

What's amazing is buying into it on the installment plan. We sought drugs and more drugs. A disease like drug addiction eventually kills. One way or another, we and the people around us pay for it with blood, sweat and tears until we die or it's arrested and we clean up.

There are times an addict may think about drugs when actually the need is food, a meeting or rest. It's a demand system.

A baby cries when uncomfortable or needy; it's the infant's way of getting attention. An addict's mind may use the demand for drugs to get attention.

Demanding drugs when actually hungry, angry, lonely, tired and serious (HALTS) is a habit that took years to build. An addict may think drugs when HALTS is really the matter. The mind thinks drugs because that's what it's used in the past as a demand to get attention. When this happens it doesn't necessarily mean the addict's body is demanding drugs. The body may be asking for a meal, companionship or sleep. When HALTS occurs, we don't need drugs. We need food to ease the hunger; a meeting to ease the anger, loneliness or seriousness; and rest to ease the tiredness. In cleanliness, the body and mind begin giving the proper signals. We think it through and stay clean.

The addict's stinking-thinking or emotional bender may be an emergency call to take care of HALTS. An addict in an N.A. meeting, having had food and getting enough rest, can usually be comfortable whatever is happening. Take away the meeting, the food and the rest--it's an entirely different situation. Instead of hugs and kisses, it's almost like "Don't get on the same planet."

The structure of the program brings sanity to those who use it. N.A. gives us a way to live clean long enough for the insanity of our addiction to pass and leave us the opportunity to face daily living. Mental anguish has a lot to do with our rejection of reality. The willingness to accept and face even a life with unresolved situations has brought a lot of us peace of mind.

It's a matter of participating in recovery by showing up and applying the program. This program develops enough patience, understanding and tolerance in us to get through anything clean. The practice of the HALTS maintenance along with the 12-Steps and relying in a Higher Power can make recovery easier.

Relying in a Higher Power brings us to Step Three:

**"WE MADE A DECISION TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM."**

Our old ways of doing things no longer work. Nobody could tell us anything. We couldn't think of anyone greater than self. And it almost killed us. We can't mess around with drugs anymore. We have to use the 12-Steps. With selfwill, we weren't going to make it. We have to have God's help. So, we are going to let go and let God; letting go of things that have served their purpose and letting God develop what works here and now.

Drugs served to show us that a life run on selfwill leads to powerlessness. When we ran to drugs in order to get comfortable it gradually began to fail us. Once we can accept that drugs no longer work nor serve the purpose they did, we begin to let God help us develop the program and practice these principles in life. True comfort depends upon spiritual fitness.

We can identify God with words like good, love, N.A., help, hope, recovery, acceptance, forgiveness, peace, group conscience, faith, clean, gratitude, service, Higher Power or with a gradual pace and manner of understanding--the God we finally find within us. Clean and serene.

Making a decision in Step Three is based on faith. The faith to live clean in the here and now. We have only to believe the miracle seen working in the lives of clean N.A. members can happen to anyone with the desire to get well. The process of staying clean in N.A. and applying this program for living to our daily affairs will eventually turn the practice of these principles into reality. What we recognize afterward is that God is actually directing us through the course of our spiritual journey.

God's grace gives us the gift of cleanliness, the design of N.A. and the dynamics of the 12-Steps with which we can contact the love and guidance of a Higher Power within us. We are given the willingness through our drug related unmanageability to accept the gift of cleanliness and use the tools of the program. The tools of N.A. aren't to beat us down; they're to lift us up.

This step is a decision we made. Drugs didn't. Other people didn't. We made the decision for ourselves to turn it all over to God's loving care.

Anyone can do it. God's ready. With daily practice, turning it over to God is easier. We simply realize there's a force for spiritual progress and we cooperate with this force. We live clean and let the spiritual progress happen to us by applying the program.

The program offers us a way to change. We learn to be clean. We live in the here and now. We get into the 12-Steps. Some addicts do this by saying, "Thy will, not mine, be done." Others do it by understanding God to be whatever keeps us clean. Being willing to do the few simple things necessary to get well can work for us as it has for others.

At times, the only turning it over we can do is to remain clean, continue to go to meetings and make a decision to go on with the rest of the 12-Steps, starting with an inventory. One of the important tools in our change of lifestyles is Step Four:

**"WE MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES."**

We list useless, destructive patterns blocking our serenity and we list useful, constructive habits with which we can cope with our emotions. This way we can measure our weaknesses and strengths. One item can note that going to a party where drugs may be used can be destructive while going to an N.A. meeting or function where no drugs are used can be constructive.