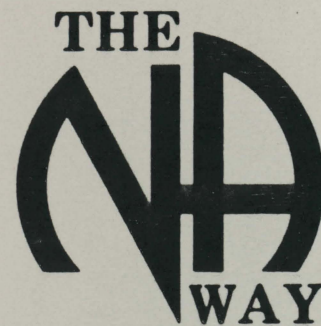


**My Gratitude Speaks
When I Care
And When I Share
With Others
The N.A. Way.**



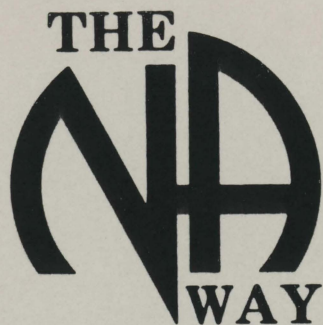
*December
1986*

VOLUME 4

NUMBER 12



**HAPPY
JOYOUS
AND
FREE**



THE INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP
OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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The *N.A. Way* presents the experiences and opinions of individual members of Narcotics Anonymous. The opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Narcotics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by Narcotics Anonymous, the *N. A. Way* magazine, or the World Service Office, Inc.

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What is Narcotics Anonymous?

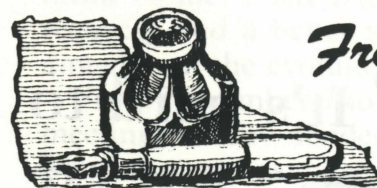
N.A. is a worldwide Fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other to stay clean. It doesn't matter which drugs you used, or what you have done in the past. We are concerned only with how we can help addicts 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

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.*
11. *We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.*
12. *Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

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*From The
Editor*

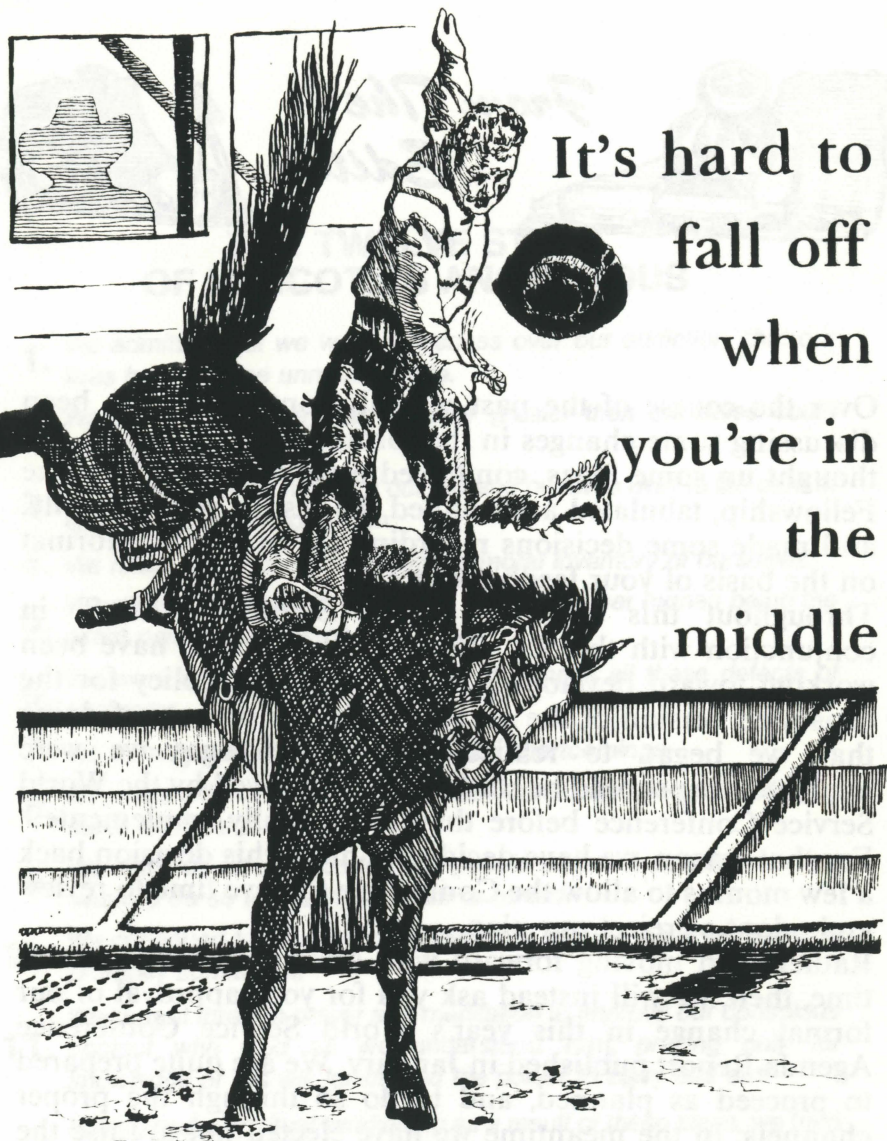


Over the course of the past several months we have been discussing some changes in the format of the *N.A. Way*. We thought up some ideas, conducted a survey throughout the Fellowship, tabulated and studied the results very carefully, and made some decisions regarding the magazine's format on the basis of your feedback to us.

Throughout this time, the WSO board and staff, in conjunction with the *N.A. Way* Editorial Board, have been working toward developing a clear editorial policy for the expanded version of the magazine. In the process of doing that, we began to realize that the changes we were implementing should be studied and approved by the World Service Conference before they are actually implemented. For that reason, we have decided to move this decision back a few months to allow the Conference to have time to review and adopt or reject our plan.

Rather than moving forward with a format change at this time, then, we will instead ask you for your approval of our format change in this year's World Service Conference Agenda Report published in January. We are quite prepared to proceed as planned, and to do so through the proper channels. In the meantime we have elected not to raise the subscription price until further notice, and the magazine will continue to contain articles about personal recovery, notices of coming events and letters from our readers.

R.H.
Editor



It's hard to
fall off
when
you're in
the
middle

After six months clean I went back out for nine and one half wonderfully miserable months of using. The first time around I tried to please everyone and do everything perfectly. I became an N.A. evangelist, and proceeded to try saving all my old using partners from addiction. I go so involved trying to save others I forgot to save myself.

November 7, 1980 was a turning point in my life. I stumbled back to the program. Coming back was not easy. "Looking good" did not exist, and I was afraid of what you'd

think of me. I felt I didn't deserve to live, let alone, find recovery and a better way of life. I felt one step below the amoeba on the evolutionary scale.

From November 7 to November 27, I went to two or three meetings a day loaded. Every day I smoked dope and went to meetings. November 27th found me at the old V.A. N.A. meeting, loaded of course. About halfway through the meeting I started "jonesing." I could just feel that certain drug giving me the instant relief I sought. At that point I reached out for help instead, and I have not had a compulsion to use since that evening. God gave me a gift and removed the desire to use drugs. My own willingness allowed me to fully surrender and accept his gift.

Since that day five and one half years ago, I have had many wonderful experiences in the program. I heard people say, "It's hard to fall off when you're in the middle." The middle of what's happening in N.A. is found in service work.

Service work has given me many gifts. When I got here my self-worth was far in the negative. Service to N.A. and the suffering addict has taught me to know real self-esteem, how to work with others, how to socialize without drugs, how to live life on life's terms.

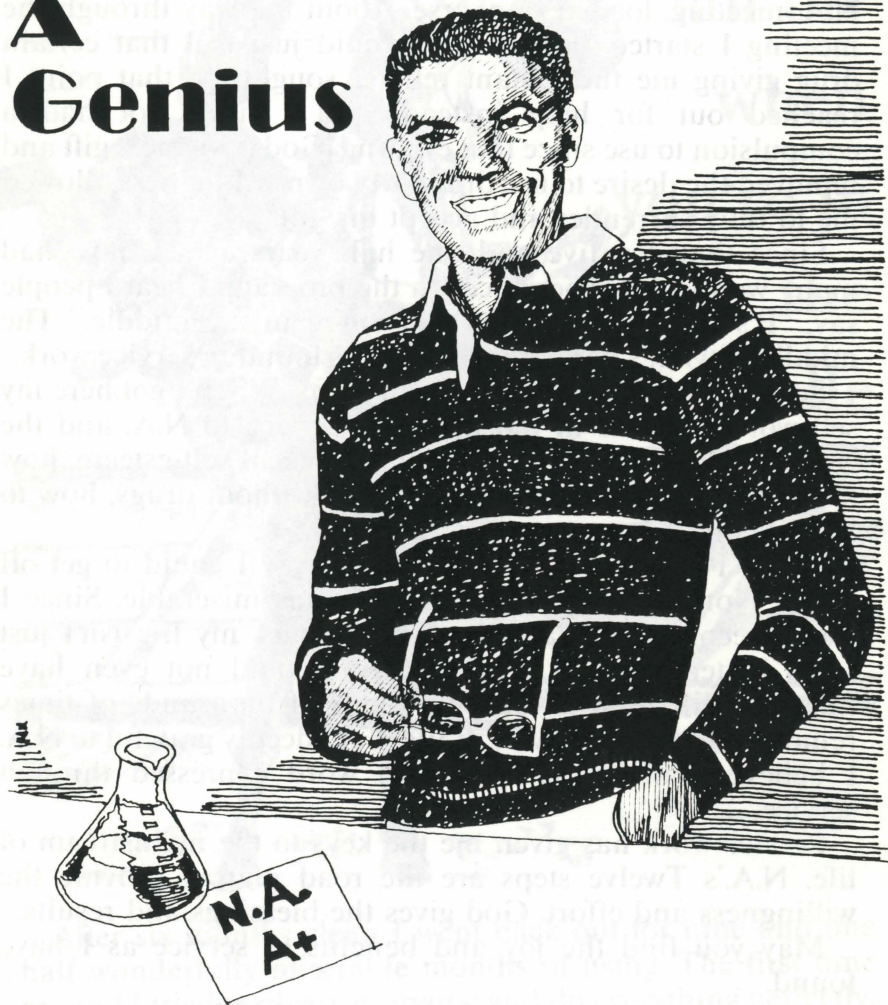
When I got here I had tried every way I could to get off drugs. Nothing worked and my life was miserable. Since I found recovery in Narcotics Anonymous, my life isn't just 100% better, it is so much better I could not even have imagined life as it is today; it's tens of thousands of times removed from my old way of life. I am deeply grateful to N.A. I believe gratitude is an action word expressed through service.

Service work has given me the keys to the mainstream of life. N.A.'s Twelve steps are the road map. I provide the willingness and effort. God gives the blessings and results.

May you find the joy and benefits of service as I have found.

M.M.
Washington

I Was A Genius



I wanted to write this letter to express a few things to my Higher Power, and I later decided maybe this might help a few other people in the program.

I was born with a rare bone disease that caused my bones to be very brittle; as a result, very early in life I

withdrew from the world of sports and physical things. Books and thinking became my big escape. I become a "scholar" and was considered "gifted." I isolated myself from others and was "different" because I was smart.

As I entered my active addiction at the tender age of twelve, I remembered hearing bad things about drugs, but figured, "I'm too smart to get in trouble." As the years melted away, and my disease progressed, I only saw that I was getting straight A's in school, and not getting caught. My friends were all getting into trouble. This became my primary excuse: "I can handle it, I'm too smart." While I continued in a field of scientific endeavor, I failed to see how my emotional and spiritual self was dying. Even at my lowest ebb, when I was physically dying and my life was a shambles, I was too smart, I can handle it.

The disease brought me to my knees, and in my agony I reached out and found N.A. The program offered me the chance to build a ladder out of my death trip. I had so much trouble accepting help because, "these people are so simple, they don't understand life like I do." The most important slogan I ever learned in the program is, "Nobody is too dumb to recover, but some people are too smart." That was me. I had to surrender and realize that my so called brilliance was the biggest road-block to recovery that I had. When I admitted that I did not know everything and was not always right, and that my head was my enemy, then I became teachable. Today I have a M.S. in Biology, and am pursuing a career in science. Today I appreciate my mental gift. But my gift in recovery is greater: it is learning that I can relate to people as equals and that I never have to wield my mind as a weapon again.

I've learned that I don't grow and change and learn new things with my mind, but with my spirit, and with my Higher Power, who I never had until I prayed for my brain to shut up with its endless and merciless criticism of everything and everybody.

My message is "put your I.Q. in your back pocket, my friend, because even a genius can recover."

R.L.
Ohio

Step Six



"We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character"

Being entirely ready was, and is, a pretty tall order. For me, being willing and able is about the best that I can do. When I was done with my Fifth Step, a large cloud of denial was blown away, and the useless, destructive patterns were clear. I wasn't sure I saw it all, but I accepted the fact there was plenty of work to do, and prayed for willingness to be willing to have a loving Power greater than myself help to relieve me of these negative traits. Terminal uniqueness was the most subtle of all, and the quiet voice of addiction spoke to me in

the form of repeating behaviors and convincing me that I could not change, as badly as I wanted to. Spiritual, mental and emotional relapses are flashing yellow lights that I sometimes pay attention to. More often I cruise right along Denial Highway thinking and feeling all is well. Pride, fear, resentment and image are the quiet whispers of the Super-Salesman of Death and Despair.

A closer look at Step Six reveals the word *defect*, which means that something is defective or broken. The spirit cannot be broken as long as we/I don't use. There is always hope. We can go on to the next issue, the next problem, the next situation, and most of all the next step. We prepare to say "bye-bye" to those parts of us that cause us and others pain, remembering that this is a process, not an event.

With time enough to give God a chance, the "getting entirely ready" part was like dressing properly for a rainy day. We don't stand out in the rain and get dressed. We prepare ourselves in the safe and secure house of knowledge that we have done the best we can with the previous five steps and are eager to go on. To find more freedom, more love, more faith, and improve that conscious contact. Willingness becomes a part of our lives. Staying on the phone, writing that article for the newsletter or the *N.A. Way*, doing the institutional meeting, hugging a shaking newcomer and him or her to please come back, talking with our sponsors and old-timers and offering them an opportunity to care and share, these actions help us to let go of our chains and feel the relief. The excitement of freedom tingles its way throughout our lives and touches everything and enhances the colors and flavors of our existence.

I see and experience defects every day and night, and the message is clear. "Have patience, I'm not done with you yet!" My Higher Power shows me how much He loves me by giving me a room in which to share, a program to live by, a sponsor to work alongside, and friends to hug. Now the preparation is almost done. I read, share and pray about humbly asking for awareness and removal of defects, rest comfortably in the arms of a loving God, and go on to the next step.

R.R.
Florida



I'm M---- and I'm an addict, and I did not have to use today.

I need to express my gratitude to my Higher Power, to my family and friends and to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous for allowing me to celebrate one year in recovery.

As a result of not using drugs in any form, just for today, and through participating in a program of recovery through Narcotics Anonymous, I am able to live with self esteem and hope today. I can be considerate of others. I am able to stop and think, to ask, "What does my Higher Power want in this situation?" I get the guidance and direction I need in a day's time.

In my active addiction, I was unable to make the right choices for myself. I was too self-obsessed, too selfish to care about others, and I was the cause of many heartaches. I was unable to develop and maintain a positive attitude, unable to share with others. Today I am able, with the help of N.A., to realize choices, to take direction, and so to experience real freedom.

By exercising my freedom and my choice not to use, just for today, I truly am able to experience and share the gift of today. I don't have to lie and steal for drugs today. I don't have to suffer with that self-obsession and insane, unchecked compulsion to use that had caused so much pain for my family and friends and myself for so many years. I don't have to be that person I used to be, ashamed, afraid, angry, hurt and hurtful, full of terror, rage and helpless frustration.

I do have a new way of life today, a life without drugs, a life of recovery and hope. I have friends, family and fellowship. I have a program of recovery through N.A., a program which not only strengthens my ability and resolve to stay clean, but which allows me a quality of personal and spiritual growth for which I am grateful.

My life for many years was about drugs—using to live and living to use at all costs. And there were costs: health, sanity, self-respect, family, friends, education, career, and freedom, among others. Some things have gotten so much better. The road to social acceptability has been opened to me, family healing has begun, spiritual viability and hope for a life free from addiction is now a reality.

My goals in recovery today include involvement in service to N.A. to help insure that recovery remains alive for myself and all those addicts in need. I plan in faith my continued surrender to the Twelve Steps of recovery. They have already brought me dynamic evidence of recovery in myself and others.

For me, none of what makes my life worthwhile today is possible if I pick up. I am not willing to risk losing the gift of today and the promise of tomorrow by using. The disease of addiction promised relief and refuge, but continued drug use delivered insanity, fear and pain. Freedom, creativity and goodwill were out of my life while I continued to use. They are becoming realities for me and others around me recovering in N.A. today.

I need to emphasize that I've gotten through some tough times this year without using. I didn't use today and I am grateful for that. Thank you Narcotics Anonymous for helping save my life. Thank you who are reading this for being part of my hope.

M.D.
New Jersey

It Works



I am writing this letter to share the absolute joy that I have found in the book, *It Works: How and Why*.

First, a bit of history. I have relapsed twice in nearly ten years. Once after six-and-a-half years, and again after two years. The first time I went out for four days and bounced right back. But this last time out I desperately wanted to be back but I couldn't get back until I ended up in jail. So, thoroughly beaten and demoralized, it was either clean up or die.

My God sent me to a drug recovery house in North Hollywood that gave me a safe haven to begin what I know today is the foundation for true recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

But back to that book. I've learned more about my addiction within its pages than I ever knew before. As it says on the very first page in Step One, "It was an awful surrender and it didn't come all at once," yet when I surrendered to the powerlessness and unmanageability that was and is my life—I felt a freedom that I'd never experienced before.

The way I first began to experience this freedom was to stop blaming people, places and things for the way I was living and thinking. I also found out that my addiction was much more than a drug or group of drugs.

Though I feel ashamed to admit it, I feel today that my prior clean time was just simple abstinence, and today my goal is "recovery" and learning day by day to live the steps of Narcotics Anonymous.

There is so much I want to say to my brothers and sisters in Narcotics Anonymous, but there are not enough words to express my gratitude. I no longer wish to die. I cherish my precious "now moments" and see them clearly for what they are—Gifts! You gave these to me freely and I am grateful.

Thank you N.A. for this divinely inspired piece of literature. Thank you for opening my heart and mind to the truth about me and my addiction.

J.C.
California

Editor's Note: The Book J.C. is referring to is the approval form of the steps portion of our new book on the steps and traditions. It is available currently at most meetings and through the WSO. Because it is in the "approval" stage—not yet "Conference Approved"—it is not yet available for sale outside the Fellowship.



Gossip

I love to gossip. It is not just because I am an addict, it is human nature to want to probe, dissect and pigeon-hole everyone we meet. As a child when I came upon a turtle moving along the road, I had to turn him over and examine his soft, vulnerable undersides. When I had picked and prodded to my satisfaction, I would turn him right-side-up and let him wander on his way. I never gave a second thought to how the turtle might have felt about all I had subjected him to.

Through sharing in meetings and in social times I begin to know the intimate details of many addicts' lives. The longer I know people, the quicker and more accurately I am able to zero in on their character defects. Many times, either in an attempt to get a laugh or to be genuinely spiteful, I will make a remark I later experience discomfort over. If I had just taken a moment to think before I blurted out my opinion, I might have refrained from making myself feel inflated at someone else's expense.

There is a beautiful tradition in India which is known as the "three gates." The concept is very simple, and the end result, if practiced by addicts in their recovery program, would make a daily Tenth Step much shorter. The Tradition would have you think of your mind as a series of three gates, and speak only after your words have cleared each of these three barriers. At the first gate we test our words by saying: "Are these words true?" At the second gate we ask: "Are these words necessary?" Do the words I am about to speak serve a purpose, or am I just talking to fill a void in either myself or the conversation around me? Then we ask ourselves: "Are these words kind?" At this point, if we determine we will speak, we need to carefully choose our words to be loving and supportive, not malicious or destructive. In the words of the poet, "Don't go for the heart, for humans, like turtles, have their soft undersides, too."

N.G.
Arizona



Painful Smile

When I was a little over a year clean, I began to take a serious look at my appearance and health. You see I never smiled anymore because my teeth looked so bad and my gums hurt a lot. I hadn't been to my dentist for about five or six years, so I made a decision to make an appointment.

Upon the completion of extensive cleaning and x-rays, he said I needed quite a bit of work done. This didn't surprise me one bit.

It was at this point that sharing with him that I was a member of Narcotics Anonymous seemed to be the thing to do. Telling him I was a member of N.A. and that I wanted to have as much work done as my insurance would cover during this annual period was all I shared at the time.

He then told me there would be some substantial pain and that he would not use a narcotic for pain relief. He said we would use another drug which I knew was mood altering. I was shocked that he didn't understand that N.A. was all about, for I had used the drug he suggested in my active using days and liked it. So at the risk of sounding like I was the dentist, I suggested in a nice way that we try a common non-mood altering drug, and he agreed.

The following week I had the surgery done in his office. Upon leaving with a prescription for a non-mood-altering pain reliever, I thanked him as best I could with a mouth full of cotton and gave him a little white book.

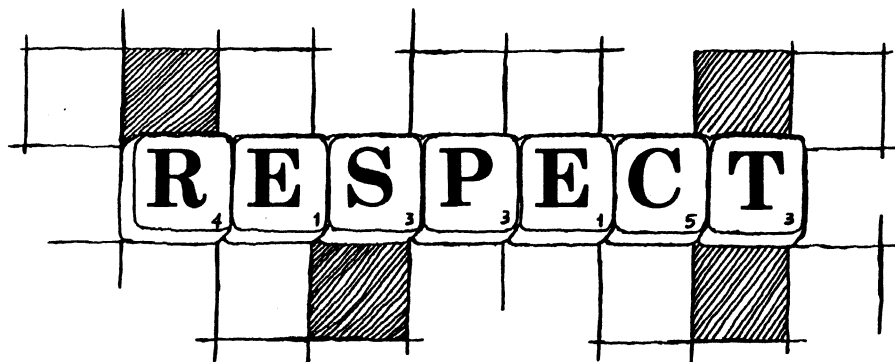
From there I hit a noon meeting and shared what had happened and the pain I was in. I then proceeded home, via the prescription store. Three of those non-mood-altering pain relievers in a 24 hour period made the pain bearable. You see, I found out I could stand some pain.

I don't know if leaving literature as such can help clear some of the controversy over the N.A. name, but I will find out if it has had any impact on my dentist in the first few months of 1987, when I go back for more work to be done.

Smiling in recovery,

H.J.
Georgia

Overcoming Our Differences



Seven letter word. Worth twenty points. Respecting others' beliefs. Who or what do I respect today? I have more self-respect today than I did when I was using. I had none! I respect myself enough today not to take that first fix, pill, drink, sniff, snort, or toke.

Today I can safely say that I respect other Fellowships and their traditions (I also respect N.A. and its traditions). I respect N.A. enough to try to use only N.A. terminology in an N.A. meeting. Using the common language helps me feel a "part of." For example, when I started using, it took me a while to find out that "Mary Jane" wasn't some foxy lady. "Front" didn't mean the opposite of back. "Acid" didn't refer to hydrochloric or sulfuric. What it meant was bye-bye cruel world. And the list goes on.

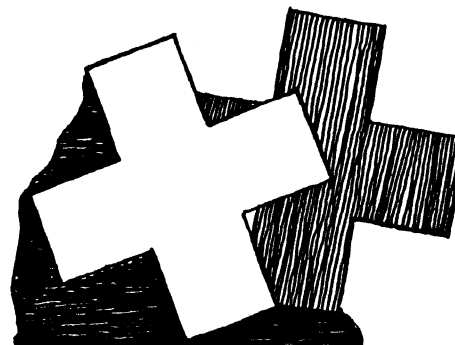
I can say that I respect others' spiritual beliefs. I've experienced how my spiritual beliefs have changed from earlier in my recovery. I'm even a bit more open-minded today: I respect others' opinions and ideas, with one exception—when they differ from mine. But I can practice respect, and when others disagree with me, it's a fine opportunity to practice.

How much do I respect my co-worker? Well, I don't have a job, so I don't have a co-worker. But, wait a minute. God is my co-worker. You're my co-worker. So, the question is, "How much do I respect God and you?"

I hope that we all can respect each other, whether we have one day clean or thirty years clean, whether we're leaders or followers, for all leaders are but followers.

I respect the power of love, of sharing, of caring. I respect N.A., for N.A. is teaching me how to love and how to be loved. But most important of all, N.A. is teaching me how to stay clean and recover.

C.B.
South Carolina



Twenty Four Principles

I'm writing because I would like to share some of my recent experiences. When I first came into the program of N.A. I felt the love and care that is expressed in the rooms. The unity of the people in the meetings expressed our primary purpose (to stay clean and help other addicts to recover).

When I first started coming I was "cross-addicted." I received gestures by some of the fellow addicts indicating that there was a question whether I was addicted to crosses or crucifixes. For a while I continued to describe myself as being "cross-addicted." Some of the members continued to express their ideas of what I should be.

Later, I changed to saying I was an addict in the name of unity. I was a problem drinker and abusively used cocaine and marijuana. I talked about alcohol and the other drugs and was approached by some members that I should take a look at my message, that I was using the word "alcohol" while sharing. I thought that alcohol was a drug. I was approached later by some members of the Fellowship and was told that if I didn't like N.A. recovery that I should not come to the meetings. I started feeling uncomfortable at my home meetings and started building resentments against certain members of the Fellowship who expressed their will, and also some of the meetings I so loved.

I used all the tools at my disposal. I used my sponsor, I read literature, I shared about it at meetings (anonymously), I talked to others, I did Fourth and Tenth Step work on it, I did a Fifth Step on it, I delved into the Twelve Traditions, and last but not least, I prayed to my Higher Power to help me through the unbearable feelings.

I felt unloved in the meetings and I felt like I shouldn't be there. My negative emotions started to emerge. Resentments, jealousy, fear of the unknown, possessiveness, hate, and I kept feeding into it in a rage.

Finally, in God's time (not mine), I came to believe that the only requirement for N.A. membership was the desire to stop using; that each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers; that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities; that our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends on N.A. unity; that for our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as he may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern. I'm grateful for these Traditions and the rest for helping me to base my recovery and understanding of the Twelve Steps. Without the twenty-four spiritual principles of recovery I would be lost. I thank my Higher Power for granting me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change (love and unity), courage to change the things I can (myself), and the wisdom (God's will) to know the difference. I love the Program of N.A. and believe that I would not be alive without it. Thank you N.A. for helping me to grow in recovery.

G. M.
New Jersey



Let the Bandwagons Die

The N.A. Fellowship is bulging with issues. We all know it, we all have opinions, we all have experience to share. Most of all, we are all interested and concerned. However, another thing we all have is a **PROBLEM** (or two)!

Even when we can come up with a solution to an issue, the implementation methods which we choose can create a new problem. An example is the "language" issue. This has been cursed, discussed, written about, prayed about, and fought over. The principles involved in the issue and the opinions expressed by Board of Trustees, World Service Conference, members, groups, areas and regions are all sensible, and I personally have no problem with them. It is the "bandwagon" approach which disturbs me.

We all seem to take it upon ourselves to convince people. Deep in our hearts, we must know that setting an example and allowing our recovery to attract others is a spiritual approach to implementing a change. I know that my own intolerance, or my desire to change others, or my love for N.A., can sometimes provide the basis for acting in order to do some convincing. But I also know that I am tired of the conversation, tired of wasted meeting time, and tired of hearing small groups of members hammer at someone about language, etc.

I have grown to realize that all of us must experience recovery before we can ever be concerned about philosophical issues. There is no way to force or condense this experience. So, if some don't care, or if some don't see the

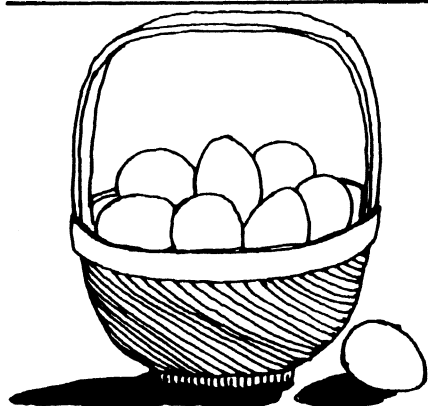
importance of certain issues, maybe it is my job to simply be available and set an example while allowing time to pass.

Maybe even while time is passing, newcomers will not go away with the impression that N.A. is more concerned with philosophical changes than with recovery.

The issues are important, and we need to take advantage of guidance. However, I suggest that any method other than serving as examples is destructive and feeds our personality defects.

Setting an example means many things to me, and is reflected in my sharing, my service work and my role as a sponsor. It does not mean philosophizing in meetings, arguing, cornering newcomers, or forming "enforcement committees." God's will for N.A. will come—in God's time!

S.S.
California



A Possible Solution

I am so very grateful to the N.A. Fellowship and our Twelve Steps, my Higher Power whom I choose to call God, my friends, and the whole worldwide Fellowship.

The controversy we in the Fellowship are having over the language we use in meetings, Clean vs. Sober, etc. I want to share an experience that may offer a solution to this problem.

The day before my nine month clean date, I was going to both Fellowships for my recovery. We were young yet and I couldn't put all my eggs in one basket, so to speak. I was planning my nine month celebration, and got word the night before to call back home, Indiana.

I called, and got the most devastating news I could ever receive in my clean time. My brother had been killed in a motorcycle accident. I was devastated, hurt, and damn upset with God!!! I called my sponsor, he told me to come over. He called some friends, and they sat with me all night. They held me let me cry and loved me in order to start to feel the pain that was happening at that moment.

I took those friends with me when I went home. My sponsor called me clear in Indiana (he was in Texas). They loved me through the most painful time of my life. Because of that love, I didn't use. I knew that one of anything was not going to help the situation, and God gave me the power to stay clean.

Since that time, N.A. in Texas is stronger and my recovery comes from the Basic Text of N.A. and N.A. meetings. I get what I need from N.A. today.

What I am hearing and trying to sort out is that members of the other Fellowship are not to come to our meetings, or if they do, "please don't talk sobriety." Well my point is that the coldness in some people in this Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous does, and will continue to, run addicts off that very well could stay to get recovery in N.A. Why can't we love them, share our experience, strength and hope with how we stay clean off everything; because it doesn't matter what we used, we are addicts. We work the steps by the example set by the people who came before us. We are in recovery today, free from the monster that was on our backs for many years.

Let's all show some love to those addicts who are not sure N.A. is for them; after all, we are members when we say we are. Let's show by example and talk the language of Narcotics Anonymous, we are recovering addicts and we are clean today. Let's not run people off because they don't come to our meetings all the time. With the love and support that God gives us, and the other friends in the N.A. Fellowship, they will be back because of the attraction. They will speak the words of N.A. in time.

Let's give them a chance to recover, you did me.

Today I love N.A. Three years ago I wasn't sure.

Anonymous
Texas



Friends

Hi, my name is Tom and I'm an addict. I'm nineteen years old and come from a family of twelve with a step-dad of eleven children. Right off the bat I had a strike against me. We moved two times, and in those two times I never met any friends.

At the age of eleven I met a true friend, Alcohol. He was a loyal, honest and true friend that never gave lectures or advice to me. I felt safe and hung on to him until my next friend came along. His name was Refer, he gave me security, courage and faith to do things I thought were right in life.

At this time I had two friends that I could turn to at any given time and I always knew that they weren't going to let me down. I told my friends I would never meet Coke or Speed because I didn't think they were true friends. Until the time that Refer was letting me down too often. So I said high to Coke and Speed and they were the ones I hung around with for years.

Then I met Narcotics Anonymous. I walked in and sat down. Everyone looked like they had friends, but not my friends. They were smiling, laughing and joking. I said to one of them, "Who is your friend?" and he replied, "You are, aren't you."

Today I'm coming up on one year. Knowing that I have friends today, loving and caring ones to turn to and ask for direction and help—that's a miracle from God.

T.S.
Pennsylvania



Dreaming on Holiday

A man awakens from his sleep. He had been dreaming of very young children, of his new love, and of carrying the N.A. message to places in need. This period following his awakening was both relaxing and intense, his body is in a meditative state, while his mind runs the London Marathon. He likes to run.

He lies on the floor thinking of his loved one, running with feelings of peace; perhaps thinking of their lives together, their careers or their future children.

This fellow is a member of Narcotics Anonymous. His life is blessed in many ways. He has been given the gift of recovery, even though he had no desire for it. Relapse is his greatest fear. Contradictory? He says not.

He runs on thinking of carrying his message, and only because it was given to him by a Supreme Being whom he may or may not understand. This gift he has was made possible through the many small and large personal tragedies in his life, experienced only so that he could help others recover from the same thing he suffered from.

He loves life today and all the daily adventure it offers. He looks forward to being a father some day, seeing his newfound love again and carrying a spiritual message. This man is not a poet or much of a writer, but was motivated to put pen to paper in an effort to remember and not forget. He feels much better now and will return to bed. Thank you.

Anonymous
Wisconsin



Today

I would like to share a little bit about what recovery is doing for me today.

I'm thirty-three years old, with a lovely wife and two young boys of seven and eight. They mean the world to me. But I would not have them if it weren't for recovery and the N.A. Fellowship.

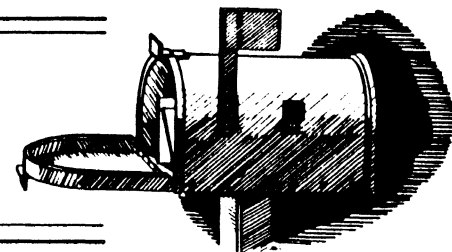
Drugs had become my major problem; they were a symptom of my disease, just like all my other defects of character. It wasn't until I came to the Fellowship of N.A. that I realized I had a problem in living life the way life is, instead of my way. All the years I have wasted doing things my way is what got me to this program. Today I realize my problem is me. I am really grateful to my Higher Power for carrying me when I needed him the most, through the hard times and good times.

I'm grateful to be alive and clean and able to enjoy my God-given family and God's will here on earth. There are good times and bad times in my life today, but with my God on my side and on the side of other addicts, we will survive, "Just for today." In order to receive all life's pleasures I have to do the work and allow my Higher Power to guide me in my recovery.

That is why I'm alive and clean today. Through my Higher Power, the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and the Fellowship of N.A. Today I can enjoy life's pleasures and become a responsible parent. Today I go to meetings, functions and conventions and stick with the winners. And today I do the next right thing—try to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. That's God's will for me. When I can't, we can.

K.V.
Indiana

From Our Readers



Dear N.A. Way,

I would like to express my concern as to the direction this magazine has taken. Provided you did rely on the Fellowship's opinion by sending out and compiling the "N.A. Way Survey," which I cannot deny. However, I feel the survey was not directed towards our primary purpose as to how we can better reach the still suffering addict.

The magazine has turned into something grandiose, always looking for bigger and better ideas. I know for me that grandiosity is part of my disease. I'll easily feed into that line of thinking without even being aware of it. Whatever happened to the basics of recovery? I think if you wanted to present the Fellowship with changes that the option could have been to making a more simpler magazine concerning recovery.

One suggestion in saving WSO money would be to stop having pictures drawn and printed by your artist. I feel recovery speaks for itself in the words of recovering addicts; I don't need frivolous pictures to help me understand. I also don't need "special editions" or "features," for there is not one aspect of the program which is more (or less) important. I need an equal application of all spiritual principles to keep me clean and the Fellowship in unity.

In my personal recovery, when I begin to get grandiose or complicated, I go back to the beginning with Step One. It works that way so that I keep it simple. Possibly that is what you need to do—go back to the beginning. I was fortunate enough to reach the early *N.A. Way* magazines, as printed in Lisbon, Ohio in 1983. I was amazed at how simple, yet powerful that magazine was. It dealt with recovery from the disease of addiction without any special attentions or aversions to what was in print.

If the Fellowship was aware of how the *N.A. Way* used to be and given a choice of the magazine then compared to now, possibly the survey results would have been different. I just pray that the focus is not on how the *N.A. Way* can become bigger and better, but rather adherence to our Fifth Tradition.

Anonymous

Dear *N.A. Way*,

I just wanted to express my gratitude to our journal for all the job I've had since subscribing last year. Every single issue is a pleasure for me to read.

I drive an hour to work, and work a second shift job, so I can't get to nearly as many evening meetings as I would like. But, every time I get a new issue of the *N.A. Way*, I take it with me to work. After reading it, I reflect on the topics and stories. I feel like I have at a meeting.

Looking forward to the upcoming changes, I've subscribed for another year. Please keep up the good work!

R.L.
Ohio

Dear *N.A. Way*,

I've been reading a lot of letters from our readers over the past few months suggesting that the *N.A.* name is inappropriate and should be changed.

In the interests of presenting the other side of the coin, and of general inertia or consistency, I would like to point out a few things about the word "narcotics," as I feel that most of the fuss stems from a narrowly legalistic and temporarily restricted view of this word.

According to Webster's Dictionary, the word comes from the Greek *narkosis* (noun), and *narkoun* (verb), meaning "to numb," or "a numbing effect." These two Greek words have their root in *narke*, "a stupor." Hence, whether a drug happens to be legally classified as a narcotic or not, in the 1980's is only partly relevant. Since we can agree that most mood-altering chemicals are used to numb unwelcome emotions, and even out or change the mood we are in.

Although it is true that some mood-alterers are used as "uppers," the intent being the opposite of mellowing us out, it is still true that the intent is also to numb the depressed emotions which preceded.

So why not stick to *N.A.*? (Although I did sort of like the suggestion of one reader).

M.M.
Ontario, Canada

Dear *N.A. Way*,

In January I went to South America, and with the help of my Higher Power, met a loner. We spent a large portion of our time together talking about *N.A.* and service. It was exciting planting the seed of *N.A.* We left the loner with a Basic Text, a couple of *N.A.* T-shirts, and a few pamphlets and a whole lot of encouragement.

Through this experience, a couple of *N.A.* meetings got started in South America. The other great thing that happened as a result of this is that I'm involved with the Loner Group. I like to refer to it as a meeting in my mailbox. I get so excited when I write to people, and probably just as excited to hear about their program.

I'm very grateful that I'm not isolated from meetings, although often I find myself isolating within. I guess writing to loners is one tool that helps me practice the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions; that's what *N.A.* is all about.

One of the questions that I often ask is, "Do you receive the *N.A. Way*?" and usually the reply is "Yes." I know for me, just like the letters from loners, I wait for the *N.A. Way*—recovery through the mail.

I think the really special thing about writing loners and hearing from them is that it's one area in which my Higher Power has the perfect timing. Often I get really impatient to hear how *N.A.* is doing in your town, city or house. I know that this Fellowship is growing, and I'm getting to be part of it. I find that being involved with the Loner Group I can help the growth a little. I have a little bit of spare time in my day, so I try to write return letters within the week. I guess as addicts, we like to have our cake and eat it too. This fits the

category! It's a meeting at your convenience, an objective opinion, and sharing the experience, strength and hope, the N.A. way.

If you want to find out about another way to give it away, please write to the Loner Group c/o World Service Office, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409. This is another way to get out of myself and not to participate in the core of my disease—self-centeredness.

I'm sincerely grateful for the many shared experiences of pain, happiness, growth and most of all, freedom.

T.S.
Michigan

Dear N.A. Way,

Over the past year from start to Live III, to Cleveland, Philly, the East Coast and soon start to Live IV, I've started to live now free and happy in my recovery.

What happened is convention fever. That high energy drive of excitement and enthusiasm attracted this addict to let go and accept this family/Fellowship of N.A. completely into his life.

What happened is another commitment and another surrender to the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous, the solution. The whole solution to my disease with myself caused by my addiction.

My experience of those first six plus, now seven plus years of recovery equaled resistance, resentment and a fight against, and for, recovery through the Twelve Steps of this Fellowship.

While letting go, I accept something new. Letting go of our parent Fellowship, I accept with open arms a hug around the world of N.A. Letting go of my natural family, I accept and make a place for myself in this family/Fellowship. Letting go of the fear, loneliness and isolation, I accept my spot in the circle we close our meetings with.

"Just for today...my whole life and thinking is centered in Narcotics Anonymous, in one form or another, the getting and using and finding ways and means to get more."

So it is another day, another convention, another year, another surrender.

T.H.
Pennsylvania

Dear N.A. Way,

One of my friends has been saying at meetings, "There are no more big deals." Last Friday I finally grasped what she has been saying.

It's all in my acceptance of a crisis. If I try to work on a problem all by myself, I'm going to screw it up. But if I do what is humanly possible, and let God do whatever He wants, I know everything will work out for the best. I know what I want, but I don't always know what is the best for me. As long as I believe God will put no more on me than He and I can handle together, I know everything will work out for the best, even though sometimes He gives me everything that we can handle.

As far as big events go in my life-like, relationships, jobs, moving, vacations, or just anything—I am the one who makes them into "big deals", by living in the future and fantasizing about what will happen. I need to get back into reality and work my daily program of faith, talking with my sponsor and friends honestly, going to meetings, and reading our literature. I have to have faith that everything will work out for the best. Sometimes I can't get honest by myself, so I need to talk with someone who has a different point of view. When I go to a meeting in this condition I need to shut up and listen.

The N.A. Basic Text and the N.A. Way is where I get most of my new information for my recovery.

These are some of my defects of character that if I don't want to act on them I don't have to.

J.C.
Nebraska

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.

CALIFORNIA: Mar 27-29, 1987; 9th NCCNA; Marriott Hotel, Burlingame, CA; 9th NCCNA, Box 6323, San Mateo, CA 94403;

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

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

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

KENTUCKY: Dec 13; 2 Year Birthday; Groups of Paducah, KY; National Guard Armory, 1800 Clark St, Paducah, KY; (502) Brenda 443-0012; Charlie 444-0399

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PENNSYLVANIA: Mar 27-29, 1987; 5th GPRCNA; Dunfey Hotel, Philadelphia; GPRCNA, PO Box 42628, Philadelphia PA 19101-2628; (215) Steve S. 925-7766; Marge 534-2887

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

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

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



*THE INTERNATIONAL
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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. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.
- 11.
- 12.

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