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WHY ARE WE HERE?

Before coming to the fellowship of N.A. we could not manage our own lives, we could not live and enjoy life as other people do. We had to have something different and we thought we had found it in drugs. We placed their use ahead of the welfare of our families, our wives, husbands, and our children. We had to have drugs at all costs. We did many people great harm but most of all we harmed ourselves. Through our inability to accept personal responsibilities we were actually creating our own problems. We seemed to be incapable of facing life on its own terms.

Most of us realized, that in our addictions, we were slowly committing suicide, but such cunning enemies of life are narcotics and sedation that we had lost the power to do anything about it. Jail did not help us at all. Medicine, religion, and psychiatry seemed to have no answers for us that we could use. All these methods having failed for us, in desperation, we sought help from each other in Narcotics Anonymous.

After coming to N.A. we realized we were sick people who suffered from a disease like Alcoholism, Diabetes or Tuberculosis. There is no known "Cure" for these--all however, can be arrested at some point and "Recovery" is then possible.

In N.A. we follow a program borrowed from Alcoholics Anonymous. In the last forty years more than one million people have recovered in A.A., most of them just as hopelessly addicted to alcohol as we were to drugs. We are deeply grateful to the A.A. Fellowship for pointing the way for us to a new way of life.

~~At these meetings I learned that I was an addict, and that my addictions started long before I ever picked up a drug, having become addicted to fantasy,~~

At these meetings we learned that we were addicts, and that our addictions started long before we ever picked up a drug, having become addicted to fantasy, because fantasy was much more preferable than reality. Later, we didn't basically change, we just used. Oblivion seemed to be the answer. If we can just keep high all the time we can't feel the pain. In our stupor we start doing things and saying things to people we don't usually mean. After a party

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someone might say, "Man, You were really messed up last night". We couldn't even remember anything but you don't tell them that. The fear of what you said or did. The humiliation of having to ask others what happened. What did happen last night? We use to cover up our humiliation. We are becoming irresponsible with our lives. We wake up sick, don't make it to work, or go to work loaded. We steal to support our habit. Hurt the ones we love. Whatever it takes to get that fix, pill or drink. We deny all these things and we tell ourselves we can handle it.

As addicts we start out looking for a way out, possibly a way to be accepted; something new in life. We for the most part aren't facing life on life's terms. We try a drug then another and it seems real slow at first and we tell ourselves we won't get "that bad". We find a drug that we like and we start using it more often. We learn how to face life through drugs. The pain, hurt, misery we feel can be postponed. We found the answer to happiness. Coming down our problems come back and then another problem. We use more often. What we did yesterday won't cover today. We need to use more and more often. Our progression is growing worse.

We don't blame others for our problems. If we bore people by complaining about how we feel and want to get a more lively reaction, we can try to hold them responsible for our problems. ~~When a person afflicted with drug addiction first comes to the program of Narcotics Anonymous, they are faced with a disturbing realization. Addiction mak~~ When we first come ~~the~~ to the program of Narcotics Anonymous, we are faced with a disturbing realization. Our addiction makes us think that our pain is unique and our futures predicated with conivance and futility. Suddenly at a meeting surrounded by fellow addicts, as new members we realized that we were not alone. In N.A., we break through many emotional barriers and learn a lot about ourselves by identifying with other addicts who are also willing to talk at depth. We are told that if we put things ahead of our

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cleanliness, the program will not work. That is one of the truest statements we know of. From experience we know that people, places and things cannot give us recovery--they will fail, leave us, and send our thinking.

We don't imagine a normal person can imagine just how empty a life can become when <sup>one</sup> you don't feel anything or feel like doing anything. We weren't focused on the fulfillment of life but on the emptiness and worthlessness of it all. Failure becomes a way of life and the peculiar inertia that keeps a person going the way they are acts on us and success becomes painful. We start realizing how powerless we really are. Nothing seems to relieve the paranoia, the fear. We then hit bottom. We <sup>N.A.</sup> search for an answer; Looking for a way out. Things <sup>WON'T</sup> don't seem to be able to get any worse. We reach out and there's <sup>NO</sup> an answer, Narcotics Anonymous.

We have nowhere else to go. Most of us have <sup>explored</sup> the alternatives. Personality change, it seems is a rare commodity and that's what we really want. Change from self-destructiveness to a self affirming pattern of living. We were sick and tired of having nothing but pain and trouble; of crying and screaming, of spinning ~~our~~ wheels, of the lies and of the hurt.

In N.A., we were told, the members concentrated on how they felt, not what they did, and recovery was talked about. The ultimate weapon for recovery is the recovered addict himself. The last thing that we wanted to do is the first thing that we <sup>had</sup> ~~need~~ to do. Being clean, we took personal responsibility for the things that we made happen and the things that we let happen. In this way we become the architects of our own lives and this is a gift that no one will be able to take from us. We come to know our true nature and it will guide us on our new path. The negative sense of self ~~will be~~ replaced by a positive concern for others and our own problems ~~seem~~ to resolve themselves.

<sup>come to</sup> We come to our first N.A. meeting in utter defeat. After sitting in a meeting we know that they care and we know that ~~if~~ they will be patient enough <sup>to</sup> love me along the way to a new life--even though ~~if~~ <sup>we</sup> our heads <sup>will</sup> ~~were~~ never ~~going to~~ make it.

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We Having realized that ~~we~~ we were unable to maintain on our own, some of us immediately began experiencing depression, anxiety, hostility, and resentment. We began to feel emotional pain that I we had nver allowed ourselves to feel--we had always been afraid to feel. We began to grow a little, began to open up a little into our new lives that N.A. had promised us. Many of us feel that since becoming clean our lives, due to petty frustrations, minor setbacks, and losses are not getting any better. Here, an honest look is often a grateful one. Also it is in these times that many of us find out who we are and allows us to make important discoveries like "it's O.K. to hurt and feel the pain towards change."

We all have our personal stories of recovery in NA. This is the way the program works. It is available to each person seeking recovery. Our addiction changed and our personal natures vary, so our experiences of recovery vary.

It is a great gift to be a human being and the opportunities we seek are closed to us only by our own sense of worth. When we lie, cheat or steal, we devalue ourselves in our own eyes. We have had enough of self-destruction. We want first to learn to do the things that will transform <sup>us</sup> into self affirming people.

Many of the symptoms of drug usage approximate mental states that aren't normal. When we quit using drugs in any form these strange habits of mind pass away and we start to learn. Continuing abstinence and participation in the program will restore us to sanity.

An addict who, by any means, can lose even for a time the need or desire to use, and has free choice over impulsive and compulsive thinking, has reached a turning point that may be the decisive factor in his recovery.

Today we have feelings of love, joy, hope, excitement, sadness and friendship. Before we were either elated or depressed with very little inbetween.

Today we can feel good about ourselves.

We will lose fear of the unknown through practice of the 12 steps and thus be freed to live and enjoy life one day at a time with out the old ghosts of our addiction greeting us in the morning of every new day making it seem like the day before and the day before that.

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Recovery is a beautiful chance that many of the members of NA thought had passed them by. The chance to live again. The spectacle of recovery from the disease of addiction, which encompasses being with people one really loves and cares about and vice versa, spiritual principles, God, as we understood him, a sincere desire for recovery acquired through much torment from drugs and a mind to try for something better, and loving service without expectation of anything in return, and of course the vital spiritual experience that results and perpetuates and results in the expansion of NA till it can reach all addicted people, is here today and is growing. There is an answer to addiction and it's fun!

While no responsible person can afford to be tolerant about illegal acts or substances in his own home, most efforts to keep another person drug free simply lead to rebellion and more use of drugs. The only way the overall motivation can be accomplished is by offering increased love and understanding especially when the drug dependent individual is clean and not yet allowing using and all its consequences to become so painful in themselves that hopefully the user will eventually seek relief from the intolerable pain caused by his drug taking.

What a change from how I used to be! That's how I know that the NA program works. It's the first thing that ever convinced me that I needed to change myself instead of trying to change the people and situations that irritated me. And then it gave me a 12-step blueprint for doing just that.

When did you come to believe in a higher power? Is the HP you believe in today the same one you believed in your 1st 6 months? How do you feel about the addict who still suffers? What are you most grateful for in your recovery?

We know that for the most part we place expectations on the program. We expect to feel only peace, joy and ecstasy--at the very least comfortability--

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