



WSO SHIPPING & HANDLING CHARGES

Following a year long study of the shipping and handling fee a change has been made. The thrust of the investigation by staff and discussion among the Board was to consider reducing the shipping and handling fee. After a thorough review and analysis of the financial impact of the shipping and handling fee on the overall income to the office and other factors it was decided by the Board to reduce the shipping and handling fee.

In statistical analysis of our order levels, it was discovered that the greatest amount of manpower was exerted in smaller orders while larger orders required less manpower and time to complete and ship. Most of the expense in completing larger orders was in the actual shipping costs. Also, we've been able to determine that the shipping costs are affected by both distance and the method of shipment.

For instance, an order that would include a full pallet of material sent by a trucking company would cost less than sending the comparable number of boxes by United Parcel Service. This means that smaller orders proportionately cost more to ship than the larger orders which we can ship by common carriers. Consequently, in making a determination for changing the shipping and handling fee, we have made the following conclusion.

A sliding scale of shipping and handling fees would be reasonable and appropriate and the shipping and handling fees could individually and collectively be reduced. Consequently the WSO Board of Directors adopted the following table of shipping and handling costs. This new shipping and handling schedule is printed on the order form that accompanies this issue of the *Newsline* and will be used on orders received subsequent to the distribution of this information.

SHIPPING AND HANDLING FEE POLICY

This shipping and handling fee policy is effective upon publication and voids the existing policy:

For orders with a total purchase of less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) an eight percent (8%) shipping and handling fee shall be charged.

For orders with a total purchase of more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) but less than one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00) a seven percent (7%) shipping and handling fee shall be charged.

For orders with a total purchase of more than one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00) but less than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) a six percent (6%) shipping and handling fee shall be charged.

For orders with a total purchase of more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) a five percent (5%) shipping and handling fee shall be charged.

During the last several years there has been a growing interest expressed by members and other individuals to be able to obtain literature by ordering on the phone using their credit cards. Until recently the office has steadfastly avoided discussions or considerations of this method of purchasing. We have, during the last three years, had growing success with satisfying the needs for literature sales to members and the general public through the existing policy of accepting only orders by mail and only orders with payment in advance.

However, as success has been achieved in the existing systems, we have evolved to the degree in our efficiency and skill that the office would be capable of handling orders received by telephone using credit cards as the means of purchase. After studying the proposal we have found that it is practical.

A number of different matters were considered in this evaluation. One matter was whether or not there would be a financial loss resulting from accepting orders based on credit card use. The discussions with our bank reveal that, if we follow proper procedures when accepting orders, we would not experience loss resulting from these transactions.

Another matter considered was the impact on manpower and staff. The ultimate volume of phone orders may have a significant impact if the volume more than doubled the number of individual orders. However there is an efficiency in this system of serving our needs that will offset some of that manpower expense. We do not expect that there will be a dramatic increase in orders resulting from implementation of a phone/credit card purchase system. Our study concludes that the manpower needs for the immediate utilization of this system would not create substantial additional costs for operation. An offset against

the increase in manpower costs is the discovery (from examining other such programs) that many of those purchasing will buy more items and more often.

After a thorough examination of the facts, the Board consented to a one year-trial period for this project. We expect to complete the final details on how the system would work and prepare the necessary organizational details in the next thirty days or so and will publish more information in the next issue of the *Newsline*.

WORLD DIRECTORY STUDY

From time to time the World Service office receives comments on the *World Directory*. Most frequently the comments are that it contains a lot of incorrect information. Unfortunately this is often an accurate complaint. That is only one of the problems we have with the Directory.

The Office began publishing the Directory as a result of an action by the World Service Conference requesting that one be published. We have chronicled the ups and downs of the Directory in these *Newsline* pages over the past years. It is not an easy project to maintain and it does not make money. Now money is not the essential measure of what services the WSO should provide. More important perhaps is the utilization value that the Directory provides.

On the financial side, however, we sell an average of 2,000 copies each year. The average income generated from selling these 2,000 copies is about \$10,000. The costs associated with the accumulation and management of the information is about \$25,000.00. The printing costs are relatively high because of the number of pages. The result is that we experience approximately a \$15,000 loss per year from publication of the *World Directory*.

This loss would not be particularly important if there was a clear or compelling value resulting from the publication. This then is the really important issue. Are we, by publishing the Directory with its current content, providing a valuable service to members and addicts in need of a meeting? This is very hard for us to judge at this time. We need your help on this matter if we are to make any future change.

When members need to find a meeting in a community distant from their home group, the *World Directory* is a logical place to look for information about where to find a meeting. Unfortunately, with so few copies of the *World Directory* actually sold, it is not realistically a vital resource to turn to when trying to find a meeting. If most members purchased copies of the *World Directory*, and had them available, then indeed people might more easily be able to utilize this resource to find meetings.

However, the difficulty of its accuracy, because of outdated information and lack of information on new meetings, means that there are a great

number of times when a person using the *World Directory* still has difficulty finding a meeting. The combination of these difficulties points more directly towards using an alternative form of information that is more reliable. Our experience with the *World Directory* and the growth we have seen in the development of helplines points clearly in the direction of having helplines be responsible for providing meeting information. The effectiveness, however, of telephone helplines should be given consideration in this matter before a change is made. Telephone helplines around the Fellowship are not operated and manned consistently with each other. Some telephone lines have N.A. members who answer only during given hours. Some use answering services. Some use answering machines. There are only a few telephone helplines that have very many hours during which an addict will respond when the phone rings.

We would like to re-evaluate this service and provide to the Fellowship and the addicts still out on the street the best service so they can find N.A. meetings. If publishing the *World Directory* in its current form is the right solution then we will make no change. However, we believe consideration of alternatives might be of value. It is our hope that these options will be discussed and the office advised of any opinions or other options you may have concerning this.

Alternative One: Continue publishing the *World Directory* without change. Alternative Two: Print only a map of the service area of each phone helpline. Alternative Three: Discontinue publishing the directory entirely--have a policy that requires each ASC or RSC that publishes an area or regional directory to send copies to the WSO. Have the WSO use these local directories as the only source for meeting information.

Making any change that would impact every helpline, discontinuing the Directory, or substantially changing its content would require a lot more consideration and discussion. With this in mind, the World Service Office would appreciate N.A. members, groups, and areas considering these matters and voicing some opinion through the service structure about this suggestion. An article appeared in the November Fellowship Report that discussed this issue in much the same language, seeking to encourage areas and regions to take some action to officially inform the World Service Office what your desires and wishes are. We will proceed with the publication of the 1987 *World Directory* and report later on any input we receive. No change can be made without the concurrence of the World Service Conference, so no changes would occur prior to the Conference meeting in the Spring of 1988.

IT WORKS: HOW AND WHY

The development of *It Works: How and Why* has been a matter of great interest and importance to

the N.A. Fellowship for several years. Members around the world are anxious to have our book on the Twelve Steps and Traditions complete because it is so greatly needed. A tremendous effort has been exerted by everyone involved in this project to get the book completed at the earliest possible moment. The World Literature Committee is currently at work developing the second half of the book, the portion on the Twelve Traditions. This article is about the current status of Part One (the Twelve Steps) and some new developments that have taken place.

The approval form of this book (the white cover) was first released in mid-April, 1986. It has been available from the WSO since that time for \$6.00. For anyone who has not yet seen this new book, we encourage you to ask your group or area service committee for copies, or write directly to the WSO for an order form.

The immediate response from most members who have read this new book was to enumerate its best qualities and endorse its content. However, there were a few who verbally expressed concerns. Because it was in the approval form, members all over the world began, in good conscience, to buy the book, read it, and prepared to express their group conscience at the 1987 World Service Conference.

As additional study of the book has taken place, a few members have begun to list items they question. In response to a few conversations between N.A. members and WSC Literature Committee trusted servants, a request was included in the September Fellowship Report encouraging this objective review and suggesting that feedback and suggestions be expressed in writing to the Committee as soon as possible.

At the recent WSC Committee meetings in Charlotte, North Carolina, some members expressed their opinions regarding the book. Two special meetings were held at which the book was discussed and specific concerns were presented.

In the opinion of some who expressed their views in Charlotte, there is a need to change parts of the book in order to avoid conflict with the philosophy of N.A. or confusion because of inconsistency. There were other members who expressed the opinion that the book should be approved exactly the way it is. The number of specific items in question cannot easily be described so as to fit within this article. However, the issue of making changes in the book is the subject of this article.

According to the Conference-approved Literature Guidelines, the book *It Works: How and Why* is in the approval form and due, according to the schedule of things, to be either approved or disapproved by the Fellowship at the next Conference meeting. This would imply that it is too late to make any changes. However, the concerns of members cannot be ignored, especially if the changes that are recommended are appropriate and necessary. At the very least,

adequate consideration of the issues raised should be given in order to determine their merit.

As a Fellowship, we have found ourselves in this situation before. At times in the past we have waited until the Conference date arrived and issues were vehemently fought out on the floor of the Conference. Unfortunately this procedure did not always resolve matters and some have continued to be a source of friction and controversy. The Basic Text is the best example. The World Service Conference has continued to make changes in it over the years and every change becomes a highly emotional dilemma. Additionally, each time the Fellowship is asked to consider changing an already approved item of literature it creates more conflict and controversy.

So, despite the need to complete our book on the Twelve Steps and Traditions, there is also a need to approve the best quality literature possible with a minimum amount of controversy. Unfortunately there is no built-in mechanism whereby proposed changes in approval-form literature can be made. Therefore, the bottom line of this discussion is that regardless of the merit of the issues recently raised, only when the Conference meets in April can any changes be made.

If changes are proposed during the Conference meeting, it creates the old problem of forcing the participants to vote on things that have not been presented to the Fellowship ninety days in advance of the Conference. There are some regions which do not allow their RSR's enough flexibility to vote on amendments or other items for which they have not received specific instructions. These RSR's would therefore be prohibited from participating in any decisions to make changes in the book.

This also brings up another point: equity. The World Literature Committee generally does not receive input on items which are in the approval form. However, since some members felt that their concerns were important, they did submit input which, of course, was welcomed and received. But without receiving input from the rest of N.A. around the world, we have no way of knowing whether the concerns which were raised are shared by the worldwide Fellowship, or simply a handful of members. Therefore, before the input which was received can be integrated into the publication, it will be necessary to receive input from other regional literature committees around the world. It is only fair that we provide an opportunity for members who haven't sent input to do so. This is the only way we can be certain that we are responding to concerns which are shared by a large proportion of the N.A. membership so that this literature item is truly reflective of the Narcotics Anonymous philosophy.

Because the book has been in circulation since April of 1986, and most of the feedback has been positive, we hypothesize that it is possible that many N.A. members like the book as it is. It is also possible that some members like the book in general, but could point out a few things they'd

like changed. Most likely, there are also members who haven't sent in their comments simply because of the fact that the book is in the approval form and is scheduled to come to a vote at the 1987 World Service Conference. It is quite possible that a large number of RSR's will come to the 1987 WSC prepared to vote on the book as it is.

Some members suggest that the approval-form (White Cover) is dramatically different from the review and input copy (Blue Cover) and therefore the Fellowship should review and input on the White Cover copy as well. Other members contend that approval literature is always reflective of input received on earlier review drafts and is frequently much different in final form. In some cases, review-form drafts and final approval-form literature are similar, but on occasion approval-form literature bears little resemblance to earlier review drafts. It is reasonable to conclude that there are no hard and fast rules.

We cannot predict the future and the Conference must make the final decision. No service board or committee has the authority to stop the approval process. We are not here to decide these things for the Fellowship, only to be responsible in making the information known, and try to offer some solutions.

The N.A. Fellowship basically has three alternatives to choose from: 1)approve the book with no changes; 2)return the book to the Literature Committee for additional work; or 3)make changes at the Conference.

Each alternative has merits and drawbacks. If the book is returned to the Literature Committee, it would delay the use of the publication by our members for an additional year and possibly two years. This alternative would, however, probably provide opportunity to assure that the final approved book was the best quality possible without problems.

If the Conference participants elect to make the changes during the April meeting, it may produce the best possible book but it may also create continuing controversy. The controversy of adopting changes that the members have not seen in a major publication might be more divisive than the approval would be worth. It may also result in proposals for additional changes being submitted at subsequent Conference meetings.

If the Conference adopted the book with no changes, it might also set the stage for having changes proposed each year in the same manner as changes are offered for the Basic Text.

This seems like a no win situation, but that does not mean other alternatives cannot be considered. It seems that some of the important factors are 1)The opportunity for N.A. members worldwide to submit input; 2)An opportunity for a World Literature ad-hoc committee to evaluate the input and suggest any changes; and 3)Avoid a two-year delay if possible. A further purpose of this article is to offer three other alternatives that may be

successful. They are presented here for your information and consideration.

Option 1: Accept Fellowship-wide input until March 1, 1987, have the proposed changes reviewed by an ad-hoc committee comprising members from the Board of Trustees, WSO Board of Directors, WSC Administrative Committee and World Literature Committee, and have appropriate changes proposed by the ad-hoc committee for adoption, as amendments to the book, when it is considered for approval at the Conference in 1987.

Option 2: Accept Fellowship-wide input until June 30, 1987. Have the ad-hoc committee review the input and publish a revised approval form by October 1, 1987, and have this version considered for approval at the Conference in 1988.

Option 3: Accept Fellowship-wide input until October 1, 1987. Have the literature ad-hoc committee review and make changes and publish a new approval form copy at the Conference in 1988 and possibly approve the book at the Conference meeting in 1989.

The trusted servants who have helped put together this article have all been directly involved in the discussions pertaining to *It Works: How and Why* for many months. It is our unanimous desire to do what the Fellowship wants in this matter and at the same time to produce the highest quality publication within the shortest reasonable time.

We do not think it would be in the best interests of the Fellowship to simply ignore the input that has been shared or take no action between now and the Conference meeting. We feel it would be irresponsible to force the Fellowship at that time to choose only between accepting the book without changes or making changes on the floor of the Conference meeting.

The quality and content of this book, as with every other publication, is significant and vital to every member of the Fellowship. It is important to the Fellowship and to us that we know that every effort has been made to produce literature that clearly and fully expresses the philosophy of Narcotics Anonymous. We believe that to accept lesser quality or incorrect information in our literature is severely and sufficiently damaging that it would warrant rejection of any publication which would have these faults.

N.A. is still growing and still evolving. We are still in the process of developing the basic structural document of our Fellowship, the various committees are still working on their guidelines and the procedures for getting things done at all levels of service are malleable. Experience may show us a way of installing an escape mechanism in the literature approval process that will help us in future situations like this.

The immediate need, however, is to either take some action that is reasonable and prudent now or wait until the Conference. It is the belief of these trusted servants that Option One should be initiated immediately in order to make use of the time currently available. Although further

discussion at the Conference will determine subsequent action, if option one is selected, we need to be prepared with the proposed amendments.

We wish to stress that although it is somewhat unusual for us to ask for or receive input on approval-form literature it is always welcomed. The Literature Committee remains open and receptive to the wishes of the N.A. Fellowship and the only way we can do this is by receiving input directly from area and regional literature committees, groups and members. It is impossible for us to guess or otherwise ascertain the conscience of our Fellowship unless it is conveyed to us.

The World Literature Committee continually strives to be responsive to the N.A. Fellowship as it evolves and grows. The only way we can be successful in this is if the membership provides us with input. So often we hear people talk about the importance of communication in service, especially world services. It is just as important for the membership to reciprocate and provide information back to world service committees.

The majority of our membership has not sent input on this book in its current form. That is, of course, what was expected. But nevertheless, having such a small amount of input makes it difficult to tell whether the concerns raised are shared by the entire worldwide Fellowship. Therefore, we encourage every area and regional literature committee, as well as any members or groups or who have input to send in their comments on *It Works: How and Why*. Even if you absolutely love the book the way it is, or if there are sections or chapters that you feel shouldn't be changed, please let us know that too. Please send your specific comments directly to the World Literature Committee in care of the WSO.

The input will be collected until March 1, 1987, at which time it will be thoroughly evaluated and discussed by the literature ad-hoc committee. It is our hope that by following this process, the committee will be able to ascertain the worldwide group conscience on these issues and, if necessary, propose some specific amendments to the book which will be presented at the World Service Conference in April.

The final decisions must be made by the N.A. Fellowship as a whole as expressed through the group conscience. All of these alternatives will be presented and discussed at the World Service Conference. Hopefully, through reports and articles such as this one, the N.A. membership will be informed and prepared to make the best decision possible regarding this important new book.

LITERATURE RACKS

The World Service Office has periodically received requests from members, groups and area committees, particularly public information

committees, about the availability of literature racks. We have investigated this matter during the last two years and have found sources of supply for a wide variety of literature rack materials. Manufacturers can produce them using cardboard, plastic and wire. Unfortunately, there is uncertainty on the part of the Office on how to proceed from having gathered the information to making these items available in the quantity and design or material that will be preferred by the Fellowship. With this uncertainty in mind, the Office will be able to respond to requests for literature racks of various sizes and designs, but such information will not be included in detail in the catalog soon to be published. Literature rack information will be contained on a separate information sheet that will be available in January, 1987. To obtain this information call or write the World Service Office.

It is not the intention of the Office to obtain and maintain large inventories of different sizes and shapes of literature racks. Until such time as some general pattern of need has been experienced within the Fellowship, we will only obtain racks when requested. Groups or committees who desire to have literature racks obtained through the World Service Office should contact us. Orders that are received from the Fellowship will guide us in selecting the specific items that you find most desirable to use. The Office intends to make this service available to the extent that the Fellowship desires to have it available. We do not intend to make this a major inventory item. Accordingly, there will be a fairly long response time from when racks are ordered to the time they are delivered.

OFFICE WORKSHOP SCHEDULED

Because of the success of the June '86 workshop on N.A. Offices and the continuing requests for another, the second one has been scheduled. The Workshop will be held on March 21st and 22nd at the Ramada Renaissance Hotel near the Atlanta, Georgia airport.

We currently expect over 50 people to attend, but can make space in the meetings for others also. Because the number of those planning to attend will be important to our planning and arrangements with the hotel, we request that anyone planning to attend please let us know at the earliest possible moment.

Arrangements for rooms at the hotel should be made directly with the hotel at (404) 762-7676. Please indicate to them that you are part of the World Service Office Workshop when making room reservations.

The workshop will be divided into separate sections. One for existing offices and a separate section for offices not currently in operation. There will also be a time for sharing by members from those offices currently in operation and those working to open one.

NEW ORLEANS WORLD CONVENTION

The New Orleans World Convention Host Committee has made great strides in planning for the 1987 World Convention. Scheduled to be at the New Orleans Sheraton Hotel on September 3-7, WCNA-17 will undoubtedly be the largest N.A. convention ever. Over five thousand members are expected.

The Arts and Graphics Committee is nearly completed with the Convention flyer. When it is done, it will be mailed throughout the Fellowship. Current plans are to include it in the January issue of the *Newsline*.

The flyer will include specific information on hotel accommodations and convention prices. The registration for the convention will be only \$20.00. Other convention costs will also be lower than might have been expected.

The Host Committee has scheduled a riverboat cruise, a mini-Mardi Gras, a Sunday brunch, a talent showcase and much more. This will prove to be an enjoyable celebration of recovery for all.

LARGE PRINT WHITE BOOKLET

A number of our members have periodically advised us that they have a hard time reading the Little White Booklet because of the small size print. This is particularly true, we have found, for members with visual impairments. Other members have also had difficulty reading from the Little White Booklet at meetings, especially if the lighting is poor.

To accommodate these needs we have prepared a large print version of the White Booklet. The size of the booklet is 5-1/2" x 8-1/2" (about the same as the *N.A. Way* magazine). On the following page, we have included a sample page reproduced at the actual size. These large print white booklets will be available soon and will be given a different item number so as to avoid confusion.

The large print white book is not being produced as a substitute for the regular Little White Booklet, but anyone who wishes to can purchase them. Because of the increased production expense, the cost will be slightly higher for the large print version. Accordingly, the net income from the sale of this large print version will be considerably less than that received on sales of the regular white booklet. We hope that this is just one of many items we will have available soon to assist visually-impaired N.A. members in seeking and maintaining their recovery.

COMING EVENTS

This space has been reserved for coming events anywhere in N.A. If you wish to list an event, send us a flier or note at least two months in advance. Include title, location, dates, contacts.

CALIFORNIA: Mar 27-29, 1987; 9th NCCNA; Marriott Hotel, Burlingame, CA; 9th NCCNA, Box 6323, San Mateo, CA 94403; Todd (415) 347-3296; Joe (408) 296-4833

CANADA: Apr 10-12 1987; 1st Annl Ontario Reg Conf; Windsor NA, Box 175, 2890 Dougall Ave, Windsor, Ontario N9E 1R9; (519) Bob 977-1743; John 255-7318

CONNECTICUT: Jan 2-4 1987; 2nd Ct.RCNA; Box 124, Clinton, CT 06413; Trumbull Marriott, Trumbull, CT; Brian B. (203) 669-8083

HAWAII: Jan 9-11, 1987; 3rd Annl Gathering of the Fellowship; P.O. Box 23436, Honolulu, HI, 96822; Claudia (808) 235-0819; Mark 373-9774

ILLINOIS: July 24-26, 1987; 3rd Mid-Coast Convention; Holiday Inn, 7550 E State St., Rockford, Ill 61107; (815)398-2200; Greg 963-5811

KENTUCKY: Dec 13; 2 Year Birthday; Groups of Paducah, KY; National Guard Armory, 1800 Clark St, Paducah, KY; (502) Brenda 443-0012; Charlie 444-0399 2) April 10-12, 1987; KRCNAI; Ramada Inn, 4767 Scottsville Rd., Bowling Green, KY 42101; Deanie (502)843-8209

LOUISIANA: March 6-8, 1987; LPRCNAV; Palace Suite Hotel, 2211 MacArthur Dr., Alexandria, LA; (318)443-2561 2) Sept. 3-7, 1987; World Convention; WCNA-17; Sheraton New Orleans Hotel & Towers, 500 Canal St., New Orleans, LA 70130; (504)525-2500

MASSACHUSETTS: Apr 17-19, 1987; 2nd New England Reg Conv; Marriott Hotel, Springfield, MA; NERC II, Box 422, Chicopee, MA 01021; (413) Steve 736-3979; Nancy 593-3809

MARYLAND: Feb 27-Mar 1, 1987; 1st Annl Ches/Pot Reg Conv; PO Box 374, Pasadena, MD 21122; (301) Len 787-1273; Mike 437-6055

MICHIGAN: Jul 3-5 1987; Freedom III RCNA of MI; Interested Speakers should submit tapes A.S.A.P. for review to Program Committee, P.O. Box 770, Flint, MI 48501

MISSISSIPPI: April 3-5, 1987; MRCNAV; Best Western Trace Inn; (Hwy 6 & Natchez Trace) Tupelo, MS; Allen (601)862-7334

MISSOURI: 2nd Annual Show-Me Regional Convention; Ramada Hotel, 2431 N. Glenstone, Springfield, MO; (800)781-0500

NEBRASKA: Dec 31; 3rd Annl New Years Eve Party; OACA Bingo Hall, 1/2 block So. of 40th & Dodge, Omaha, NB; Al (402) 345-2012

NORTH CAROLINA: Jan 1-4 1987; Asheville's 2nd Area Conv; Mike R., 32 Starmount, Asheville, NC 28806; (704) 252-8812

OHIO: May 22-24, 1987; Ohio Reg Conv; Holiday Inn Cascade Plaza, Akron, OH 44372; Please submit speaker tapes for consideration to ORCNA V; Box 5837, Akron, OH 44372

PENNSYLVANIA: Mar 6-8, 1987; Central PA Convention NA; Holiday Inn-Center City, Harrisburg, PA; 717/234-0193; 2) Mar 27-29, 1987; 5th GPRCNA; Dunfey Hotel, Philadelphia; GPRCNA, PO Box 42628, Philadelphia PA 19101-2628; (215) Steve S. 925-7766; Marge 534-2887

TEXAS: Mar 27-29, 1987; LSRANA II; LSRANA II Pro Subcom, PO Box 300794, Houston, TX 77230-0794; (713) Rick 531-6734; Janie Rae 973-7002

VIRGINIA: Jan 9-11, 1987; 5th AVCNA; Omni Int Hotel, Norfolk, VA; 5th AVCNA, Box 11443, Norfolk, VA 23517; (804) Kathy 363-9097; Bob 627-6786

WISCONSIN: Jan 10, 1987; 8 am; 2nd Annl Milwaukee NA Mini-Conf; Matc Main Campus, 1015 N. 6th St.; Dennis W. 1534 S. 65th St., Milwaukee, WI 53214 476-4984

10

Narcotics Anonymous, Newly Revised

RECOVERY AND RELAPSE

Many people think that recovery is simply a matter of not using drugs. They consider a relapse a sign of complete failure, and long periods of abstinence a sign of complete success. We in the recovery program of Narcotics Anonymous have found that this perception is too simplistic. After a member has had some involvement in our Fellowship, a relapse may be the jarring experience that brings about a more rigorous application of the program. By the same token we have observed some members who remain abstinent for long periods of time whose dishonesty and self-deceit still prevent them from enjoying complete recovery and acceptance within society. Complete and continuous abstinence, however, in close association and identification with others in N.A. groups, is still the best ground for growth.

Although all addicts are basically the same in kind, we do, as individuals, differ in degree of sickness and rate of recovery. There may be times when a relapse lays the groundwork for complete freedom. At other times that freedom can only be achieved by a grim and obstinate willfulness to hang on to abstinence come hell