

1<sup>st</sup>  
DRAFT

## WE DO RECOVER

Although "Politics makes strange bedfellows," as the old saying goes, addiction makes us one of a kind. Our personal stories may vary in individual pattern but in the end we all have the same thing in common. This common illness or disorder is addiction. We know well the two things that make up true addiction. Obsession and compulsion. Obsession — that fixed idea that takes us back time and time again to our particular drug or some substitute, to recapture the ease and comfort we once knew.

Compulsion — that once having started the process with one "fix," one pill, or one drink, we cannot stop through our own power of will. Because of our physical sensitivity to drugs we are completely in the grip of a destructive power greater than ourselves.

When at the end of the road we find that we can no longer function as a human being, either with or without drugs, we all face the same dilemma. What is there left to do? There seems to be these alternatives: either go on as best we can to the bitter ends — jails, institutions or death; or find a new way to live. In years gone by, very few addicts, ever had this last choice. Those who are addicted today, are more fortunate. For the first time in man's entire history, a simple way has been proving itself in the lives of many addicts. It is available to us all. This is a simple spiritual — not religious — program, known as Narcotics Anonymous.

When my addictions brought me to the point of complete powerlessness, uselessness, and surrender some twenty-six years ago, there was no N.A. I found A.A. and in that Fellowship met addicts who had also found that program to be the answer to their problem. However, we knew that many were still going down the road of disillusion, degradation and death, because they were unable to identify with the alcoholic in A.A. Their identification was at the level of apparent symptoms and not at the deeper level of emotions or feelings, where empathy becomes a healing therapy for all addicted people. With several other addicts and some members of A.A. who had great faith in us and the program, we formed, in July of 1953, what we now know as Narcotics Anonymous. We felt that now the addict would find from the start as much identification as each

needed to convince himself that he could stay clean, by the example of others who had recovered for many years.

That this was what was principally needed, has proved itself in these passing years. That wordless language of recognition, belief and faith, which we call empathy, created the atmosphere in which we could feel time, touch reality and recognize spiritual values long lost to many of us. In our program of recovery we are growing in numbers and in strength. Never before have so many clean addicts, of their own choice and in free society, been able to meet where they please, to maintain their recovery in complete creative freedom.

Even addicts said it could not be done the way we had it planned. We believed in openly scheduled meetings, no more hiding as other groups had tried. We believe this differed from all other methods tried before by those who advocated long withdrawal from society. We felt that the sooner the addict could face his problem of everyday living just that much faster would he become a real productive citizen. We eventually have to stand on our own feet and face life on its own terms, so why not from the start. Because of this, of course, many relapsed and many were lost completely. However, many stayed and some came back after their setback. The brighter part, is the fact that of those who are now our members, many have long terms of complete abstinence and are better able to help the new-comer. Their attitude, based on the spiritual values of our Steps, and Traditions, is the dynamic force that is bringing increase and unity to our program. Now we know that the time has come when that tired old lie, "Once an addict always an addict," will no longer be tolerated by either society or the addict himself. We do recover.

# We Do Recover

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Draft (1)

staying clean and sober is the main purpose of the program of N.A. Gaining strength and guidance leads us into a new life that is beyond the imagination of the operating addict or the newcomer. Nothing is forever and wherever we find ourselves coming in rest assured that we are going to experience many miracles as we progress step by step. The original desire to be clean is the flame that we should feed. It will burn away all the old ideas that hold us back and make us ready to begin our new lives.

~~—~~ If you <sup>we</sup> are in the program ~~and~~ <sup>who</sup> find yourself <sup>our selves</sup> cultivating feelings of isolation and despair ~~don't feel~~ alone. Many of us have had similar difficulties at different stages in our recoveries. Usually they come at a time of great potential growth. In other words self-destructiveness will make us want to go out and use again instead of recovering. We can overcome this if we make a special effort to share our feelings at a meeting, in fellowship or with a friend or sponsor. By doing this we are moving out of ourselves rather than inwardly. We don't want to protect, hide or cherish negativity. By getting it out we run a better chance of encountering someone who may be able to help us. Many of us find our own answers downing on us while we are trying to explain them to someone else.

What we have in common, what we have all felt, is the aloneness, separateness, misery and despair; the pain inside us, in the empty numbness that set us apart from our fellows. The one thing we all share, the uniting factor, is that we all felt that we were unique, different, better than or worse than, but always separate. We had a very empty place inside us. We felt we were alone. Our pain surrounded us, but didn't fill the empty place inside us.

A We do have a common bond of chemical addiction, of mysteriously twisted personalities. We both have experienced that terrifyingly overwhelming urge, that need for something outside of oneself. I know the feelings all too well. We share a bond of fear, of anxiety, of anger that we are unable to control.

In the past about all that was really known about the addict encompassed only a small segment of addiction. Since there were few if any real recoveries how could anything else be known, except our behavior while using, during withdrawal and thru' some short periods of abstinence. Even when long periods of abstinence had been imposed upon us nothing really changed to bring about real freedom from drugs.



2 ②  
Any drug addict clean ~~and sober~~ without a compulsion to use is a miracle. To keep the miracle alive in ongoing recovery involves personal growth in attitudes and awareness. It is important to remember that recovery is an abnormal state for us addicts. We learn to live clean ~~and sober~~. If we find ourselves in trouble with our recovery after some time clean ~~and sober~~, we have usually stopped doing one or more of the things that ~~used to~~ helped us in the earlier stages of our recovery. This can show up as an unexplainable depression or disorientation but is really related to a poor spiritual condition.

7/8  
C. Infante  
For some life is the living the here and the now. There is bitter and there is sweet; yet all remains ephemeral. For others, life is in the future. Carefully considered successes are not always achieved; and there is disappointment - then regret. And for a few, life is in the past, the memories. They are blind to the future and unaware of the present. They see the future as an extension of the past; so their lives are of self-fulfilling prophecy. These are the saddest of all; and ~~one~~ <sup>weird</sup> one.

By measuring the minutes, <sup>we</sup> ~~I~~ am able to endure the endless hours. There is comfort in my carefully measured footsteps as they divide the day. Each step, each moment, puts me closer to my goal, or my death. Each promises peace. But for now, there is only the moment and <sup>we</sup> ~~I~~ endure.

offensive  
Although ~~I~~ <sup>we</sup> some of us had used, misused and abused medications for half of ~~my~~ <sup>our</sup> lives, ~~I~~ <sup>we</sup> never considered that ~~I~~ <sup>we</sup> might be ~~an~~ <sup>us</sup> addicts. For me, the term "drug addiction" conjured up visions of street crime, fear of the law, and needles. As far as ~~I~~ <sup>we</sup> chose to believe, the drug addict lived in a skid row environment; and because ~~I~~ <sup>we</sup> did not fit the picture ~~I~~ <sup>we</sup> had imagined, ~~I~~ <sup>we</sup> could not be a "drug addict". ~~I~~ <sup>we</sup> had never been arrested, ~~I~~ <sup>we</sup> had no fear of the law, and ~~I~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> afraid of the needle.

Legal doses of prescribed medication can addict a person because of unknown side effects, combination with other drugs or an inborn potential ~~to~~ <sup>taxes</sup> susceptibility to become addicted. ~~The individual is usually~~ <sup>are</sup> unaware that any real problem exists until a prescription lapses or ~~they~~ <sup>we</sup> begin to experience failure in unacceptable ~~their~~ <sup>our</sup> living. ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> they start losing jobs, become divorced, find ~~themselves~~ <sup>ourselves</sup> without friends and are unable to account for these changes. Generally ~~their~~ <sup>we</sup> use of drugs will increase with these changes. ~~They can stay~~ <sup>we</sup> in this condition indefinitely or increase ~~their~~ <sup>our</sup> dosages or types of drugs by various means. If at any point ~~they~~ <sup>we</sup> make the basic connection between ~~this~~ <sup>our</sup> use of drugs and the way things have been going for ~~them~~ <sup>us</sup>, they can begin ~~their~~ <sup>our</sup> recovery by seeking help. If ~~they~~ <sup>we</sup> persist in ~~their~~ <sup>our</sup> usage, they become insane by degrees. Denial can overcome the most obvious evidence of addiction and prolong ~~the~~ <sup>our</sup> active addiction. Acceptance is of the fact of ~~addiction~~ <sup>our</sup> is the only way out. Well meaning ~~my~~ <sup>our</sup> family members can enable ~~us~~ <sup>we</sup> to continue using by compensating for ~~their~~ <sup>our</sup> inadequacies, getting ~~them~~ <sup>us</sup> out of jams, giving ~~them~~ <sup>us</sup> money and accepting ~~their~~ <sup>our</sup> rationalizations. ~~The addict is usually~~ <sup>we</sup> very effective in encouraging this sort of special treatment. It can in fact become a way of life for ~~them~~ <sup>us</sup>. Recovery depends on reality to provide ~~them~~ <sup>us</sup> with enough pain to where ~~they~~ <sup>we</sup> want to recover. Prescription addiction is every bit as painful and horrible as the more notorious forms of addiction. ~~Doctors and Federal agencies are becoming~~

STAN  
TYPING

Unfortunately many of the mental and physical states resulting from this kind of addiction make it more likely that the person will consider themselves victims of diseases which have no recovery program available but only vague forms of treatment that can go on indefinitely unless the real nature of their illness is discovered. The best rule we've found is that if you think you ~~zzzzzz~~ you might have a problem ~~unmistakably~~ do, x with drugs you probably do. 2-A

There were times in our drug using careers when we were convinced that all we had to do to control our using was to quit after the second, or the fifth or the tenth or the twentieth time that got us "loaded"; it was the first! The first time was the one that did the damage. The first time was the one that started us on our merry-go-rounds. The first time was the one that set up a chain reaction of addictive thinking that led to our uncontrolled using.

Another thing that many of us learned during our using days was that enforced "being clean" was generally not a very pleasant experience. Some of us were able to stay clean, occasionally, for periods of days, weeks and even years. But we did not enjoy our being clean. We felt like martyrs. We became irritable, difficult to live and work with. We persisted in looking forward to the time when we might be able to use drugs again.

Now that we are in N.A., we have a new outlook on being clean. We enjoy a

When I got to Alcoholics Anonymous in 1974 I knew instinctively that staying sober meant staying off all mood changing drugs as well. As A.A. was for booze I didn't talk about my drug taking very much. I only occasionally mentioned my midnight drives to the paddy fields outside Saigon when I was stoned or drunk, and the paranoia I felt the last time I smoked hashish in Algeciras, Spain. My taking of Stelazine, a major tranquiliser, I put out of my mind altogether.

I knew I had an alcohol problem and knew sooner or later I would start drinking alcholically, little did I know, I already was. I felt as though I would be able to drink about fifteen years before I would be in any trouble. I didn't know ~~xxxx~~ I had a disease or know about the progression of the disease. So, within a five year span there was no wife, no kids, no home, no business, no car, no money and no hope.



4 (4)

During the years of my using, I spent a great deal of time in one of my many doctors offices. I got scripts for every imaginable condition, from depression, to mania, to physical complaints. I knew that the drugs felt good, but I believed that I was treating my conditions rather than feeding an all-consuming disease. I began developing symptoms that, although they were real enough at the time, served me well when I sought a particular drug. I learned quickly how to get any particular medication.

Over the years I endured many surgeries, that I believe now were actively sought by me to obtain drugs. I became a sick individual. I spent a good many months, over a span of ten or more years, in mental institutions, being treated with the drugs that I was becoming a slave to. My days were spent in obtaining drugs and using them. I felt that I was free, but I was a slave to myself and my drugs of choice.

After I admitted and accepted that I was, indeed, a drug addict, I became painfully aware that there were few women my age in treatment or in NA. Where were these women that I knew still suffered. Most of them were and are in sheltered situations, living with a husband, parents, or boyfriend. A great deal of them still live under the assumption that they are sick or crazy, when they are in the legions of drug addicts. They spend years in and out of hospitals and doctors offices, cashing scripts and dying.

No one can even guess how many women, housewives and mothers, die as a direct result of drug abuse and addiction. How many accidents occur while the victim is under the influence? Because of my experience with drugs and illness, I believe that a great many deaths of women are caused by drugs and attributed to other causes, such as heart attack, "natural" causes, and accident. Women are dying everyday, overdosing on housewife's little helpers. Until we recognize just who is an addict and how we can help him, many will die needlessly. I will do all I can help in this work. I am grateful to my God and to the NA for being there when I sought help.

At the end we are consumed with terror and despair. We know for sure that we are dying and many of our friends are usually dead. No one can explain the incredible fact that addicts confirmed beyond hope in their addiction can and do reach for and receive help in Narcotics Anonymous.

My brother and sisters out thier and I do consider you all  
my brothers and my sisters and I love you, thier is a way that  
we can do this . WE can live the life of the spiritual . We  
if we are and we should be willing to go to any lenght  
to be fr~~ee~~ from the prostrates of our actives addiction.  
I dont want to die that way; you dont want to die either,.  
We are in the same boat, I love you ,Its not said egnough  
but ,by God , its the truth. I want to pass on what has worked  
for me and many others like ,you and I. This is the way  
of the 12 steps and well worked oit is a sure fire way  
to be happy, joyous and free.

The 12 steps work as a way to aresting and stoppin  
g the vicious cycle that we find our selves in when we use dru  
gs. 1st we admit that we are powerless over our addictions that  
our lives have become unmanagable. 2nd we come to believe that  
tere is a power greater than our selves that can restore us  
to sanity whenever we call on it. This corresponds to the  
2nd tradion of NA "that our only authority is a loving God as  
it may express our selves." the condition that we should put  
on this God is that is be lovindg able ,and willing to take  
good tener loving care of us. There is no other condition to b  
e put on this God. Not Jewish, Christian, Zen, Moslem,  
Hindu, buddist, These are great world religons but if we can not  
bring ourselves to believe in the they are no good . To have  
the vitail spiritual experience we addeicts need we have  
got to have something that will work at all times. There fore  
no matter what You or I may call our Higher Poower , it is  
nessesary that it work and work for us,because let me tell  
you, if we are not the most important people and not willing  
to do it fotr our selves well then for gret it. ~~What we want~~

6 4  
I cannot subscribe to the belief that God tests me. If ever God did test me, I would fail absolutely. Instead, the sober experiences in N.A. strengthen my character, building on a firm foundation the ability to respond here and now.

When I am ready, God presents the opportunity that heals the spiritual malady. The use of drugs or alcohol were a symptom of deeper emotional and mental disorders. After clearing up the superficial wreckage of the symptom with the 12-Steps, it is necessary to continue applying the principles of the program to deal with the causes.

By keeping it simple and sharing your experience of the disease concept with your new people, you can give them knowledge that may save their lives. Most people just don't know about the progressive and incurable aspects of our disease until they come to the program and sit through a few meetings. Until they have their own understanding of the disease and how it has affected their lives they have little hope of ongoing recovery.

8/5-6  
8th flr  
This woman seem to radiate a feeling of love & joy that I had never felt before anyone before, upon meeting her I felt like I had known her forever, something in me was drawn to her, little did I know that this woman would become my sponsor and play such a big part in my life for the next 10 years, ~~time was in this~~. This was the beginning of a journey that even today <sup>never</sup> ceases to amaze me, a way of life of learning complete trust in a higher power and to learn a love that has no pretense, a way of life where the constant thought of others must become automatic.

0030

It was never again necessary for me to come into contact with the law but I can tell you every feeling of every person who has ever done time because I was locked down in a prison of my own making. I continued to take chemicals of all sort, eventually shooting heroin with the rest of the gang. I believe that part of my early using was due to my need to be accepted but as it progressed I became more and more self-centered and by the time I got my first fix I know I was doing it because I had to - for me - to be able to survive in this lonely, frightening world. For the next 7 yrs. my life was a series of runs and clean-ups. I think one of the reasons I stayed out there as long as I did was because I believed I had a certain amount of control. Somehow I held jobs most of the time, I got married (to another hype) and had a son. Of course, I didn't take into consideration the fact that I had to quit jobs before they fired me for stealing their money or the fact that I got married kicking a habit and also stayed strung out during my pregnancy and left the hospital with my son 15 hrs. after delivery because I was sick and had to fix.

I kept trying to prove to myself that it wasn't as bad as it seemed, that I could get it together one way or another. I moved to different towns, got different jobs, saw psychiatrist and doctors, read self-help/awareness books, switched from drug to drug, tried methadone on end off the streets but the obsessive, compulsive insanity got worse and worse.

My little family and I ended up a year after my son was born back at my parent's house. There I spent my last 6 mths. of using. My husband left, got arrested and went into a recovery house. At this point, I was completely incapable of caring for my son or myself. My mother took over my son. I was lucky to be able to get out of bed in the morning to try to hustle for the day. I was dying and I knew it - I was praying to God for death.

Their  
exists no model of the recovered addict. When the drugs go and the addicts works the program, strange and wonderful things happen. New possibilities spring up like flowers in the desert. Lost dreams awaken. The juices of life begin to flow.