

2nd Draft

OUR COMMON WELFARE

Our common welfare is generally addressed in abstract terms like 'N.A. as a whole'. This may be useful for some discussions but the actual elements of our welfare are based in reality and can be listed to some extent: 150,000 members, 5000 regular weekly meetings, a growing body ⁽¹⁾ of approved literature, a functioning world service system, ~~the~~ the recognition of jails, hospitals and the media. In spiritual terms, we have the resources of actual human experience in recovery and spiritual growth which can only be transmitted person to person ⁽²⁾. The spiritual value of identifying with other people who have in common the pain of addiction and the uplifting rewards of recovery.

Our meetings are windows into the world of N.A. We can see, hear and feel a spirit of unity which is the basis of our common welfare. Our program of recovery is documented in our ~~approved~~ literature, shared in our meetings and among our members. Our Fellowship consists of members who live by the Twelve Steps of N.A. and allow themselves to be governed by the principles contained in the Twelve Traditions of N.A. Our service structure is the formalization of the commitment our members feel to insure the N.A. message is readily available to all who seek recovery. These things, our program, our Fellowship and our service structure are elements of our common welfare.

Through our meetings, we learn about the elements of our common welfare in a relaxed and natural manner. We share the strength of many members who have found N.A. to be the answer to their needs.

Our literature is a vital factor in assuring our common welfare because it gives our Fellowship a way to share the wisdom of our experience. All our written materials have had to withstand the close study and scrutiny of members to assure that it has a basis in the facts of the actual experience of our members.

All the good people of N.A. do things which contribute to our common welfare ⁽³⁾. All members benefit from the individual acts of giving. ⁽³⁾ We stress the goal of giving because we have found that the givers get the blessings of lasting recovery. **IN FACT OUR ENTIRE PROGRAM IS BASED ON MEMBERS OR THE GIVING OF THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEYOND OUR GRATEFULNESS IS ONE OF OUR GREATEST RESOURCES**

In time we learn to function in accord with other members in order to achieve N.A. goals, like carrying our message into jails and hospitals, forming groups, setting up help lines, writing new literature, contributing to N.A. newsletters and all the other various things we do to better share what N.A. has to offer today.

While as estimated ninety-eight percent of our services are conducted informally, we have a service structure which provides for routine services and carrying our message beyond the bounds of our meetings. ⁽⁴⁾ Much work has gone into service guides and handbooks. They are designed by experienced members to suit our needs and can be adopted to serve as policy by our service committees. Our surrender makes them ours and they can provide a framework around which we can conduct our service efforts in trust and safety from the discouraging effects of mob rule ⁽⁵⁾. It takes heart, and love, as well as experience, to provide our

THAT'S PERSONAL SERVICE.

OUR SURRENDER TO N.A. PRINCIPLES ALLOWS THESE GUIDES TO BE RESOURCES WHICH KEEPS US FROM

services and our affliction is always ready to give our members opportunities to seize on some disunity or error and say, "See, right there! N.A. doesn't work!" Our devoted members have paid a great price for the benefits we enjoy today.

Our common welfare doesn't end here. The world is a school and we are meant to learn. Our teachers must be ready with our lessons and we must be ready to hear. One of the great things about N.A. is that it provides a setting where this type of sharing exists as much through necessity as desire for self-improvement.

Information is generally shared by people who are near to the same place in their spiritual evolution. Both the giver and the receiver benefit. Discovering, discussing and applying the spiritual principles to be found in our Twelve Steps is the basis of our recovery. While these Steps come to us from A.A., it is clear that their applicability in our case is based on the universal nature of truth. Application of the design within the Twelve Steps centered on the word 'addiction' within our first Step ~~processes~~ ^{OPENS THE DOOR TO REACHING} recovery process. We practice such spiritual principles as hope, surrender, acceptance, honesty, openmindedness, willingness, faith, tolerance, patience, humility, unconditional love, sharing and caring.

The word 'God' becomes more real to us when we see people doing things which make sense only in spiritual terms. Curiosity sets in and we're on the way to a spiritual life.

~~FAULT~~ ~~A LIMITATION~~ of N.A. which has to do with surrender, faith and hope. We can simply state that we can not tolerate drugs in our meetings, disruptions to our services or putting personal preferences ahead of our group and Fellowship goals. Anyone who is interested in making a positive contribution has to face the enemies of personal power and ~~PERSONAL INABILITY TO TRUST OTHERS~~. The First Tradition makes

~~OR CLEAN~~ ~~THE AND~~ ~~XIENCE EXPER-~~ ~~ENCE REQUIRE-~~ ~~ITS TO HOLD~~ ~~OWNSHIP~~ ~~ERVICE~~ ~~SITIONS ARE~~ ~~CONSTITUTE~~ ~~REOUR S~~ ~~IN RESOUR CES~~ ~~ONTRIBUTE TO~~ ~~CALAMITY~~ ~~OUR WELFARE~~ ~~THIS UNI~~ ~~TY~~ ~~IS THE~~ ~~BASIS OF~~ ~~OUR COMMON~~ ~~WELFARE~~

It clear that our group purpose can not take precedence over our existence. We can not carry our message by getting loaded, and there is no kindness in tolerating interruptions in our Fellowship. A person who is disruptive during a meeting will in the end be asked to leave. Resorting to dramatic claims to membership will not satisfy the requirement for membership. The desire for recovery is evidenced by some kind of humility, asking for help, or admitting a problem - not disrupting meetings, focusing on the shortcomings of our members and working a hardship on others. We have found through painful experience that we do best to stick up for ourselves, our program and our members. This builds the program and gives us the sense of unity required to help others. Without our spiritual integrity, we have little to offer anyway. Our lives, and the lives of those to come, depend on the truth and effectiveness of our spiritual principles. This reality occupies a special place in our hearts. On one hand, our members will talk about spiritual principles at the drop of a hat. On the other, they hold back the inner part of their hearts as any sensible person would. In N.A., we have no need to bring others into our program to get a grant, secure our 'status' or prove our program of recovery. If our sincerity, total abstinence and concern for others is insufficient, outside funding and support would make little difference. We have found

~~WITHOUT SACRIFICING PARTS OF OUR COMMON WELFARE~~
~~THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF THOSE SERVICES~~
~~OF SERVICES WE AS A FELLOWSHIP HANG TO OFFER.~~

HERE'S NO WAY TO GET
THE BENEFITS WHICH
COME FROM OUR COMMON
WELFARE WITHOUT THE
DESIRE FOR RECOVERY.

a way to stay clean together which eliminates these things from consideration. Without the proof of pain, our message would have little to recommend itself to addicts seeking recovery. External evidence of recovery is only a shadow of the real change within. We learn, sooner or later, to reach way down inside ourselves for the strength and guidance we need to grow. Only by giving our very best can we expect the results we desire.

What we share in common in N.A. is available from the beginning to any addict with a desire for recovery. The only limit on what we get in N.A. is our ability to accept help. This help comes from many members in many forms. It is our policy to extend this help to all.

It is important to know that the pain which generates our desire for recovery, buys us membership in N.A. and allows us to access the wisdom and knowledge gathered over our many years from thousands of recovering addicts in N.A. This pain spurs us to hope for better.

The spirit of hope and a desire for a lessening of pain for ourselves and others like us is the basis of our N.A. unity.~~is~~ Slavery's antidote is unity. When we are young in recovery, the complex interworkings of our members, groups and service bodies seem incomprehensible and irrelevant. We are generally too busy blinking our way out of the fog of our addiction to be concerned. We just know we're hurting and somehow N.A. helps. Even from the beginning, we can feel we're a part of something good - something special - something just for us...

There is a sad side to some members who are uneasy when these spiritual matters are brought up or approached in writing. Still, without the strength and guidance of a loving God, we would never even seek recovery, much less make spiritual growth such an important matter in recovery. Apparently, there is an illusion that spirituality will only meet our needs so far. This mentality is like a blind man in a mine field who says they can take it from here after coming close to being completely blown to pieces. In terms of recovery, we need sure hands to lead us out of the danger zones and into a completely different sort of existence based on different values.

As long as the spirit moves through our members, all will be well. As long as we have the faith which has built N.A., we will grow. As long as we have the courage of our convictions, we will be worthy of the trust addicts seeking recovery place in us. As long as we can speak the truth with the conviction which comes from personal experience, we will be free. We need always guard against dogma and hollow words which are meant only to sound good. It is our inner strength which counts most; the outward signs of our growth are strictly dependent on the silent progress within.

When we can share the truths which came to us in recovery, our unity is present and our common welfare secure. When we can reach out for love, understanding and help with our problems, and get what we need, we realize the miracle of N.A. We are no longer alone. We don't have to flounder in hopelessness.