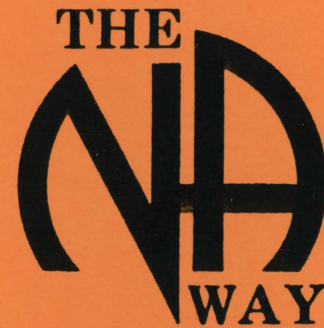


**My Gratitude Speaks  
When I Care  
And When I Share  
With Others  
The N.A. Way.**



**OCTOBER  
1986**

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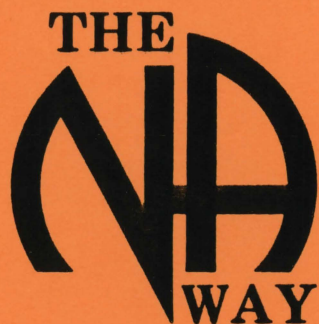
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OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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## What is Narcotics Anonymous?

N.A. is a worldwide Fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other to stay clean. It doesn't matter which drugs you used, or what you have done in the past. We are concerned only with how we can help addicts recover. It costs nothing to be a member of N.A.—there are no dues or fees. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that *they work*. For more information about the N.A. groups nearest you, write us at the address below.

*All members of Narcotics Anonymous are invited to participate in this "meeting in print." Send all input, along with a signed copyright release form, to: The N.A. Way; World Service Office, Inc.; P.O. Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409*

# Praying Only for the Knowledge of His Will for Us

## THE TWELVE STEPS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

1. *We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.*
2. *We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*
3. *We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*
4. *We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*
5. *We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*
6. *We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*
7. *We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.*
8. *We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*
9. *We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*
10. *We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*  
*We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious*
11. *contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.*  
*Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried*
12. *to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

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This addict was sitting on his porch one day during a very intense storm. The rain continued to pour, and the floods were soon to follow. He began to worry. But soon he decided to pray, as he had always done when he was in a bind, so pray he did—for the rain to stop.

An hour later the water was at his doorstep. The neighbors began to head for cover, but he went on praying, "Dear God, please make the rain stop."

A boat came by and someone yelled for him to come aboard, but he answered, "No, the rain will stop!" As they sailed away, he went back to praying; the water now up to his knees.

Hours later he was seen atop his roof, the water right below. Another boat arrived, and again someone pleaded with him to come along. Again he assured them there was nothing to fear. "The rain will stop."

The next morning he was found dead. The rain indeed stopped, but a little too late for him.

Up in the great meeting place in the sky, he desperately searched for God. Upon finding him, he asked, "Why did you let this happen to me? Why did you let me down?"

God said to him, "You know that I love you and promised that I would take care of you!" A confused look came over his face. Then God asked him, "Didn't you see the two boats I sent for you?"

M.L.  
Chicago

# Inside Contributions: an inside Job



For me, Narcotics Anonymous is a program of Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. I have had to learn how to apply the Twelve Traditions in my personal life, just as I have had to apply our Twelve Steps.

I felt a lot of guilt about Tradition Seven the first few years I was clean in N.A. I was more incapable than ever of supporting myself in early recovery. Thanks to a parole board, I found myself in Narcotics Anonymous, "trying to get my life together," but I found myself living at home with my mother and back in school. I was unemployed and unemployable for sixteen out of my first twenty-four months clean.

At the time, I felt so guilty because I was not fully self-supporting. You see, I knew what the basket was for, but usually didn't have money to put in it. I was grateful that there were no dues or fees for N.A. membership, but I still felt guilt that crippled my developing sense of self-esteem.

In my recovery, thanks to good sponsorship, I have participated actively in service and become a responsible, productive member of society. When I started going to area service committee meetings, I saw how group contributions made it possible for us to carry the message by paying our telephone answering service bills, as well as stockpile and distribute literature both for N.A. groups and for addicts in hospitals and institutions. Later, attending regional service committee meetings, I saw that contributions from the many areas working together provided services that would have been impossible alone—regional meeting directories and our regional convention, for example. Attending my first World Service Conference in 1983, I saw with my own eyes how

excess group contributions worldwide ended up carrying our message to the addict who still suffers through services that no group, area or region could ever provide alone. Services like our Basic Text, which was published that year along with twelve new pamphlets. It deepened my spiritual awakening to see how it all led back to the basket passed at every meeting.

As the Fellowship has grown, I have seen steady progress in all of the services we are able to provide. As an addict, however, the progress has not always been fast enough for me. I want it all now, and it kills me sometimes to have to see Narcotics Anonymous unable to provide services which would contribute to the growth and development of the Fellowship as a whole. I pray to the God of my understanding that we are able to live up to our responsibility. I know that if every member knew the need as I have seen it and felt it, that they would be touched as I have been touched. The therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel.

Today, I am fully self-supporting through my own contributions, and it's a good feeling. I know external chaos is typical of the first couple of years of recovery for many of us. For the first time in my life, I have enough money to make ends meet and settle past debts (extending our Tradition of self-support and Step Nine into the past). My self-esteem has grown.

Our First Tradition tells me my personal recovery depends on N.A. unity. Today I see the strength our common welfare gains from the pulling together we must do in declining outside contributions. Like personal recovery, it's an inside job. We have a lot of work to do.

These are some of the things I think about when the basket is going around—some of the dreams I have for Narcotics Anonymous. Today I see that the basket is the vehicle which drives our Seventh Tradition; it's the best way for us to provide the funds needed to support both our individual Twelve Step work and our group's primary purpose of carrying the message to the addict who still suffers so that no addict, anywhere, need die from the horrors of addiction.

M.L.

California



## APASLIG—RECOVERY I

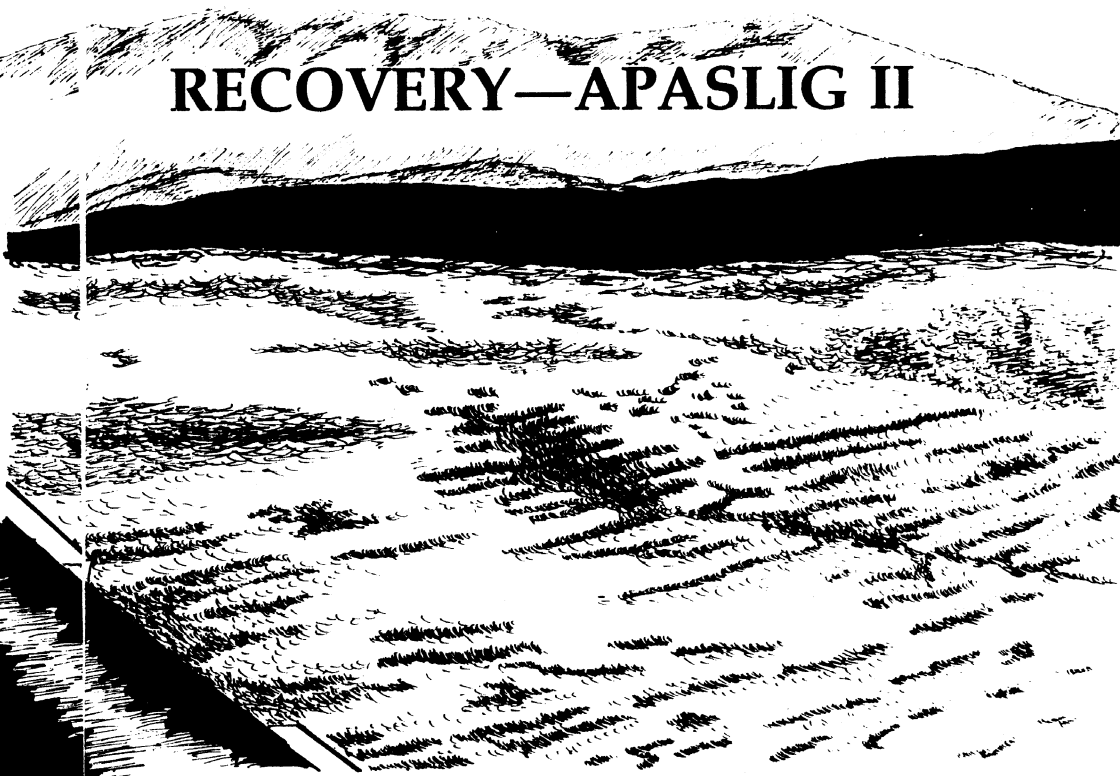
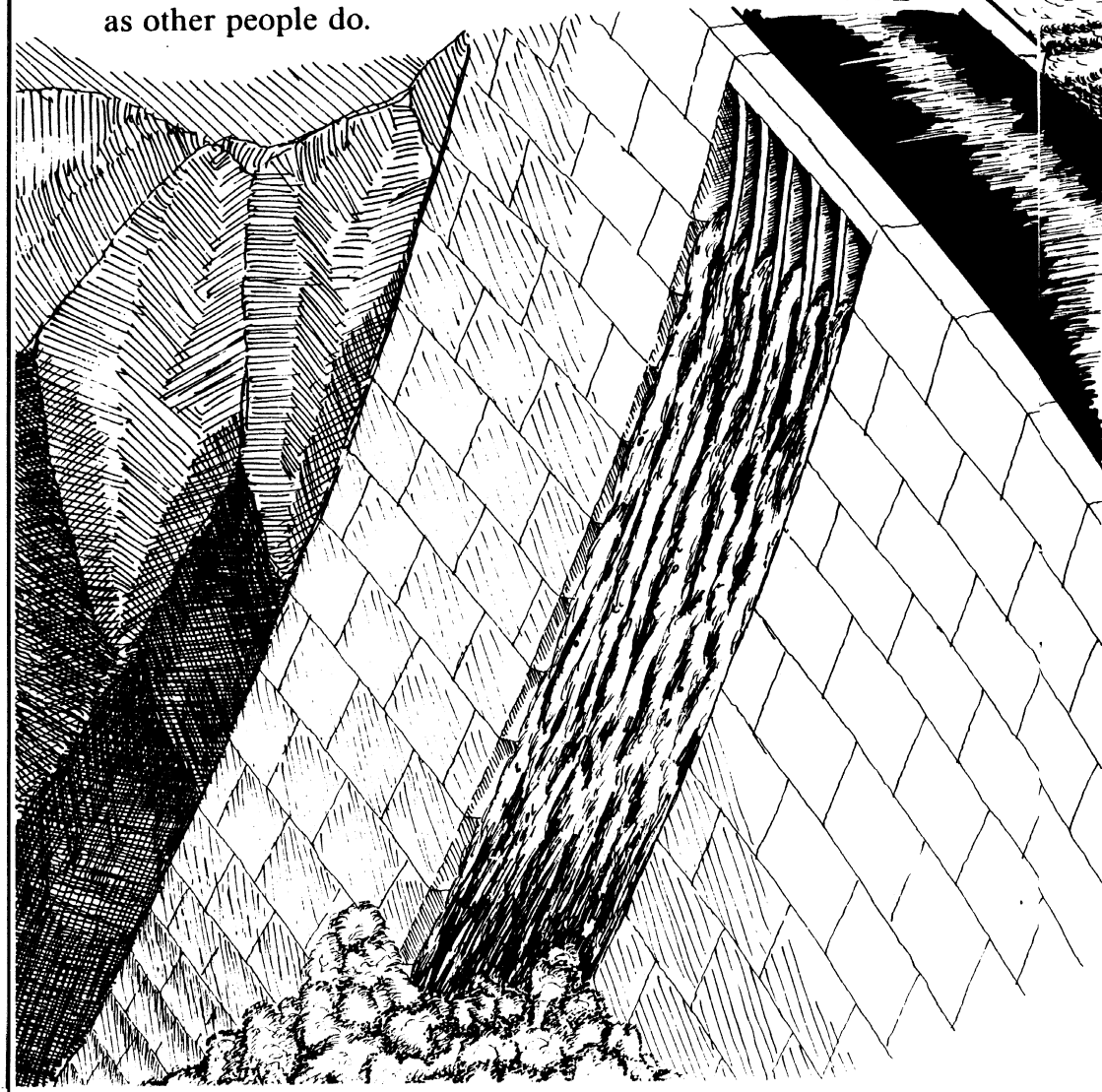
When chaos, confusion and conflict flow in our lives, self-will is the current of the river.

Because we all are part Egyptian, we flow full of DeNile until we are stopped by the Apaslig Damn.

Flowing full of anger and self-contempt, flowing and realizing that "true spiritual principles are never in conflict," we begin to admit to our powerlessness, accept it, surrender to it, then let it go.

In letting it go, our banks are overflowing, fertilizing the life within and without, we are then free to live and enjoy life as other people do.

## RECOVERY—APASLIG II



Recovery is a process of awareness. We see the character defects of another addict and are blind to our own defects of character.

Recovery is a process of understanding the nature of the disease of addiction, realizing that we have a disease that tells us we do not have a disease.

Recovery is a process of admitting our powerlessness over our addiction. Accepting the defeat, realizing that "we can escape from the edge of insanity and certain death" by surrendering and letting it go.

I am in the process of learning to do this on a daily basis, yet I feel such a peace and calm in me, peace that comes from admitting my defeat and my powerlessness to control the uncontrollable, to manage the unmanageable, to have my will, in my way, in my time.

In order to realize true surrender, unconditional surrender requests of me a willingness to let go absolutely and ask a Power greater than myself into my daily life.

T.L.  
Pennsylvania

# On Being a Coffeemaker



One of my sponsors always said that there were two things that would get a person into the steps faster than anything else: a relationship and service. For me, it was service.

Being of service in Narcotics Anonymous has been an experience of joy and growth for me. To feel the joy, there sometimes has been sadness; to grow, there sometimes has been pain. But it's all part of the process of recovery. The pain has generally come from the battering my ego and pride have sometimes suffered, yet this has been the source of the greatest change that has taken place in me. My ego was so big to begin with, it had to be smashed; and the clash of personalities and principles that are so much a part of service and of the Fellowship are just what I needed to learn how to live, work and socialize with other human beings.

One of the things I'm doing in service now is something I am enjoying more than anything I've done in a long time. I'm making coffee again! And it's wonderful. It gets me to the meeting regularly, and forces me to do what was suggested to me in the beginning: come early and stay late. I have felt a strong need for the intimacy which can come from close involvement in a home group. I've had a lot of trouble with my disease isolating me from other addicts and from myself—trouble with knowing a lot of people but being close to few. So, for me, it's back to basics.

What I want to share about being a coffeemaker is that I think it's the highest and most prestigious position of service which exists in Narcotics Anonymous. Most people think that service at the group, area, regional and world level is an uphill progression to greater glory, power, prestige and recognition. But, believe me, nothing could be further from the truth. If anything: it's a downhill path of greater anonymity, self-sacrifice, hard work and responsibility. I know most people think it's the other way around. If you're looking for applause and recognition, however, make coffee. Speakers, treasurers, group service representatives (GSR'S) and secretaries all take a back seat to COFFEEMAKERS in the applause department!

So after five and one-half years of clean time, I am basking in the glory of making coffee these days, allowing the love and respect of the Fellowship to be heaped upon me. What a thrill!!! Being a trusted servant has enhanced my membership and my recovery in Narcotics Anonymous forever. Today, my gratitude must be expressed in action. I must give freely and gratefully that which was freely and gratefully given to me (Basic Text—Step Eleven). I want what I have and am willing to do anything to keep it.

Anonymous  
California

# The Trip Goes on Forever



Last Fall I had an opportunity to take a trip all over the USA, experiencing recovery in a very special way. The spirit of recovery abounded throughout the land in different meetings, and H.P. even visited with me personally in the wilderness. Now, could any good addict ever get enough of such a dynamic and adventurous high?

The plane landed in Spokane at about 12:00 a.m. A clean addict who had awakened that morning in Atlanta, reassembled his bike in Spokane and put it on the back of the rented car. A light rain filled the skies only to add to chills of excitement up and down his spine.

Suddenly after crossing into Montana, the night skies cleared and a half-moon smiled amid the stars in the cool, clear evening air. The smell of the cottonwoods and the effect of the evening forced him to pull the car over and take in the moment with a tear of joy and a cry of thanks.

I guess you could say that I really dig the outdoors. It is there that H.P. and I communicate with few distractions. Unlike during my using days, when I venture into the outdoors today I always find something beautiful, new and different.

I was like a quarterback calling the plays at the line of scrimmage on this trip. The next thing I knew I was in Canada. Could they actually have N.A. in other countries? My call was returned promptly, and before I knew it, I was feeling love and recovery. I spent a thirty minute conversation on the Fourth Step, and on what clean life for an addict is like in Calgary, Alberta. It was such a blessing to have automatic friends wherever "the play was called."

Moments in the wilderness were special. I was lying in a forest one day reading some N.A. literature when suddenly a beautiful deer appeared across the forest to feast on the growth. I glanced at him for a minute and then got back into my reading. About ten minutes later, I happened to look up and that awesome creature was standing less than ten feet from me gazing upon his new encounter. Serenity will blow your mind when H.P. gives you a special dose.

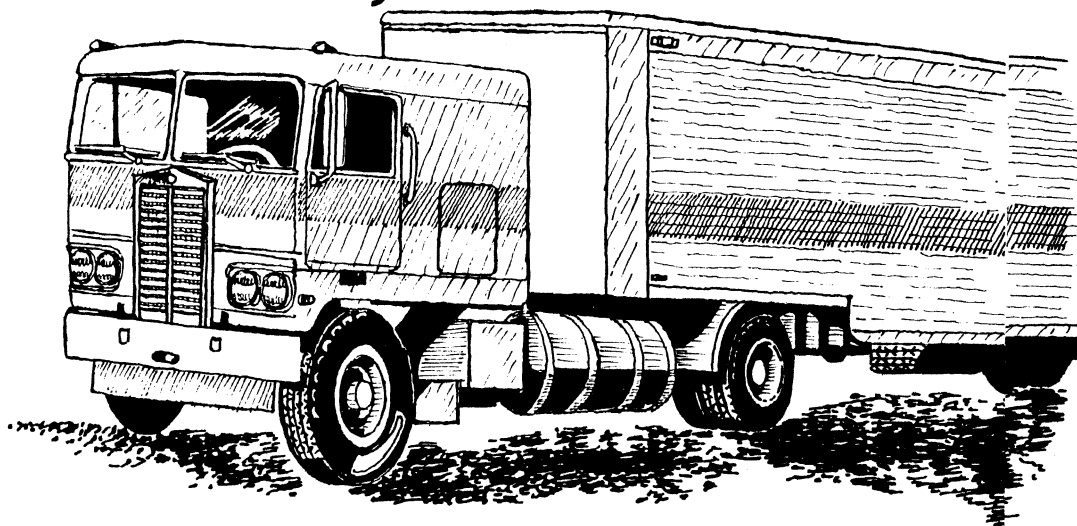
Sometimes in these moments I talk to H.P. I was standing against a long waterfall against a steep mountain one day. I picked up a rock and said, "H.P., I know I'll never see this again," as I threw it high and far up into the stream. After about a minute of admiring the majesty of the falls, an object suddenly popped from the water at my feet. It was that exact same rock.

A beautiful wild mountain goat crossed my immediate path on a secluded road as I rode my bicycle up into snow covered peaks. Serenity can blow your mind.

I'm glad I'm clean today. I don't have to blow my mind anymore. Thanks N.A., because through you, H.P., and the spiritual beauty of recovery, that process is taking place. I run to reality because it is far greater than I could have ever imagined. The trip does go on forever.

E.O.  
Atlanta

# Roll on, N.A.



Name's H——, I'm a fellow addict just trucking across the U.S.A. the N.A. way. Long time no talk. I want to thank the fellow addicts who took their time to show me that N.A. is anywhere you are if you are willing to find it. The choice is yours. I choose to find it.

Recently on a run to Jersey City, New Jersey, I had a layover in New Castle, Delaware. I arrived at the truck stop, made a few calls and found out I couldn't drop the load in Jersey until Monday morning. What do I do now? Hang around the truck stop until Monday and get bored, or find the Fellowship? I know it's there and I have the choice to make. I chose to find the Fellowship. It didn't take long and I was in contact with another caring addict I didn't even know yet. We talked for a while and they agreed to come pick me up at the truck stop and bring me to a meeting. Beautiful! Terrific!

After the meeting they introduced me to a bunch of fellow addicts. We got names, addresses, phone numbers and shared our experience, strength and hope. It was great to feel you don't have to be alone unless you want to. They invited me to the dance they were having the following night and showed me around town. I really want to thank the gang from New Castle, Delaware for the warm N.A. welcome they gave me that weekend. It hurt like hell to leave, but I knew I

must move on and carry the message. Thanks again, Del—united we stand, divided we fall.

I got back from New Jersey. I've been to Knoxville, Tennessee, back to Louisiana and back to Reading, Pennsylvania. No matter where I go, the arms are open and I meet a bunch of beautiful people caring and sharing their experience, strength and hope to another recovering addict. Thanks to them, I'm clean another day today and for that I'm truly grateful.

July 4th—here I am again stuck in a town and don't know a single person, but I know the Fellowship is there if I want it—and I do. It's okay to plan, but don't plan the outcome. Anyway, I had to drop a load in Reading, Pennsylvania and pick up another bound for Houston, Texas. Well, the Texas load got canceled and it's a holiday weekend and I can't find a load going south until Monday. I had planned to take the Houston load south to South Carolina and hit the N.A. convention and then drive on to Houston, Texas, but H.P. didn't want that I guess. So here I am angry at the dispatcher. Being not too far from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, I decided to drive on to Harrisburg that morning and find the Fellowship. I arrived at the truck stop, made a few phone calls and found a meeting. I talked about the way I feel and they tell me that's natural, so I agree—I'm powerless. I again feel the unconditional love and caring from another addict. The anger slowly goes away and I feel normal again (whatever that is).

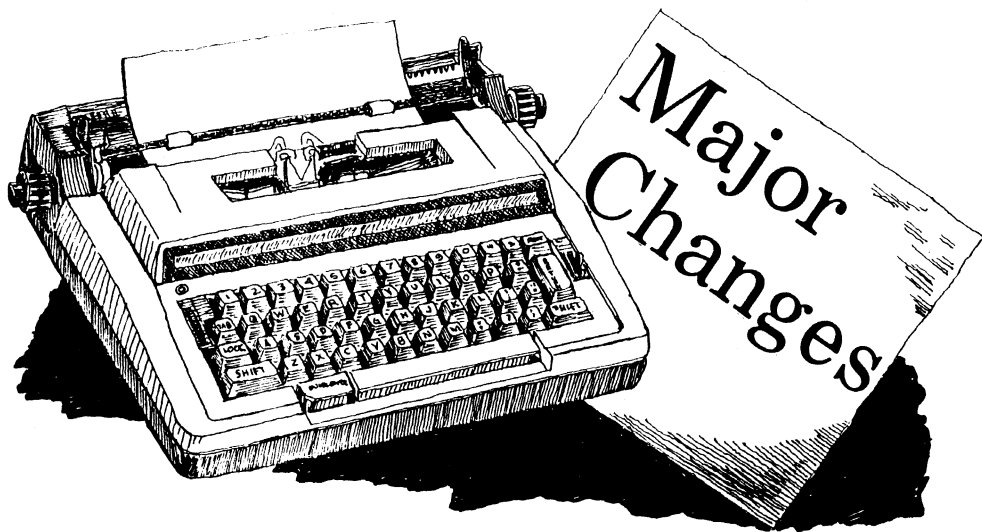
Again the door and arms were open for a recovering addict. After the meeting they all tell me, "Keep coming back and give me your phone number and address." It wasn't a convention, but it was beautiful and special the N.A. way, and it was H.P.'s will. Thanks again to the fellow addicts who opened their arms and doors all the way to Pennsylvania and back on down to L.A. and Texas.

Well, I gotta go and get some more Fellowship. Until we meet again, wherever it may be, keep the parking lot, doors and arms open. I'm coming through, the N.A. way.

H.T.

Louisiana





In a few days I will be celebrating two years of clean time. The days have passed so quickly! My first year of life without mind-altering chemicals was a whirlwind of changes. Whoever first came forth with that advice to newcomers about not making any major changes during the first year clean must have said so with tongue in cheek. To stay clean, I had to stop doing the same things over and over. To survive, I had to make changes.

During my first year, I moved six times, travelled extensively, changed jobs, and helped two family members struggle toward freedom from their own addictions. I put myself in precarious positions by staying at the home of some people who had joints lying around on the windowsills, and by hitting the streets of Anchorage when it was still 20 below with five dollars in my pocket and no place to stay. Somehow, I made it through that year without using; God was keeping a close watch over me.

Six people attended my first birthday celebration, making it the largest N.A. meeting in the history of Healy, Alaska. Four days later, I married another member of our Fellowship and became the proud stepmother of two adolescent boys.

In my second year of recovery, more major changes have come about in my life and in myself. I moved to this tiny town and stayed here all winter. As the bombardment of my life by external changes ceased, my attention was drawn toward my inner spiritual needs. I battled old enemies that it

was time for me to face: fear, resentment, irresponsibility, selfishness. More than once I wanted desperately to escape the prison of self. I would be sitting there wishing I was where I was when I wished I was here. In no time I would be half-way down the Alcan in my head. Painfully, I had to drag myself back into the present, and try once more to deal with life on its own terms.

The Loner Group has been a lifesaver to me during this second year clean. I am compulsive about a lot of things, including writing letters. I cried my heart out on paper to people I had never met, people who had nothing in common with me other than the fact that they, too, were addicts. That was enough to keep me clean for one more day.

I began writing freelance articles during the winter, and was amazed to meet with success in selling a few of them. I found that stories I wrote about the past either were rejected by editors, or they never got to the typewriter at all because I got lost in them. The things that sold were all about today. What is happening today is the only thing that needs to concern me. On some days I feel just barely able to hang on to my sanity. Regularly, I repeat a prayer: "God, help me to remember that nothing is going to happen today that you and I can't handle together."

If I think about tomorrow for more than thirty seconds, I become obsessed with terror all over again. Please God, no more changes! All I ever wanted to be was that little spot on the wall! But I smother the fear with faith that God and my friends in the Fellowship will get me through, no matter what may come next. God is in control; despite my fearful pleas, I am still powerless to stop the tide of change.

In my years of using, I never stayed with anything long enough to find out whether it would work: half a year in this town, two months at the job, no drugs for one week. I am now beginning my third year. Yet I do have a guide, whose line is never busy and who is happy to show me what to do next if I can sit still long enough to listen.

Let the major changes roll!

K.K.  
Alaska

# Freedom



Well, here I am twenty-three months clean and just starting to grow. When I came into the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, looking for a way to stop using, I was married. Six months later we separated. I thought it was for the good of my recovery since he was still using. I began another "relationship" the same day with a recovering addict.

After an up and down eleven months, we separated for the good of my recovery. One week later I was in another relationship.

Is there a pattern here?

After four months in this relationship I have finally seen, with the help of my sponsor and a Higher Power, the

disastrous effects of my disease. Not only am I addicted to drugs, but I also feel I need to be in a relationship to be okay. I felt that discomfort while I was involved with the relationships but my denial was at its peak.

At this time I have been out of that type of relationship for two months, and I can honestly say I'm getting better. I have grown spiritually more in the past two months than I did throughout the first twenty-one, because I now have to work the Steps to feel better. I have to pray to feel better. I have a relationship with God today.

The first few weeks were tough. I felt alone. I wanted to go back to my first relationship, but God had closed the door firmly. I even wished my husband had survived the disease so he could be there. I called my sponsor when I was deep in the pain of self-pity, and she told me to work the Steps! Through the fog of pain, I realized what she meant:

1. Admit I am powerless over my obsession to have a relationship (I couldn't think of anything else), and my life had become unmanageable.
2. Come to believe a Power greater than myself can restore me to sanity (a Power greater than a "relationship").
3. Make a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God *as I understand Him*. (I had to go to *It Works: How and Why* to find out how to do this—and I thought I was recovering so well!).

Immediately after using the steps on how my addiction was showing itself in the area of relationships, I didn't feel so alone. The void that I had felt seemed to be filling up.

When I heard in meetings about God filling the void left when I stopped using drugs, I didn't understand. Today I do. When I heard "I have a relationship with God," I figured the person just couldn't find a partner. Today I understand. Today I don't have to use drugs to feel better, nor do I have to use a "relationship." I have a relationship—a Higher Power and me. And when God wants me to have something else, He will let me know.

D.C.  
Florida

## ONE ADDICT'S WALK THROUGH THE TWELVE STEPS

At the end of what I had hoped was my final run, I hit a physical and mental bottom. After bitter and unsuccessful attempts to get clean in my home state of Hawaii, I managed to get myself to a meeting in Southern California, where I asked for help. A group of Mexicans took me into their homes, fed me, let me shower, while they washed and ironed my clothes. They took me to meetings, gave me cigarettes and loved me when I couldn't love myself. I remember asking them, "Why are you being so nice to me," as tears of self-pity and low self-worth flowed from my eyes. They told me I would understand the N.A. message some day, if I worked the Twelve Steps. They even bought an airplane ticket for me to go home. In short, I had to ironically learn the aloha spirit of love from this group of Mexicans, who, although they live in a barrio, were rich in the spirit of love and service. They also guided me through the Twelve Steps of recovery.

I arrived back in Hawaii in good spirits and started to attend a lot of meetings. Lacking humility and wisdom, I placed personalities ahead of principles and I relapsed again. I cold-turkeyed myself clean and went to work, came home and isolated, and then went back to work the next day. Still carrying a lot of resentments toward the Fellowship, I refused to go to any meetings. I held out for ninety days, hitting a spiritual bottom of self-centered isolation. I felt I couldn't breathe without feeling that the world and the people in it were the proof of the conspiracy to get me. I felt damned if I used and damned if I didn't. I felt so totally isolated from God and my fellow human beings. In short, I feared I would go on like this until the bitter end with no hope in store for me. Despair was a step up for me at this point. Life had gone dead for me inside. These feelings and my problems with staying clean and out of legal trouble brought me to my knees where I admitted I was powerless over addiction, that my life had become unmanageable.

Recovery really started when I picked up the telephone and asked another recovering addict for help. I came to believe that his Higher Power could keep me clean too, that God could work through this man if I would be teachable and let Him. I asked that man if he would be my

sponsor, and he agreed. He told me to read the Basic Text as well as some other books, to work one step a week with him, and to go to the Central Office every day to see if I could be of service. I obeyed his simple instructions. I was like putty in his hands.

He had me take the Third Step at a Fellowship campout, where we knelt in front of everybody and I made that fundamental decision to turn my will and my life into the care of God, as I understood Him. The Third Step gave me a sense of inner peace and calm that enabled me to take a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself. I had to confront those problems and feelings that got me using in the first place.

I wrote about defects such as resentments and fear, lust and anger. I learned that my selfish pursuits (pride, lust, anger, envy, greed, gluttony, and sloth), forced me to use character defects such as dishonesty, resentment, selfishness, and fear to get what I wanted, and that the chronic use of defects in all of my affairs lead me to repeat my mistakes in a self-centered, circular pattern. I also became aware that my defective relations with people lead me to experience shortcomings such as low self-worth, self-pity, rejection, isolation and grandiosity (or egomania). I wrote how I had harmed people with my character defects, and in prayers I expressed a sincere regret for having done so. I learned to humbly ask for God's forgiveness, and that humbly asking is not the same as proudly demanding.

I had to learn that God removes defects and shortcomings, if I let Him, by allowing myself to be loved by God (all of me—good and bad). I was taught to build good character by naming my defect, claiming it, asking God to remove it and replace it with spiritual principles such as honesty, openmindedness, willingness, patience, tolerance, hope, faith, forgiveness, acceptance, caring, sharing, and unconditional love. I became aware that "character" can be defined as "who I am when you people aren't looking." My pride and my ego were deflated in the Sixth and Seventh Steps. I had my first in-depth look at the principle of humility, and I asked for God's power and grace to help me practice principles rather than defects, that I might become the man I ought to be in this long, slow spiritual process. From the Seventh Step I've learned that you can take the



addict off the streets, but only God can take the streets out of the addict—if we humbly ask.

In the Eighth Step I became aware that we live in a world of feelings. It made me more aware of where other people were at, and that the God of my recovery didn't get me clean so that I would continue to go on to hurt and to harm others. I was taught that I had to write a simple list of all people I had harmed and to becoming willing to repair or to make restitution for harms done, that to amend means to mend, and not merely to apologize.

I was taught how important it is to clean up my side of the street, that I make direct amends and financial restitution so that I owe no man anything but the love, truth, patience, tolerance, acceptance, justice, forgiveness, and courtesy that God wanted me to give people in the first place! The Ninth Step allowed me to heal broken relationships. It forced me back into a relationship with you and God in which there was at least some frail semblance of honest communication on my part to set things right.

The Ninth Step made me aware that I must check my motives when making amends, lest in doing so I might injure someone; that it isn't right to make amends to get off the emotional hook of guilt, only to cause more harm in doing so. I learned to be aware of the well-being of others.

With this newfound knowledge of myself from the first nine steps, I had to write about just how I was to form the best possible relations with others. The Ninth Step spelled the end of my isolation. I had to learn to forgive and to ask for forgiveness. I had to learn to forget that I forgave to be free to give love again. I learned that I am forgiven by God only as I am forgiving others who have done me wrong, so that "where there is wrong, I might bring the spirit of forgiveness."

The Tenth Step gave me my membership card back into the human race. Being human gave me the right to make mistakes, to be wrong. It also gave me the responsibility to promptly admit it and to take corrective measures, that I might not repeat the wrongs. I learned that acceptance does not mean approval-seeking, that once I accept that I have a right to be wrong, it means that others have the right to be right. I learned I am not different from others, and that addiction does not distinguish among us.

I had to learn not to be the doormat of people's self-centeredness, and yet, I had to learn to stop fighting everyone and everything. I had to learn how to communicate from the heart. I had to learn how to balance my Tenth Step ledger, to not only look for wrongs, but to also look for the good, and to do the footwork in ridding myself of those defects that block me off from the sunlight of God's Spirit.

The result of the Tenth Step is serenity—the awareness that it is pointless to get angry or upset at people, who, like me, are merely expressing the pains of having to grow up spiritually. Finally, the Tenth Step taught me an important spiritual axiom: that whenever I am upset, no matter what the cause, I must first look within to find what is wrong with me. I can no longer blame people, places or things for the way I feel. I must own my own feelings and work the steps for my own serenity. Before I insist on demanding my "rights," I ask myself, "Is it really worth it? Does it really matter?"

In the Eleventh Step, I allow myself to be loved by God through you people, and I allow God to work through me by surrendering self and letting myself become an instrument of God's will. I've learned that love must be experienced, it does not come through the intellect. I became aware that before I can improve my conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation, I had to improve my conscious contact with people, and that meant being thoughtful and mindful of the needs of others, and allowing others to be thoughtful of me. I had learn how to say thank you, and you're welcome, and please in the Eleventh Step. This step illuminated the first ten steps, and I was taught to love people and to use money instead of money using me.

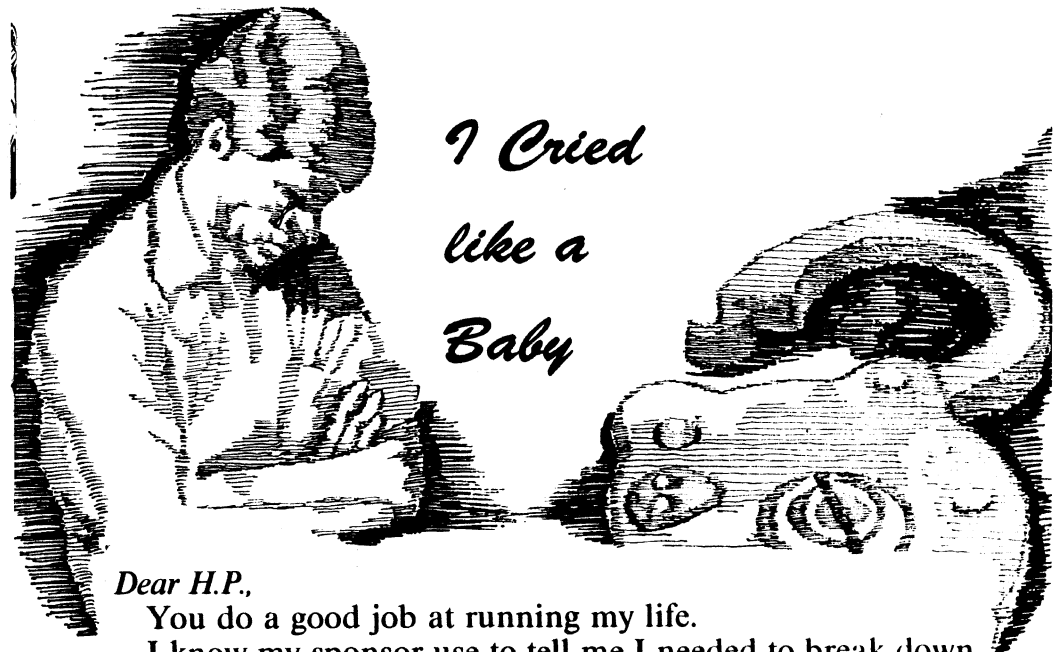
I believe today that God's will for me is that I be happy, joyous, and free, and I acquire these spiritual gifts when I use God's power of love to overcome self. I've learned to ask for His power of love, and I've learned that love conquers all. I become happy, joyous, and free when I remember to give of myself that others who still suffer might live, love and laugh again. I've learned to use the power of prayer, and as the Basic Text says, that prayer is talking to God, and that meditation is listening. I was taught in the Eleventh Step to be perfectly still and "know" that God is love.

In the spiritual awakening of the Twelfth Step I learned that we get clean by the loving grace of God, through practicing the first eleven steps, and that we stay clean in the Twelfth Step by helping the suffering addict recover from addiction, so that, God willing, they too may work these Twelve Steps and awaken from the spiritual tomb of addiction.

I remember bringing a lot of addicts who were kicking to my home in my first year of recovery. One was a visitor from Australia who was kicking in my living room on Christmas day. He was opening a present that was under the tree and was crying. He asked me, "Why are you being so nice to me. What's in it for you?" Before I could answer, my mind drifted back to Southern California when I had asked those Mexicans the same question. It was then that the N.A. message of love and service struck deep in my heart, and as tears of joy and laughter filled me, I answered, "I am being nice to you because I care, understand and love you." I was finally at peace with myself, and that there were no real problems in life, only solutions that God had not revealed to me yet, that more will be revealed in God's time. I had had my spiritual awakening, and I had come to know what love is, and I had come to understand what service is.

I told this Australian addict that in time, if he worked the steps he too would understand. I fed him, led him to the shower, washed and ironed his clothes, took him to meetings, gave him cigarettes and an airplane ticket to go home. I told him someday he would pass the N.A. message to an addict who still suffers, and that he would know of the joy of living through unconditional giving.

D.C.  
Hawaii



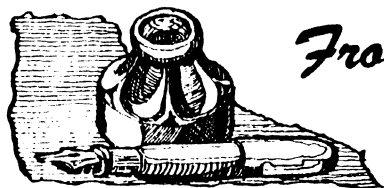
Dear H.P.,

You do a good job at running my life.

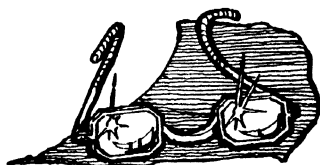
I know my sponsor use to tell me I needed to break down and cry. But he didn't know the hassle I used to get for being a "crybaby." It took work to learn not to cry—a lot of work. Anyway, when my dog died, I shed a few tears. I figured I had fulfilled my sponsor's desire. But then January came along and I lost my girlfriend. For the first time in recovery I had poured out my soul to another human being. I really thought you personally had given me this girl for life. I know I didn't listen to my sponsor or others you put in my life. And I know I took control of my life and made her my Higher Power. I'm glad you forgave me and kept me clean. When it became obvious that I had made a mistake, I was hooked. It became like a drug to me. I'm glad you saw me through, and now I know what they mean when they say "take time to laugh, take time to cry, take time to work, take time to dance."

Thank you for teaching me to cry, H.P. Today is part of my recovery, so today I pray you help my friends in recovery who don't cry, to learn to cry. And those who don't laugh, teach them to laugh. Thank you for the pain I went through the last six months. It was not easy to face myself clean, but you saw me through. Thank you for the Twelve Steps, for they are helping me recover. Most of all, thank you for N.A. and my friends who loved me when I was incapable of loving myself. Yep, you're all right in my book, H.P.

B.W.  
Alaska



## From the Editor



As you read in the August issue of the *N.A. Way*, we have begun to work toward expanding the format of the magazine. The groundwork has been laid over the course of the past couple months, and we are now in the process of developing the exact layout of the new format.

First, we will begin in the next issue to include articles that previously would have been published in the *Newsline*. That will be a first step toward eliminating the *Newsline* entirely. Some of its content will appear in the magazine, some in the bi-monthly Fellowship Report issued by the World Service Conference.

Secondly, we will develop a forum in the magazine for ongoing dialogue on issues of concern within the Fellowship. This section is intended to become an important way in which the Fellowship as a whole can make its voice heard in the decision-making process in N.A.

This open forum section brings with it some real challenges. When the volume of responses is too great to print it all, how do we choose which articles to print? When we want a guest editorial on a particular subject, how are the writers selected? And there is the nagging question that keeps coming up when this type of forum is suggested, are we opening a "can of worms" here? How will we select and edit this type of material? These are questions we are looking at very seriously as we enter into this project.

As you may know, the *N.A. Way* is edited by a review panel of six—three Trustees and three Conference appointees—who give us guidance on all editorial matters. After we have a final edited version of the magazine, an editorial board of three—A Trustee, a member of the Southern California Fellowship, and myself—sit down with the final draft and carefully look for any tradition violations or other material which may be inappropriate for print in our Fellowship's most visible international publication.

In the past this editorial process has been tried, re-examined, and modified. Right now we are in the process of gearing all of this up once again to better handle this new responsibility. For our part, we intend to be very vigilant about maintaining a quality dialogue, befitting the spiritual principles our Fellowship rests on. We hope you all plan to use both this section and our "Experience, Strength and Hope" section to continue to demonstrate the effectiveness of those principles in all of our lives. We are looking forward to this new era in the life of the *N.A. Way* magazine with great anticipation.

In the August issue we reported that the survey we conducted resulted in a great surge in the number of subscriptions to the magazine. That growth spurt has continued—we're now at about 4,500—and we expect the format changes described above to accelerate it even more. Since those changes involve a significant increase in the size of the magazine, there will also be an increase in the cost. The price will be going up to \$15.00 shortly after all of the changes are in place. Since we will be gradually moving toward the new format over the next few months, we will remain at our current price until sometime early next year. Be sure to let everyone who may want to subscribe know about those changes now, so that they can get on board at the current price.

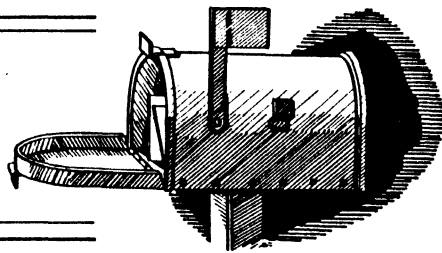
The response to our new policy to accept subscriptions on a "bill me later" basis has been tremendous. Several members on the East Coast in particular have really gotten behind this effort, actively spreading the word about the magazine at conventions. Members who signed up have been very good about following up and paying the bill. As a result of a large number of subscriptions sold at its convention, Florida had just passed California as the state with the most subscriptions. Is there a challenge there?

Thanks for all your support and encouragement. We have been receiving a great deal of material for publication lately. If you sent something in and haven't seen it yet, keep watching for it. We're backed up about three or four months. Keep it coming in like that—that's what makes this project work!

R.H.  
Editor



## From Our Readers



Dear N.A. Way,

Today I had a great day. It's not so much that something happened outside of me that was great, but rather something inside that made it so special. I have only 83 days clean today, but that in itself is the greatest miracle I have experienced.

The awareness that came to me today was that I have some sanity, I have some order in my life, and I have some positive direction. These are just a few of the things that the Program of Narcotics Anonymous has given me.

I have worked out a daily routine with a lot of help from my sponsor and many caring members. This routine has given me the order I need for daily maintenance. The sanity has been a blessing from my Higher Power. My routine includes contact at least three times a day with my Higher Power. This maintains my sanity. It also provides my positive direction. I can actually say today that I care for myself. That caring, I'm sure, will grow to become love in the todays to follow.

I couldn't possibly give back to the Fellowship in a hundred thousand years what it has given me in the last 83 days, but I will give all that I can. I'll do this by going to meetings and sharing, and by committing myself to service. That's what I am doing now. Maybe if my Higher Power wills and I am willing, I can give that little bit extra that has been given to me.

Anonymous

Dear N.A. Way,

UNITY

Coming from a large area that has many groups and many meetings, I have seen what seems to be a lack of unity and communication between members and between groups. We have our share of growing pains and controversy.

When a unity committee was recently formed in our area, there seemed to be little interest among members or groups

to attend or support this committee. Have we forgotten about our First Tradition? We really need help and input from groups in the area, not because it is recommended to send a representative from a group to the meeting—a group should want to be involved.

C.J.E.

Philadelphia

Dear N.A. Way,

LEARNING TO LOVE

Ever since I can remember, I've written my feelings and thoughts down on paper. It's been a gift from God that I *can* write, and that I love to do it.

When I got to this program fourteen months ago, I continued to share my insides on paper. Today, my pen is still my closest friend. I attend meetings regularly and have several friends whom I associate with—but I just can't seem to share what really goes on inside of me. I feel like there is this little voice in my heart that cries out from inside of me to tell the world that it *loves*—yes, I do *love*—but I just can't always show it.

Basically, I'm a happy person. I smile easily and can feel the joys and sorrows of others. Lately, I've been working on myself, trying to allow myself to get close to others. I've always thought that I was a really trusting and loving person. Not until now have I learned that I'm not. Several years ago I shared myself with a very special person. I shared my feelings and dreams with him on a daily basis. Not only were my feelings abused, but my soul also suffered damage. I remember when we broke up, I promised myself that I would never give *anyone* the chance to break my heart again. It's been a really lonely life since.

Today, I have another chance to open up with another special person in my life. I'm so afraid to take that risk. This program has taught me that I don't have to live the way I did, that I now have tools that I can use to change my old patterns. Well, for this addict, that is a freedom. I'm sick and tired of not being able to share with someone how I really feel. I need to stop living out of fear and start living through love. Love for the world, the Fellowship of N.A., my God, and myself, comes from the Twelve Steps that I practice.

I have some faith today that if I continue the path that I'm on, I will be able to express to my special one just how much he means to me, and that I won't be afraid to open my heart and love. The same heart that was broken years ago and has had a chance to mend. Until that time, I will continue to express through my writing, through the Fellowship, and through my God, all of the love that I truly feel.

C.C.  
California

Dear N.A. Way,

## ACCEPTING LIMITATIONS

My story is fairly common as stories of recovering addicts go. I spent the last eight years of my using in and out of mental institutions and psychiatrists' offices. There was also a pair of drug-related arrests.

But almost immediately after finding recovery in N.A. I quickly found out how productive and responsible I could be. Yet, like several people with this disease, I got compulsive and greedy, attempting to rectify the past overnight. I got grandiose in my effort to attain respectability in the working world.

For five and a half recovering years, I took on any task that came my way with only one thing in mind—achieving perfection. I attended college for the first four years of my recovery and felt a need to get all A's in my classes. I did a stint as a journalist upon graduation from school, and felt I had to be the best writer in the business. Then I got a job in a drug treatment facility and almost totally lost my mind, unable to cope with the intense pressure that existed there.

It has only been since the time that I worked in that treatment center that I had a startling eye-opener—I have limitations! Perhaps one of my most glaring is my inability to function under too much pressure. In fact, I seem to fall apart at the seams when I am asked to do more than one task at a time. That's just the way I am. I also have a difficult time operating under rigid deadlines. Yet, for some reason, I have chosen to immerse myself in these types of environments since day one of my recovery. I have not only exposed myself to an inordinate amount of pressure from others, but have imposed an unrealistic amount of it on myself.

In attempting to become a responsible, productive member of society, I acted on every single defect of character I

possess. In the process I was destroying myself physically, mentally and spiritually one day at a time (almost sounds familiar, doesn't it?).

However, it got to the point where I was able to reassess my capabilities, to take a sincere look at my recovery. What I discovered was that I confused "responsible and productive" with "status and prestige." I had hoped external success would fix me.

In my unceasing struggle to achieve supremacy in the working world, I remained stressed out about ninety-nine percent of the time, and was of little use to my Higher Power and other addicts who needed me.

Today I have a totally different set of priorities. Spiritual success is number one on my list. This is followed by my role in the Fellowship and my usefulness to the addict who still suffers. It is still important for me to be successful in all my endeavors, including work, but the difference today is in my attitude. I realize that success at work comes through working the steps and through ongoing surrender. When I'm focused on these things, I no longer have to take on any pressure that I can't handle. I realize God will help me progress in a Good Orderly Direction in this area of my life, just as he has in all the others.

G.R.  
Georgia

## COMIN' UP

*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.*

**ALABAMA:** Oct 17-19; Alabama/NW FL Surrender in the Mountains; Cheaha State Park; Convention Committee, 2519 Norman Terrace, Huntsville, AL 35810; (205) Neal 852-4065; Kim 281-3513

**CALIFORNIA:** Oct 24-26; So Calif 8th Annl Conv; Hyatt Regency, Long Beach, CA; CC of NA, Box 60846, Pasadena, CA 91106-6846; Valerie (213) 370-8052; Peggy (818) 505-8505

**2) Mar 27-29, 1987; 9th NCCNA; Marriott Hotel, Burlingame, CA; 9th NCCNA, Box 6323, San Mateo, CA 94403;**

**CANADA:** Oct 10-12; 2nd Bilingual Convention Montreal 86; MBCNA, Victoria Stn, PO Box 313, Westmont, Mont., Quebec H3Z 2V8; (514) Paul 484-4048; Beverly 489-1748

**2) 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**

**FLORIDA:** Nov 13-16; Serenity By The Sea; Colonnades Hotel, Singer Island, WPB, FL; Recovery 5, Box 164, Delray Bch, FL; (305) Ray 734-2601; Joe 499-2354

2) Oct 10-13; Keys Recovery Weekend III; Marriott's Casa Marina, Key West; Keys Recovery Group, Box 4664, Key West, FL 33041; Pat 296-2810; Susan 296-4420

**HAWAII:** Jan 9-11, 1987; 3rd Annl Gathering of the Fellowship; P.O. Box 23436, Honolulu, HI, 96813; Claudia (808) 235-0819; Mark 373-9774

**IRELAND:** Oct 24-26; Dublin, Ireland 2nd Conv; Dublin Sports Hotel; Austin C. 01-934-090

**KENTUCKY:** Oct 25; Kentucky Area H&I Awareness Day; Kentucky Area; Box 23544, Lexington, KY 40503; David 252-5151; Scot 272-7054

**LOUISIANA:** Nov 7-9; Second Chance Group 4th Campout; Burns Point State Park, So of Centerville LA; (318) Howard 386-5161; Fred 828-5888

**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

**NEW JERSEY:** Oct 4; 1st Annl East Coast Basketball Tourn; Essex County College Gym; NENJASC, Box 2132, Elizabeth, NJ 07207; Vincent (201) 673-8034

2) Every 4th Sat of the Month; Dance; UAW Hall, 1320 Parkway Ave, Trenton, NJ; 9:30 p.m. till 1:30 p.m.

**NORTH DAKOTA:** Oct 18; 5th Annl Fargo/Moorhead Banquet; (701) Carrie O. 280- 9072; Chris C. 237-6955

2) Nov 15-16: Meet your NAbor days; 1st & 3rd St W Dickinson; Mike: 701-225-4392

**OKLAHOMA:** Nov 21-23; 2nd Annl Fall Retreat; Camp Takatoka on Fort Gibson Lake, Choteau, OK; EASC, c/o CSO, 4611 S. Peoria, Tulsa, OK 74105; Leo 747-4556; Mike 747-6442

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Oct 31-Nov 2; TSRCA-IV; TSRSCNA-IV, P.O. Box 110217, Pittsburgh, PA 15232; (412) Ken J. 731-9219; Jeff W. 363-8444;

**SOUTH CAROLINA:** Nov 7-9; Serenity Festival IV; Myrtle Beach, SC; David Pressley, PO Box 91, Columbia, SC 29202; Stan (803) 781-2841

**TENNESSEE:** Nov 26-30; 4th Regional Conv.; Radisson Plaza Hotel, Fourth & Union, Nashville, TN; PO Box 121961, Nashville, TN 37212; Charlie (615) 868-3150

**TEXAS:** Mar 27-29, 1987; LSRCA II; LSRCA II Pro Subcom, PO Box 300794, Houston, TX 77230-0794; (713) Gino 697-4045; Mack 870-9048

**WASHINGTON:** Oct 24-26; 9th Annl Conv.; Everett Pacific Hotel; PNWCNA #9, Box 5393, Everett, WA 98201; (206) Mike S. 672-6848; Russ F. 259-4904

**WISCONSIN:** Oct 24-26; 3rd Wisconsin Conv; WSNAC III, P.O. Box 3305, Madison, WI 53704; (608) 258-1747 (phoneline)



*THE INTERNATIONAL  
JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP  
OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS*

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ASSIGNEE: (TO BE COMPLETED LATER BY WSO)

## THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.  
*For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving*
2. God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.  
*An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.*
6. Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
7. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
8. N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
9. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.  
*Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.*
10. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
11. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.
- 12.

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