

#4

Howit Works

(126)

B. ... Step 12

I preay to be used as an instrument of GOD

s grace, with with gratitude and selfless service. I get in touch by phone or in meeting s with addicts who are aeking an answer to thier drug problem and share my own experie ce strenght and hope.....

• The answer to escaping self-will s ends of jails institutions and death is the way of selfless sevice to others.. We ,drug addicts can best help out our selves by helping out another addict, and forgetting our head trips for awhile Plus, by helping him or her we are ,by our being there enabling them to find anew and better way of life. Thiis also reenforces out program out.

My being clean and sober today is the direct Result of the Fellowship, love, and concern I found in N.A. It's the direct Result of ^{their} showing me a loving God and understanding Creator. To you all - I'm grateful for my sobriety.

I now believe that my commitment to helping other addicts was the main thing that kept me clean for those first few years. Whatever it was, it worked, and I stayed clean long enough for the fog to lift from between my ears.

I had very little help early on in my recovery, as there was virtually no NA at the time. It all started for me while I was a patient at a State Mental Hospital in the late sixties. There was no place else for a junkie to go other than to the Palace of the Peculiars to get "help" for addiction at that time, and while locked up on a looney ward, I met a guy who was there for alcoholism. He gave me an AA card with the 12 Steps on it, and told me that when he really followed those steps and attended meetings he stayed sober. I sort of scoffed at the whole thing, mostly due to the presence of the word "God" in those steps. I, of course, didn't believe in God, didn't want to have anything to do with Him, and was sure that if there really was a God, that He surely didn't want anything to do with me either.

Just think if the people in Ca, hadn't seen bit to spread the message out here. Where would I be. If I sat for the first 2 or 3 people here, where would I be. I know where I would be. worth it, when it doesn't seem

When we look back at our clean and sober lives ; we see that we are under going a huge process of learning how to better live. we can see our lives unfolding with a definite purpose and events we were apart of we can remember those old feelings which were so new to us then. Now we are at a point in our recovery where we can be extremely grateful for a tremendous favor done in our lives for us we find it necessary to do unto others as was done unto us. We now have a lot to offer and have to offer our services to others in a similar plight. we have phone numbers of people we can try to help, to try is all that counts, when we have tried we have in God's eyes succeeded in our mission. There is no easier softer way for that we try to be grateful . This way we only fail when we don't want to try.

Our involvement with N.A. will give us a sense of purpose and add to our sense of personal fulfillment immeasurably. Through helping the addict who still suffers we are constantly reminded of the major fact in our lives: the program works. We perform a useful task where the best efforts of our society overall has failed. This is a task to which we are well suited and upon which our ongoing recovery is dependent.

Serving others , our needs will be met. Serving suffering addicts, learning to love the unlovable, frees us from the effects of addiction. Serving in our work , we become part of the network of loving, concerned individuals everywhere who have outgrown themselves and really work at improving the world. Serving the spirit, we realize why we are here and why we have gone through the experiences that we have. Our suffering has cleaned us of some of our illusions. In our own time we have been guided to a new life and place in the world and in our hearts where things seem to fit and work out for a change.

4 B. Step 12

How it works 8/28

Working with others
and my Character Defect
Had to stop force feeding
them and let them
come to me and let
them ask questions orally
or expression wise, eyes,
mouth etc.

ONE MEMBER'S EXPERIENCE WITH NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS IN PRISONS

My name is Barry. I'm an addict. "There but for the grace of God,
am I."

Have you ever stopped to think about how many times in our active
addiction we could have been arrested for some crime relating to
drugs? I have examined my past pretty thoroughly in my 4th Step
and have realized more and more that, but for the grace of God, I
could be spending this day in a penal institution. It doesn't matter
what for. We all have our own experiences and stories.

I have been blessed with the opportunity to carry the message to a
place where there was very little hope. In a state prison in Georgia,
where the inmates relate to each other mostly by negative and
criminal behavior, some of my fellow addicts and I have witnessed a
new miracle.

We have seen our brothers and sisters, these imprisoned addicts,
turn to Narcotics Anonymous for help and watched them change
before our very eyes. This change reflects a change in myself as I see
them look at us first with suspicion, then with bewilderment, and finally
with love and respect. Here is my Higher Power at work.

Can you imagine the feeling of seeing 35 people at their first Nar-
cotics Anonymous meeting, all asking, "How do you not use?" I have
been overcome many times with the feelings of love and compassion
for men who, like myself, have had nothing but drugs and crime as a
way of life for years.

My hope is that enough recovering addicts will see the need in
institutions near where they live and, walking with God, talk with the
Warden or superior officer, explaining your own past, identifying
yourself, and telling him how Narcotics Anonymous works for you.

I feel that this kind of service is an opportunity and a joyous one
rather than something to be looked at as 12th Step "work". What lit-
tle work there is involved has been more or less just "part of the fun"
with me. This is why I see the need for others to know about Nar-
cotics Anonymous institutional service.

The need is great. Right now there are probably not enough Nar-
cotics Anonymous members to go around to every jail or prison, but
if there is one near you and you think you would be interested in
sponsoring a group, at least talk with some one about it.

You may think prison service is for those "hard-core junkies" who
have done 5 to 10 for burglary or robbery. This is untrue. I have
never been in prison, but I have never received a greater, more in-
tense feeling of love and gratitude than my weekly meeting at
Bulford.

Barry L.
Atlanta, Georgia

Pray for them Dad
can do a hell of a
lot better job than
me.

Win their confidence
so they won't blame
to hell with and fear
rejection and me using
it against them. Tell
them I believe in their
recovery and sincerity
if I do. I ^{love} thing alone
you unconditionally
show them hope ^{see} so
thing can see it working.

I am writing this letter to you in the behalf of all the
prison inmates here at the River Junction Correctional
Institution, but most of all I would like to show great
gratitude and have it publicized the thanks we all have
and would like to show Miss Dawn _____ for bringing
and helping make the N.A. to find its way into this prison.
I myself am one of the prison inmates who at one time was
on drugs. I never knew of N.A. but I always wanted help
with this thing that drugs had over me, but then one day
I got this letter from Dawn who told me all about N.A. and
how it has helped her....

Dawn sent me papers and books on N.A. and I couldn't help
but fall in love with it so I talked with a few of the
inmates who also said we should have the N.A. here....

We are also grateful to our neighboring N.A. fellowships in
California, Oregon etc. There were people there who were of
great support to us. Just knowing that we are a part of N.A.
and the solution rather than the problem, gives us a feeling
that cannot be put into words.

STEP 12

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WORKING WITH OTHERS

Intensive work with new comers has proven effective in bringing our outlook on life. I, an addict and alcoholic named Hank and I was talking to an old timer in the program one day. He was disturbed that N.A. needed more trusted servants. He said that there were 100 or so members with time and talent who could really be of help to us in service; who could really get together and help us by coordinating a 12 step list and a good, much-needed phone answering service. However, he asserted, "they are doing the same thing that they were 5 years ago. They go to meetings at institutions, they socialize and talk about the program." Its pitiful. "for the... Its also very intense", I said, what he asked for the good or bad?" "For the good! they work very intensely with newcomers. They sit around with them one on one and throw themselves into working with the suffering addict with great sensitivity and feeling that only one addict can have for another. The caring and sharing that goes on is deep, why, on the southside instead of spending an half hour of fellowship they spend any where from one to 1 1/2 hours in intensive work with the new comers there." "Really?" he asked amazed, "your a comfort to me that's great!" "Sure" I said, "they operate on a social level, talking to a new comer most of the time of thier own sex going out to a movie or dinner. They work intesly for hours. I mean like spending thier day with a new comer, getting them out of those institutions on passes sure they show them a good time but they also work tirelessly and in tensely with the patients."

Well thats great. personal service is the highest form of sevice"

DiG THis" I continued, "the other day at Brawners I saw two of the most beautiful new comers you ever saw. One guy was a hard core heroin addict he told his story lie this "In 1969 my girl friend tied me up and let loose with some blue morphine It was the very best feeling Id ever had in my life. I did it for a few years and but then my friend were leaving (I knew from the pain in his eyes he was speaking of those lost slane by the needle) I was so lonely . for years I wanted to die . I had to have a shot to get up, to put me to sleep I was addicted"

The other newcomer coming off 7 years of pralude addiction was jonesing and both were crying out for help. the wve of serious and humorous attention they were enveloped with was intense almost desprately so. The truth is that people like this can die with that crawling feeling up thier spine and or live with that wretched feeling of having dirt under thier skin so that nothing is comfortable except oblivion .So we share a llof us we can to save just 1 live.

"maybe you can t save the whole world , but you can save a tiny piece of it... ..

LOVE, HANK

STEP 12 HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING (130)
AS A RESULT OF THOSE STEPS WE TRIED TO CARRY
THIS MESSAGE TO ADDICTS & TO PRACTICE THOSE
PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS

I believed it was others like myself who would help me the most, even if they had difficulty staying clean. I began sponsoring women from recovery houses, the rebels loved me! I did what I could on a volunteer basis to help other women find N.A. and to allow them to express themselves while living in a somewhat repressive environment (I'm being kind). I worked at regular jobs in regular businesses for 2½ years before I felt confident enough in my abilities and my motives to seek employment in the field of drug rehab. I had seen a lot of people go down the tubes who took this step prematurely. I was almost a casualty myself when I was clean one year and became "director" of a program for a month. I was well intentioned but had not gained enough knowledge about me. It was much easier to work on other people. Some people pursue this course for many years and find it painful to see. I feel good about myself and my work today. I am a Staff member in the program where I had such difficulty. I am in a position to help correct some of the problems that still exist. I do not confuse my work with the 12th Step but while at work as in the super market, "I am the message."

The recovery house brought me to N.A. where I found myself, a self which I have brought back to the recovery house so in a sense, I have come full circle, although it seems more like an upward spiral. Since I have been doing this work I have found it necessary to keep foremost in my mind "I am an addict" and to continue working my personal program and placing my sobriety first.

I am not fooled about rehab work and I hope my message is clear. Narcotics Anonymous works.

We are however responsible for making a effort one day at a time for our recovery. As one addict to another we share our experience, strength and hope. Knowledge of the twelve steps and twelve traditions is passed on in meetings, in fellowship, in twelfth step work and in literature. We do not compare our programs, cleanliness or growth, This only distracts us from our primary purpose. We merely work as a family for our own survival. Our aim is and should always be for ourselves and for our new found family unity and effectiveness in carrying our message of recovery from the disease of drug addiction. If

The twelfth step

to guide us, speaks of our spiritual awakening, characterized by personality change and sharing our message of recovery with the addict who still suffers.

The idea of a spiritual awakening may seem like nonsense or worse to a newcomer--but the proof is in the promises. Although it takes many different forms in the many different personalities we find in N.A., the spiritual awakening does have some things in common throughout the fellowship. Life takes on a new meaning, a new joy, a quality of being good and worthwhile, which to most of us, was as alien as another planet prior to our working this program. We become spiritually refreshed and are glad to be alive.

Usually, by the time we achieve this state of mind, no one has to tell us to share our new life with the still-suffering addict; we are more than eager to help that person because by this time we recognize that helping others--giving away that which has been given to us is our best possible insurance against a "slip" or a return to the vague, tortured existence of a practicing drug addict.

We call it "carrying the message" and we do it in any number of ways.

The first way in which we carry the message is by staying clean and sober with the help of God and the N.A. program. Our new way of life speaks for itself better than our words ever could. People see us on the street. They remember us as furtive, frightened lovers. They see us gradually come alive; see the grayness and fear leave our faces; see a spring come into our step and a twinkle^{come} into our eyes. The message is meaningless unless we live it. If we do it, we give it more meaning with our lives than our words ever can.

When we see
we are getting out of
the problem and into
the solution.

The only way I
can make my program
work is by honesty
that's the key
word.

4 B. STEP 12 (132)

We attend the meetings and make ourselves visible and available to serve the fellowship. We give freely and gratefully of our time, our services, our money, our experience in the service of our fellows. We do not shirk when called upon to practice these principles, because we know that the more eagerly we wade in and work to stay clean and sober, the higher we're going to get--or--to put it another way, the richer our spiritual awakening will become.

Especially when we are asked to help a newcomer whether he be de-toxifying in a jail cell or just beginning to learn the principles of the N.A. program--whether he be young or old, of our own race or some other, hostile or docile--we will do what we can to make the newcomer aware of what the program offers and we will try to make the newcomer feel at home. Experience shows that the best way to accomplish these ends is to share with them our own experience, strength and hope through sharing as much as is needed of our own personal story: what we were like while we were using, what happened to bring us to N.A. and what life is like for us today.

We try to present the newcomer with the medical and statistical facts of his dilemma and then show them the alternative offered by the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

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We have seen our brothers and sisters, those I've imprisoned before, turn to N.A. for help and welcomed them through doors our very eyes. This change reflects a change in myself as I see them look at us at first with suspicion, then with bewilderment, and finally with love and respect. One is my Higher Power at work.

Can you imagine the looking on people's faces at their first N.A. meeting, all asking, "How do you get out?" I have been overcome many times with the feelings of love and compassion for men who, like myself, have had nothing but drugs and crime as a way of life for years.