; Camp Farnham, Durham; info: (203) 230-8265 or (203) 497-8733; Campout, Box 808, North Haven, CT 06573

Florida: 4-6 Aug.; 4th South Dade Area Unity Weekend; Miami Beach; rsvns: (800) 327-6656; info: (305) 667-8948; Unity Weekend, Box 141514, Coral Gables, FL 33114

2) 18-20 Aug.; 1st Uncoast Area Convention; Daytona Beach; rsvns: (800) 767-4471; info: (904) 375-9624; Uncoast Convention, Box 12151, Gainesville, FL 32604

Georgia: 7-9 July; 13th Piedmont Area Anniversary; Macon; rsvns: (800) 222-2222; info: (912) 956-5533; PASC, Box 4362, Macon, GA 31208

Hawaii: 28-30 July; 3rd Annual Kauai Gathering; Kahili Mountain Park; info: (808) 823-6165; send speaker tapes to: Kauai Gathering, Box 1268, Kapaa, HI 96746

Idaho: 16-18 June; 5th Annual NA Campout; Givens Hot Springs, Nampa; info: Campout, Box 9291, Nampa, ID 83652

2) 28-30 July; Southern Idaho Regional Campout; Porcupine Springs, info: (208)733-3835; SIRNA, Box 261, Twin Falls, ID 83301

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

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

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

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

Michigan: 29 June - 2 July; 11th Michigan Regional Convention; Flint; rsvns: (800) 333-3333 or (810) 239-1234; info: (810) 544-2110; send speaker tapes to: MRCNA, Box 7116, Novi, MI 48376

Minnesota: 2-4 June; Southern Minnesota Area Recovery Blast; Camp Patterson on Lake Washington; info: (507) 455-9091; SMARB-7, Box 69, Owatonna, MN 55060

Missouri: 28-30 July; 16th Annual Ozark Area Convention; Truman Lake, Clinton; info: (316) 856-4277; send speaker tapes to: Ozark Area Conv., 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 Days, Box 262, Minatare, NE 69356

Nevada: 9-11 June; 5th Sierra Sage Regional Convention; Lake Tahoe; rsvns: (800) 648-3322 or (702) 588-6211; info: SSRANA, Box 11913, Reno, NV 89510

2) 14-16 July; 4th California-Arizona-Nevada Area Convention; Laughlin, Nevada; rsvns: (800) 227-3849; info: (602) 754-4260; CANAC, Box 21975, Bullhead City, AZ 86439

New Hampshire: 23-25 June; 5th Annual Fellowship in the Field; info: (603) 432-0168; Field 5, Box 4354, Manchester, NH 03108

New York: 28-30 July; 1st Finger Lakes Area Convention; Wells College, Aurora; info: (716) 394-7038 or (315) 462-7461; FLASCNA, Box 385, Geneva, NY 14456

2) 5 Aug.; Multiregional Learning Day; Jamestown Community College, Jamestown; info: (716) 282-2605

3) 26 Aug.; Greater New York Region's Music Fest; Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Staten Island; info: (718) 447-3961 or (718) 335-0652; Box 246, Staten Island, NY 10306

North Carolina: 23-25 June; 15th Carolina Regional Convention; Charlotte; rsvns: (704) 392-1200; info: (704) 344-8018; Convention, Box 31547, Charlotte, NC 28231

2) 21-23 July; 2nd New Hope Area Convention; Durham; rsvns: (919) 683-6664; info: (919) 682-3777; NHACNA, Box 25043, Durham, NC 27704

3) 18-20 Aug.; 5th Carolina Regional Awareness Weekend; Raleigh; rsvns: (919) 782-8800; info: (803) 762-2471; Awareness Weekend, c/o RSO, 1327 Beaman Place #9, Greensboro, NC 27408

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

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

Oklahoma: 23-25 June; Mirror of Miracles; Sycamore Valley Camping Area; Wynadotte

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

Utah: 21-23 July; 12th Utah Region Campvention; Granite Flats Campground, American Fork Canyon; info: (801) 399-3974; URC, Box 324, Clearfield, UT 84015

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

2) 22-24 Sept.; Spiritual Connection; Cornet Bay, Oak Harbor; info: (360) 428-7171; Convention, Box 1001, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273

Wisconsin: 1-4 Sept.; Campvention 95; Clearwater Camp, Minocqua; info: (715) 277-4141; Campvention 95, Box 383, Minocqua, WI 54548

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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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