

THE
NA
WAY

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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 contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
11. *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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The N.A. Way Magazine



The International Journal
Of the Fellowship of
Narcotics Anonymous

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----|
| From the Editor | iii |
| Experience, Strength and Hope | 1 |
| An Oldtimer with a Newcomer's Attitude | 2 |
| Reunion | 5 |
| Responsible in My Recovery | 6 |
| One Member's Opinion on Group Conscience | 8 |
| Fear | 11 |
| Setbacks | 12 |
| Newcomer to the World | 14 |
| The Quest for a Vision | 16 |
| Group Conscience? | 18 |
| N.A. in the United Kingdom: The First Group | 21 |
| N.A. News | 25 |
| N.A. in the United Kingdom: An Interview | 25 |
| World Service News | 29 |
| Opinion | 32 |
| Hey, Buddy, Wanna Buy a Watch? | 32 |
| From Our Readers | 35 |
| Comin' Up | 39 |
| Subscription Form | 41 |
| Copyright Release Form | 42 |

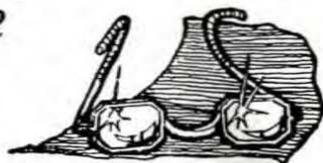
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From the Editor



In the "N.A. News" section, as we've discussed before in this column, we have used two types of articles. The first type could be called "hard news," or highlights of reports about current issues in N.A. World Services. The second, "soft news," includes feature articles about interesting developments or happenings around the Fellowship.

As we've prepared both types of news we've learned some things. One is that our production schedule does not really lend itself to the "hard news" type of material. If you are reading this around the beginning of February, the March issue of the *N.A. Way* is finished and being printed, the April issue is about wrapped up and turned over to the artist, and the May issue is being edited. We have a pretty good idea of what features are going into the June "Opinion" and "News" sections as well. In order for us to be adequately prepared each month, that's the kind of lead time we need.

Perhaps you can see the problem. As a major business journal says in its ads, "News is not one of those things that gets better with age." By the time we can get the latest discussion to you, the issues have changed and developed. As a result, we are leaning away from printing that type of information in the magazine. You will see the "News" section focus more and more on the

feature stories and less on the reports. Any reader reaction to that move would be welcomed.

We'd like to remind you once again that the *N.A. Way* is available and appropriate for use by service committees in carrying the N.A. message. We've had one H&I committee, for example, order 100 subscriptions and distribute them throughout the facilities they cover. Our mail from jails would suggest that those copies of the magazine get pretty tattered and rattered by the time they get passed around to everyone who wants them.

Some P.I. committees have told us that they place a rubber stamp of their own phone number and mailing address on the cover somewhere and use the magazine as a public information tool. Hospital emergency rooms make an excellent place to drop off an *N.A. Way*. People in a crisis of one kind or another related to this disease often find themselves in those rooms anxiously reading while a loved one is getting medical attention. What better reading is there at such a time than the *N.A. Way* with your phonenumber or mailing address stamped on it!

You might take a look at the price breakdown for multiple subscriptions on the subscription form, and take it up with your committee.

R.H., Editor

Experience, Strength & Hope



This section of the magazine is an international monthly Narcotics Anonymous meeting in print. All members of N.A. are invited to participate. Share your "experience, strength and hope" on any topic related to your recovery from addiction through the N.A. program. Please include a signed copyright release form (inside the back cover), and send it to:

**The N.A. Way; World Service Office, Inc.
P.O. Box 9999 Van Nuys, CA 91409**

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 above.

An Oldtimer with a Newcomer's Attitude

I am what some N.A. members consider an oldtimer. My Higher Power has graced me with over four years clean time. Even though I have always professed "quality, not quantity," not too long ago I started *feeling* like an oldtimer, and it almost cost me everything.

I thought I had read the Basic Text inside and out, sacrificed myself in service work, and burned up enough phone lines to sit back and enjoy my recovery for free. It didn't take long for the insanity to return and make my life a living hell once again. I felt as hopeless as I did before I walked into my first N.A. meeting, without even having to pick up and use again. Self-centeredness quickly replaced the spiritual principles I had worked so hard for the last four years.

At the few meetings I did attend, my sharing was only lip service. My ego wouldn't let me share the pain in my gut. I had to protect this "oldtimer" image. If I told of the anger, the fear, the isolation I was feeling, they would know I wasn't even working the program. If I told of the many nights I sat up crying my eyes out because I was so unhappy and didn't want to cope with



life anymore, they would know I had just been "talking the talk" and not "walking the walk." Besides that, I knew what I needed to do. I didn't need anyone telling me, the oldtimer, what I

already knew.

Finally, in the early morning hours not too long ago, I seriously thought about suicide. I was so tired, physically and

mentally, of trying to cope with the realities going on in my world that it seemed like the easiest way out.

Relapse was never a choice at the time, because I knew it would be too slow and painful. As I sat alone in the darkness, feeling totally drained, I thought about the four years of recovery I had under my belt and wondered how the serenity, the faith, and the hope could have slipped away so fast.

Somewhere inside me, a humble cry of surrender came pouring out to the Higher Power I had trusted and loved for so long, but had somehow edged out of my life in recent months. Through tears of anguish and pain I promised my God I'd do whatever he wanted me to do, if he'd just help me. At the same time I repeated out loud the First Step. Even though I wasn't using, I knew I was powerless over my addiction and that my life was unmanageable.

I had heard a million times that using was only one symptom of my disease. Now it was all of the other symptoms that were causing me so much pain.

That night I started over. I made a conscious decision to work my program with a different attitude—a newcomer's attitude. I had to, or I knew I'd die. I had to have the honesty, open-mindedness and willingness that it took for me in the beginning of my recovery. Somehow I had let ego and complacency take over my spiritual program, and, as the saying goes, "If you don't use it, you lose it!"

The following day, a phone call allowed me to work a Second Step. Four very special recovering addicts called from New Orleans, Louisiana. They were leaving the 1987 World Convention and asked if they could

stop and spend the night before making their way home two states away. As I hung up the phone, I was overcome with gratitude and hope. My Higher Power was bringing the World Convention to my home through those four recovering addicts.

Needless to say, they brought with them a "convention high" filled with love and spirituality. Three of those N.A. friends had known me since the beginning of my recovery. We had shared a lot of growth together until I moved a year ago. After a lot of hugs and settling in, two of my friends and I got comfortable on my couch together while everyone else went to sleep.

The hours that followed are hard to describe. For the first time in several months I shared everything in my heart: the pain, the hopelessness, the thoughts of suicide. I had never felt God's presence like I did in those early morning hours with those two recovering addicts. They shared with me the theme heard throughout the World Convention—work the Steps! They reminded me: when you are tired of fighting, you surrender and become *willing*.

I believe today with all my heart that God brought me those N.A. friends because he knew I could be honest with them (they knew me too well for me not to be!), and that I would be able to hear what they had to share. The heart of N.A. beat with much love and hope that night.

During the days that followed I did a lot of self-searching. I started doing the things I had done for so long in the beginning of my recovery—reading, praying, going to meetings. But most importantly of all, I shared *me* with other recovering addicts. I was remind-

ed that I have to ask for help to receive it.

Today, my recovery still isn't what I want it to be, but with restored faith in my Higher Power I'm sure it's where it's supposed to be. I know from painful experience that complacency is my worst enemy. I have to leave my clean

"That night I started over. I made a conscious decision to work my program with a different attitude—a newcomer's attitude."

time *quantity* outside of the meeting and bring my open-mindedness and desire for *quality* in. Only in this way can I grow.

The basic tools of my recovery today are the ones I learned when I was a newcomer—honesty (sharing humbly from my heart, not my head), open-mindedness (staying teachable), and willingness (working the Steps over and over and over). I heard someone say that we work Steps One through Twelve for recovery, and go from Step Twelve back to One for humility. Today that is also my experience.

Through the grace of my Higher Power and the love of our Fellowship, so much has been revealed to this recovering addict. Today when someone refers to me as an oldtimer, I say, "Yeah, but in order for me to recover I have to keep a Newcomer's Attitude!" No one can take a free ride in this Fellowship for very long without paying a price. For that painful lesson, I am grateful!

Anonymous, Tennessee

Reunion



I was recently reunited with some people that I haven't seen in twenty years. It was our twentieth high school reunion. Some of the folks had really changed. Most all of us had these little lines protruding from the sides of our eyes. I think they're called "crows' feet."

Things went well for awhile. Then as

we sat down to eat, I noticed that the people who had related with each other in high school all sat together in groups, or "cliques." Well, that was okay. I had related to only certain people in school, too. But after we ate and had a skit, I started to feel out of place. I started to feel that something was missing. The loneliness, the uncomfortable feelings, all got to be a bit too much, so I left early.

It wasn't revealed to me until two days later, then it hit: No one from my group—I guess you'd call us the loners—showed up. Four of them had already gone on to the "other side," mainly because of their self-destructive lifestyles. The old song, "As Tears Go By," rang true. I missed them.

Earlier in the day of the reunion, I visited the resting place of one of the dudes. I sat there and meditated and shared awhile. We had a lot in common. We both were veterans, and we had both done drugs. He had taken his own life some twelve years before. He had set me an example that addiction doesn't work.

I laid a rose on the simple little plaque that his name was inscribed upon. *Au revoir*, my friend. I love you and miss you, brother. Then, it was like a message came cruising from across the universe that said, "Just stay clean, C—, learn to live and enjoy life without drugs. You don't have to follow my example."

I'm glad I went to the reunion. I wasn't rich, famous, or a great success by some people's standards. That did bother me to some degree. But people, I'm just grateful to be clean and alive. That is success in its own right. I have you people, N.A., to thank for granting me the opportunity to experience life.

C.B., South Carolina

Responsible in My Recovery

When I first read of responsibility in the Basic Text, I just breezed right past it. Yeah, yeah, I paid my bills, showed up for work, attended business meetings, called my sponsor, worked the Steps, paid the child support and called on my Higher Power for direction and help as often as I could remember. But that was not the kind of responsibility our book was talking about.

About four years ago, I began hearing and reading about the healing power to be found in the simple admission of powerlessness over addiction. I learned that I had only one disease. Up to that time I had always strung a long list of different diseases after my name. You see, I was terrified of returning to that despair of using, and I was afraid that if I didn't identify every disease I thought I had I would leave the door open. Lack of faith or *what*, guys?!

I began to hear visitors identify themselves as "addicts" seeking "recovery." I was told they were able to find that recovery in attending only



meetings of Narcotics Anonymous. Something inside of me changed at that moment. The whole idea was something this addict found attractive. I was ready to throw away my talismans and

become simply an addict seeking recovery.

At that point, I was given the article from the Trustees regarding our relationship to A.A. [printed in the September, 1987 N.A. Way]. I was also given directions to read and practice the Twelve Traditions. Suddenly they took on a whole new meaning. I wanted to carry the message to the best of my ability. Now I had a choice either to do it on self-will or to do it with the directions offered in the Traditions. Thus, becoming responsible in my recovery became much more than I had first thought.

I learned that when I shared at meetings, I could either strengthen the atmosphere of recovery or dilute it. I could continue to just dump in meetings, or I could share my recovery. The drama and egocentric excitement of dumping suddenly lost all of its appeal, and I began to change. I not only started to feel a new respect and love for Narcotics Anonymous but also a new respect for myself.

It was difficult at first, and there were painful moments when I would really put people off with my enthusiasm. But today, four years later, I can see how our N.A. community was positively affected when so many of us here began that same search for new meaning in the Traditions. In a matter of only a year we had a meeting every night. Attendance at our area service meetings blossomed from ten addicts to thirty.

Today we have six areas and a region, and sometimes four meetings a day. This shows me that it does work. My H.P. pushed me in this direction so that I could enjoy life and become a responsible member of N.A. Today I

pray to do that as simply and lovingly as I can.

By sharing my recovery in meetings and with the newcomer I reflect the respect I have for the atmosphere of recovery. That respect also shows when I

"Many of us began that search for new meaning in the Traditions. In a matter of only a year we had a meeting every night."

participate in business meetings ready to share my experience—not trying to force anything down anyone's throat!

When I sponsor people, we study the Traditions together as well as the Steps, and we talk about the responsibilities of service. The Traditions are there for me because they work. They not only protect the Fellowship from outside influence, but they also protect me from my own ignorance and self-centeredness. I don't have to formulate my own set of guidelines. I can simply accept the experience found in the Traditions and participate in the growth and unity of N.A.

To carry the message to the addict who still suffers is my primary purpose. I pray today to continue to do that to the best of my ability. And for this addict, "the best of my ability" means continuing to learn about and follow the principles found in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

Today I am a responsible, contributing member of Narcotics Anonymous.

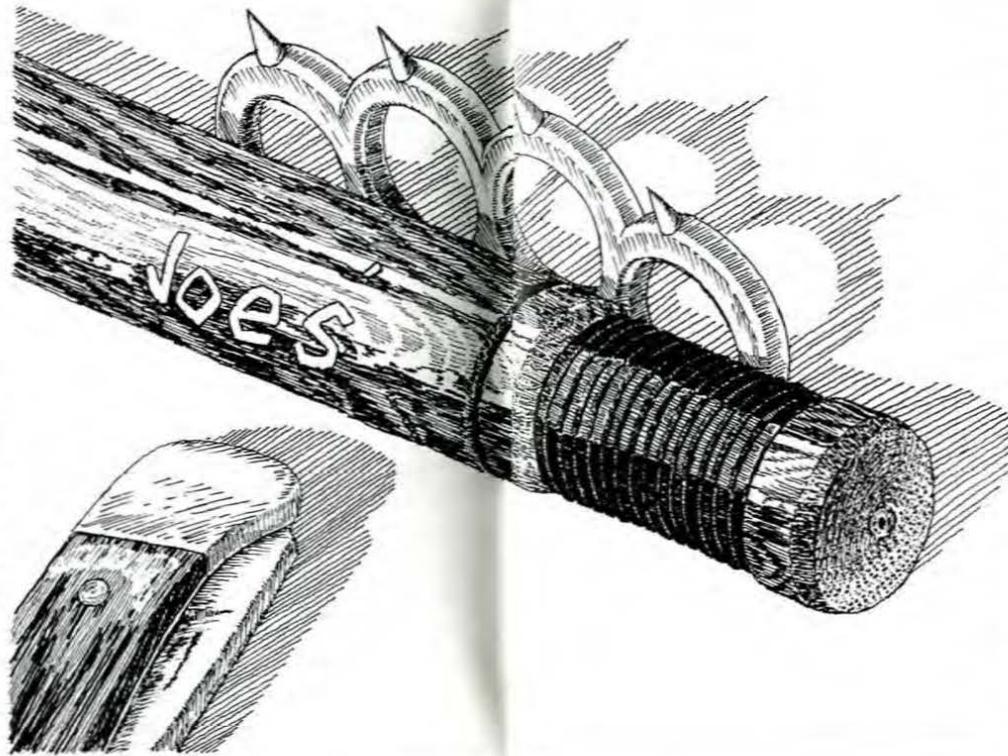
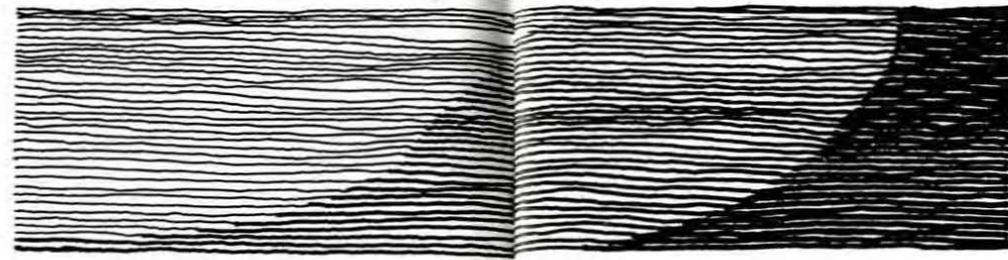
Anonymous, Hawaii

One Member's Opinion on Group Conscience

We've all heard someone say, "Let's have a group conscience." Often group conscience is thought of only as the group's business meeting. But thinking of group conscience like that takes away from the essence of the term's real meaning. Conscience is moral fiber. The group conscience is the spiritual feeling and understanding of the people in the group. Meetings and votes are the means a group uses to express its conscience, but they are not the conscience itself.

Hopefully, we are all individually practicing N.A.'s Twelve Steps and seeking to become instruments of a loving God. That way, when we get together to make decisions, a loving God can use us. Together, we search our conscience and make a decision.

The group must make its decisions as a group. It is only when the group as a whole lacks a sense of responsibility for itself that an individual can govern a meeting. When that happens, the meeting takes on a personality. That's not the N.A. way. Such a meeting strays



from our principle that *we* do things, not *I*. And what happens if that one individual decides to move, or gets loaded? The meeting dies. That is not responsible in terms of carrying out our primary purpose.

How can group members at, say, Joe's meeting become more responsible? What they want to do is have Joe hold a business meeting, which Joe most likely does already. He attempts

to hold a business meeting every few months, but nobody shows up. So the thing to do is to show up at Joe's business meeting and be ready to make decisions—in other words, to take primary responsibility.

Members bring up a problem. There's discussion. Somebody proposes a solution. They take a vote. But let's say the vote is a controversial one. That's where I tend to disagree with

using the term group conscience to refer to a decision rather than to a process. That kind of a vote is more a group opinion than a group conscience. The group conscience would be, "This matter is controversial, this might not be a good idea." To me, that's the group conscience—the feel of the group.

We really have problems when group conscience is used like a weapon. When a vote is taken, and it's called *group conscience*, it's given special meaning. Someone goes to a group and says that such-and-such a service committee is doing wrong, and railroads that group's understanding—gets them all stirred up, forces a vote real quick without receiving any other information, and then says, "This is group conscience." That is even less responsible than not taking part at all.

Not all of our decisions are great. Just because a group votes on them does not mean that the vote reflects the group conscience. If there's not enough discussion on one side of the issue, or if no one understands the issue because they don't have enough information, it's best not to do anything until there is better information. It's as if I were to ask God to remove my defects of character before I do a Fourth Step. How can I ask Him to do something if I don't know what the problem is, if I haven't looked at it real good and taken an inventory of the situation? In the same way, if you ask me about something without giving me all the facts, my answer will be different than if you had told me the whole story to begin with. Groups should take their time in making decisions.

The best way to ensure that God's hand is in the group conscience process

Setbacks in recovery! This is something that I had never given much thought to. I've had setbacks before. After a couple of days I would jump right back up on the beam and not give it another thought. But this last setback was very lengthy, and at times I didn't think I would get out clean.

What is a setback? One definition of "set" is "to apply oneself." One definition of "back" is "a former state." So in essence a setback is to apply one's self—to revert—to a former state. I like this explanation of a setback. Today I know that is exactly what I was doing.

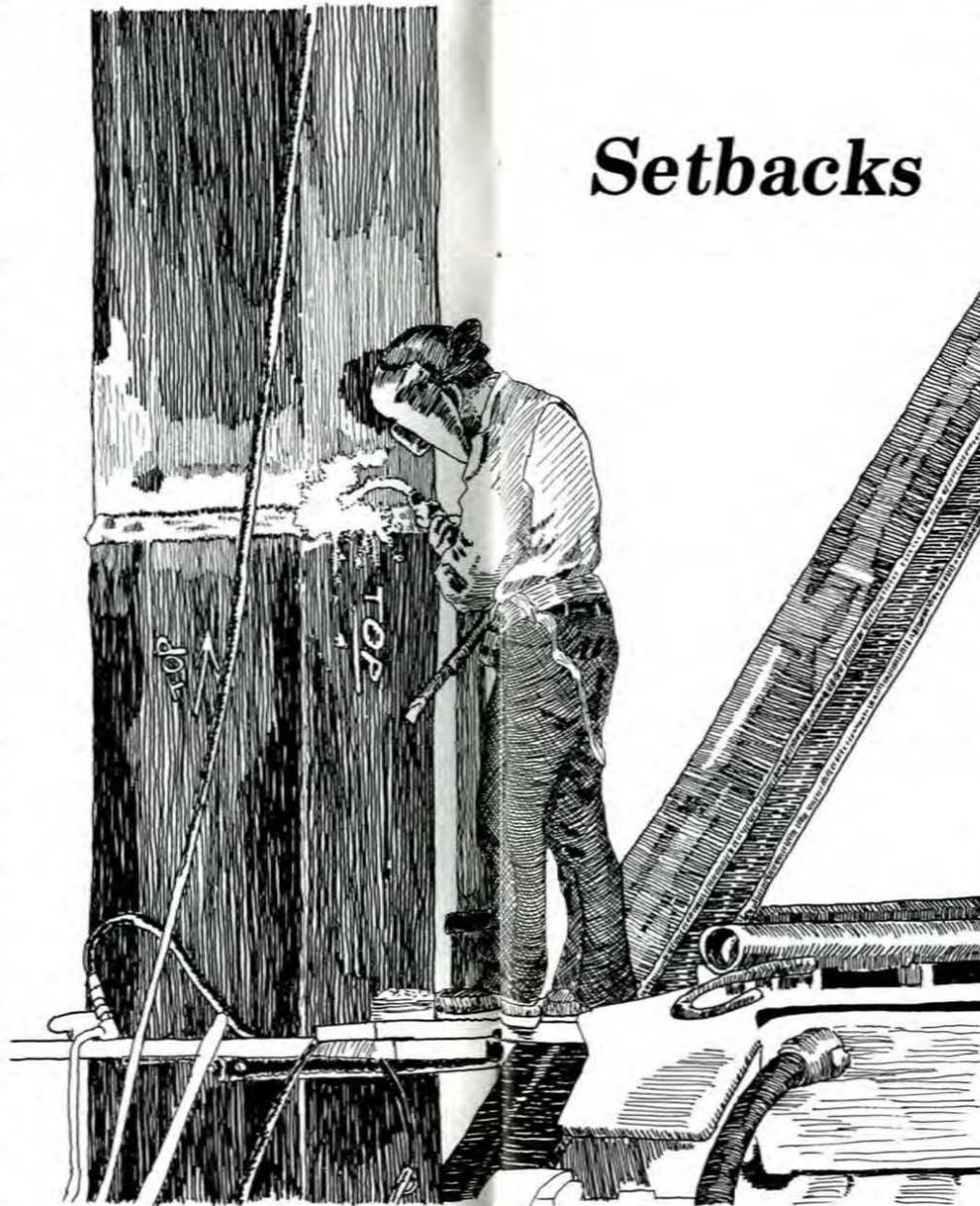
In my setback, I experienced many of the old feelings from my active addiction: resentment, fear, anger, cockiness, confusion, anxiety, and on and on. I also was uncomfortable, miserable and a pain-in-the-ass to live with. I don't know how my family put up with me!

Setbacks can be very devastating and very painful. Good can come from them, however, if we learn the lesson. Today I know that setbacks don't have to be the end of the world. They can be an opportunity for me to work my program.

I have a little less than two years clean, but it sure didn't feel like it this past two and a half weeks. I am not sure what triggered my setback, but before I could say "Just For Today," I was off and running. I got back into old thinking and behavior real fast!

As I said, it was pretty painful, and for awhile I wallowed in it. My thinking and behavior were just like they were in active addiction. The only thing missing was the drugs—thank God!!

After about a week of being in constant pain and fear, I decided I had to turn things around. The first thing I did was to call somebody in the



Setbacks

even got a raise at work, but I wasn't grateful. I didn't think it was enough. When I'm wrapped up in the disease, no matter what I get, it is not enough!

Slowly, however, I started to move through it. The turning point came when I was sitting at an Eleventh Step table and I was asked to chair. At first I refused; then another member mentioned that I could probably use it. So I

"What I heard was people telling me about a conscious contact with a Higher Power, which is something I had apparently been taking for granted."

did what I was asked, and found it was exactly what I needed (when I chair a table, it is important to listen to each person closely). What I heard was people telling me about a conscious contact with a Higher Power, which is something I had apparently been taking for granted. I had "prided" myself on the "spiritual program" I was working. Today I know that I was no longer working it. I just expected my Higher Power to take care of me, although I hadn't asked for any help in about three weeks!

I had needed to lead that table. I had needed to listen. Today I am climbing out of the pit I had put myself into. I am praying—I have a conscious contact with my Higher Power. I am back on the beam today. Most importantly, I feel good inside again!

S.C., Michigan

Fellowship, but I guess my pride started to show and I didn't honestly tell them how I was feeling. The next thing I did was to get to a meeting. While I was at this meeting I couldn't

listen, nor could I stay seated.

Like I said, this insanity went on for about two and a half weeks. It seemed like no matter what I did or what happened, nothing seemed to change. I

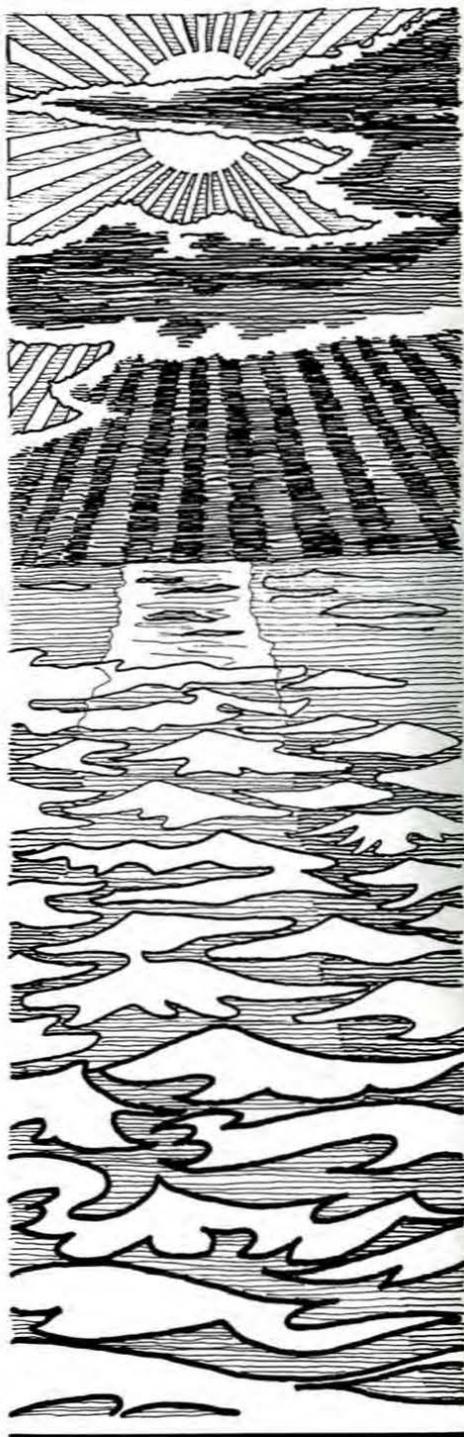
Newcomer to the World

I just got back home after attending my first N.A. convention—and what a start! It was the Seventeenth Annual World Convention. I found out there that I was still a newcomer.

It was my first airplane flight in recovery, and I made it through without any urges to use. I had motion sickness from the flight, which I haven't had since I was a little girl. On planes during my using days, I had been too busy getting loaded, using drugs in my seat and in the bathroom, to get airsick.

Upon arrival at the hotel, we were greeted by a long line of recovering addicts waiting to check in. After checking in, it was another long line to register, and I was overwhelmed at how many people I knew and how many I didn't know. But I found out it didn't matter, they all had hugs and smiles for me. It was a dream come true.

Later that evening, I was at the speaker meeting. The size of the room and the number of people in it took my breath away. When the speakers were



finished, and we joined in our circle of unity to say the closing prayer, I cried. In this sea of blurry, smiling faces, the echo of the prayer went through every vein in my body, and I knew I had finally found what I had always searched for—a home and a reason to live.

There were many, many more meetings, and I didn't know which way to go. My higher power was with me though, because the discussion at every meeting I wound up in was just what I needed to hear; I soaked up every drop.

There were a few highlights for me. The first was running into a man who had shown me years earlier that I had a choice, although then I wasn't ready. When I finally found the rooms of recovery, I called him and told him I was participating in another fellowship. He told me, "You've got to go to N.A., N.A.'s the best." I disagreed, too wrapped up in substances, and didn't listen to a man who had been there. It was good seeing him now, and I was able to thank him.

Next a man approached me who I didn't really recognize, but who had heard me "qualify" in New York. He shared with me his revelation about the disease of addiction. He said he was hearing more and more at the convention regarding this subject that he had first heard about from me. He had finally accepted that he's simply an addict, that he has one disease, not one for each substance he used. Through this experience I realized that today I have something to give.

After the banquet, when we had the roll call, I felt a surge of hope. It was very moving to watch thousands of people stand up, first for their country or state, and then for their clean time. I was covered with goosebumps and

shaking with excitement. When the countdown reached one day, we stood up clapping and chanting "Keep Coming Back" to a woman with twenty-four hours. We then gave her a Basic Text,

"After the banquet, when we had the roll call, I felt a surge of hope. It was very moving to watch thousands of people stand up, first for their country or state, and then for their clean time."

and for a second I envied her. What a way to begin the road to recovery! I pray she does keep coming back, and that she uses that Basic Text.

All in all, it was the experience of my life. I exchanged many phone numbers with people from all over the world, packed a suitcase full of T-shirts and memorabilia, and headed back to New York. I was feeling a little sad that it was over, but later I realized it was just the beginning. I thank my higher power for leading me through the doors of N.A. to find the love I'd spent my whole life screaming out for, and for giving me the opportunity to "Live My Dreams." None of this would have been possible had I been using.

I know more today than I knew yesterday—but more shall be revealed.

With deep love and gratitude,

D.M., New York

In some American Indian religions, young men seeking to become warriors had to first be granted a vision by the Great Spirit. Some rituals involved climbing to a scorching desert plateau, starved and naked, waiting for the gift of a vision. When a vision was granted by the Great Spirit, the passage from a child to a young man was celebrated.

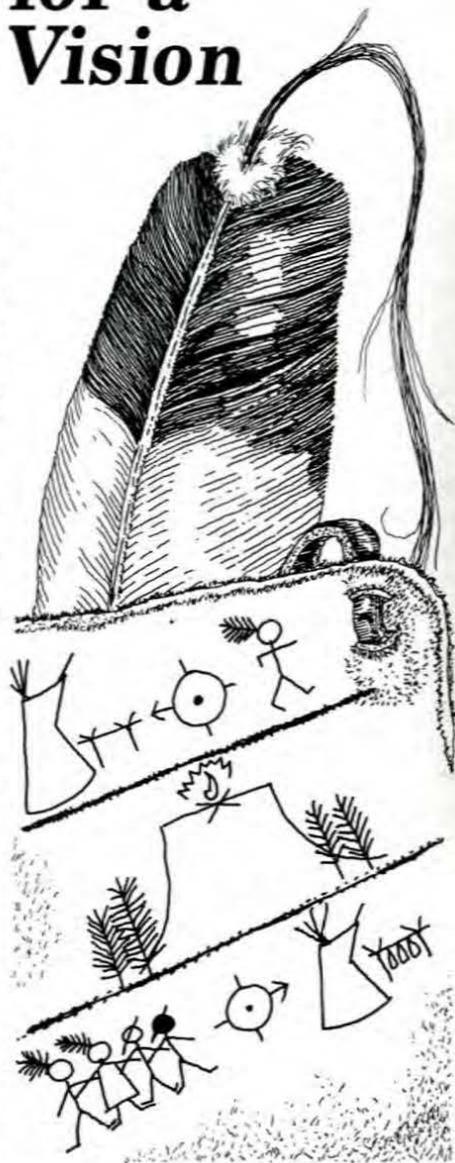
In some ways I think all of us in N.A. have gone through that ritual. In my case, the disease of addiction led me to a spiritually barren plateau of consciousness, completely devoid of a vision for my life. My only glimpse of hope would come later as I worked the Second Step of N.A. I would find hope that the Great Spirit would grant me a vision sufficient to sustain me without drugs, and to fill the painful void left behind when the drugs were removed.

But from that parched plateau of addiction, I had no vision. My disease was right there in front of me, a clutter of symptoms and situations that should have made it obvious that my central problem in life was drug addiction. It was as if it were not all one picture, but a thousand unconnected bits.

Each time someone who cared about me tried to help me with one piece of the picture, I disappointed them. They saw the larger picture; I saw only that piece. They couldn't get through, and my disease grew stronger.

Not until I stood alone on the dusty plateau, and in those first three steps humbly asked the Great Spirit for a vision, was there any hope. When I did, I began to see the connections among the scattered bits of my life. I was granted that portion of the vision very early on. I saw that I had the disease of addiction, and that this program had the solution for me. It was enough to keep me coming back.

The Quest for a Vision



With the first five steps I was granted much more vision, and could see in greater detail the overall picture

of my life up to that point. I had made a commitment in Step Three, and when I faced Step Six it was time to make it again, but this time with a twist. This time the commitment I was called upon to make was to a new vision, again not yet in view. I had enough vision now to see my past, but the future was still unclear.

Another bunch of disconnected fragments! I was assured that the rest of the steps would work together to again grant me the vision to see this new picture, so I went ahead. Amends, more inventory, prayer and meditation, more inventory, prayer and meditation, carrying the message, practicing these principles—one by one I applied myself to the fragments of the new picture, even though I couldn't see as yet the overall pattern that bound them together. But as I continued to apply these principles, that new pattern began coming into view.

Practicing Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve with some discipline has, over time, produced the clearest vision yet for me. My place in this world has become apparent; my life has gained meaning. I see with growing clarity *who* I am and *why* I am. I am an instrument of God's creativity, and as an addict I am uniquely suited to be of use to God in the lives of other addicts.

As others have undergone this same process, we've made the journey together down off the parched plateau, our growing vision intact. As we develop our vision together, side by side, the miracle of "collective vision"—group conscience—comes into focus.

Deep down inside every one of us is a vision of the Power that our Second Traditions calls "a loving God." As more and more of us seek spiritual growth, the operating principle in that

Second Tradition becomes a natural dynamic in our Fellowship. That loving God molds and shapes this Fellowship and each of its members. The larger collective vision begins to gain life among us. Not until I began to see this

"Practicing Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve with some discipline has, over time, produced the clearest vision yet for me. I see with growing clarity who I am and why I am."

could I really appreciate the depth and beauty of our Traditions.

In our brief course as a Fellowship, the process of an emerging collective vision hasn't always looked too spiritual. It's not always a pretty transition, that path down from the desert plateau, either for an individual or for a Fellowship. And we are still at times plagued by the disunity that results when we look more to ego than to spirit for our vision.

But just look around you now and you'll see a parade of us coming down from the plateau, a vision of our primary purpose in our hearts. Because this vision is truly from the Great Spirit of the Second Tradition, it can only unify, not divide. Even though there are challenges for us, as individuals and as a group, I think our future looks pretty exciting from here.

M.E., Minnesota

Group Conscience?

When I first came around the program I wasn't at all sure about this thing called "group conscience." I know that I heard the words at every meeting when someone read the Twelve Traditions. It wasn't until I got involved in service work at a group level that I began to hear what a group conscience consisted of: the collective decision of the members of that home group on a given subject. The issues that we were most concerned with at that time were simple things like, "What kind of format do we want at this meeting?" and, "Do we want to start this meeting at 7:30 or 8:00?" There was generally not a lot of controversy over these questions so, after whatever discussion ensued, we would take a vote and come to a decision.

As our area has grown over the past several years, the issues have become more complicated. At the same time, we have grown in numbers and more people have become involved in service on an area and regional level. There are innumerable reasons for people to become involved with service work, as well as numerous different levels of service. These run the gamut from helping set up or clean up after a meeting (chairs, coffee, ashtrays, etc.)

to holding a trusted servant position.

With six months clean, I became the GSR for my home group. I had no idea of how the service structure worked or



why it was so important. When I attended the area meetings each month, it was so threatening and scary that I didn't ask any questions or say any-

thing for several months. I just watched the other GSR's and listened to what they said. Then, when a vote was called, if it looked like most of them were going to vote in favor of a motion, I would too. I thought *that* was "group conscience."

As time passed, I realized that there was more to group conscience than voting the same as the other GSR's. I began taking issues back to my home group as I was instructed to do at the area meeting. Then the members of my home group would discuss the issue and vote to the best of our ability and understanding. This seemed to work better but it still didn't feel quite right.

Sometimes we would have people stay for our business meetings who were not members of the home group, but who wanted to help explain what was being discussed. Sometimes the issues would be swayed by the forceful personalities of these members. Some of these members were "Tradition spouters" who almost seemed to enjoy creating disunity and disharmony within a group.

I began to see how a "group conscience" could become a "member's conscience" with a little bit of group support. I also began to see how our Twelfth Tradition could be twisted. Just because members talked about "placing principles before personalities" there were a lot more personalities in group conscience decisions than principles.

There have been, and will continue to be (I'm sure), several occasions when I have carried a vote that I was not at all happy about carrying. On some of these occasions the vote went against my ego. ("No, not that decision. *I know better.*") At other times the vote was

possibly due to misinformation or personalities before principles. At these times I have gone ahead and voted as the group has instructed me to vote. I have done this because I feel that as a trusted servant I have a responsibility to carry my group's vote, even if I don't agree with the group's decision.

Recently, my understanding of group conscience, and how to get an *informed* group conscience, has undergone another shift. Today I am not comfortable with anyone other than a member of my home group attending a business meeting, unless they have been invited to help clarify an issue that no one else in the home group understands. The visitor is not usually a voting member, and is only there to provide information. This allows the home group members to give their thoughts and opinions on the issue, no matter how long they have been clean.

This is the *only time* that the GSR, or anyone else, is able to present their own beliefs and ideas about the issue being discussed. This is the time when we need to look at whether the issue being discussed is something that will be for the good of N.A. as a whole, or whether our egos and personalities are getting in the way of the issue.

Also, as our area has grown, both in clean time and in numbers, there seem to be more people interested in applying the Twelve Traditions in obtaining an informed group conscience. This understanding of the Traditions gives us, as an area, a much broader base from which to grow. This enables us to better focus on our primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers—as our Fifth Tradition states.

At a recent learning day, I heard the

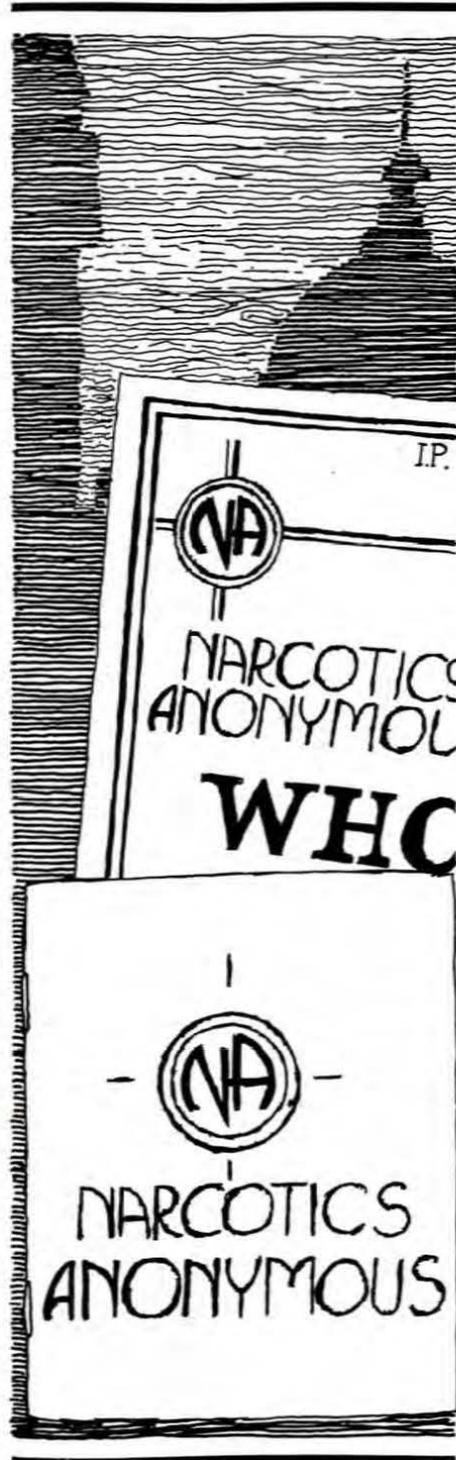
best description of group conscience that I have heard since I have become involved with service work: acceptance of, surrender to, and application of spiritual principles on a group level. This seems so simple. If we, myself included, can apply and practice the spiritual principles we learn in this

"Group conscience: acceptance of, surrender to, and application of spiritual principles on a group level. This seems so simple."

program to our personal recovery, then why is it sometimes so difficult to use these principles when it comes to group conscience and service work? Why do the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions seem to become faint and weak when issues of importance or controversy come up for group conscience?

I don't have any answers to these questions. I'm not at all sure there are any simple answers. I only hope and pray that as we continue to grow and recover, our understanding of a true group conscience also grows. I have faith that as we use the simple formula for group conscience—acceptance of, surrender to, and application of spiritual principles—that we will then be able to grow and prosper as an area. This will allow us to continue in our primary purpose of carrying the message of recovery in order that no addict, anywhere, need die from the horrors of addiction.

H.A., Tennessee



N.A. in the United Kingdom:

The First Group

In 1980, N.A. in the United Kingdom was started in a way oddly reminiscent of the beginnings of N.A. as a whole. Almost thirty years earlier, in 1953, a group called "A.A. for Addicts" had been formed in Los Angeles, California. A suggestion made to that group by A.A.'s General Service Office had led to the founding of Narcotics Anonymous as we know it today. In 1980, N.A. in the United Kingdom—a nation made up of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland—got a similar start. This is the story of the first English N.A. group, as told by the three key members of its original steering committee. See this month's "News" section for a feature article on where the story went from there.

D—, one of N.A.'s earliest members in the United Kingdom, had gotten clean on a visit to the United States in 1979. A series of very odd coincidences had led him to his first N.A. meeting in Florida. When it came time for him to return to England, he had asked his newfound American N.A. friends where he was supposed to go for his recovery back home, there being no N.A. meetings in the U.K. at the time. They told him to go to A.A., to identify himself as an addict-alcoholic, and see what happened.

D— recalls what happened after he returned home:

After a few weeks of going to A.A. meetings and identifying myself as both an alcoholic and addict, a bloke came up to me. His name was J—. He said, "So what's this all about then?" I told him. And he said, "Oh, that's me, too! And there's another one over there." I began to meet a few people. There were only about seven of us.

One day an Irishman came up to us in a cafe and he said, "I'm sick to death of hearing you talk about drugs in these meetings." And I thought, "Here it comes, what I've been waiting to happen." And he pulled out this file and threw it on the table. "Here's a starter kit from Narcotics Anonymous in Frankfurt, Germany. There's a room available Thursday nights at 7:30. The rent is two pounds a week, negotiable. Let's hear no more of it."

So we seven people were put in the most extraordinary position—and I believe one of the most privileged positions—an addict can attain. We were given the pleasure of starting the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous in

another country. We were scared stiff.

Somewhere in the course of this, very early one morning, I woke up and suddenly realized that it had been exactly one year to the day since I had become a member of Narcotics Anonymous in Miami, August the 5th, 1979. N.A. in London started on August the 5th, 1980.

"I remember walking from my home on the appointed evening, clutching the N.A. literature and thinking that this could be a very important night."

Another member of that original N.A. group in England offers his reflections:

When I first came into recovery in 1980, there was no N.A. in England. I felt fully an A.A. member—until I started talking about my drug addiction. I felt angry that I could not share about drugs in A.A. meetings. But of course I did. A lot of A.A. members showed me love; some did not.

One day while attending an A.A. meeting, I heard a member say he was an alcoholic and an addict. I was drawn to him. A few months later we started our first N.A. meeting with help from an A.A. friend, a member of a German N.A. group, and the group starter kit from the WSO.

We were only a few months clean. At times we broke Traditions, but we hung on in there. We just had the Little White Booklet and four pamphlets.

Each week we carried the N.A. message wherever we could. And slowly Narcotics Anonymous grew.

The third key player in that first English N.A. group was, and is, an A.A. member concerned about his own Fellowship's Traditions—the Irishman referred to earlier by D—:

Round about 1979, 1980, I became aware of a new phenomenon developing within A.A. in England. People

"After a few weeks of going to A.A. meetings and identifying myself as both an alcoholic and addict, a bloke came up to me and said, 'I'm sick to death of hearing you talk about drugs in these meetings. Here's a Narcotics Anonymous starter kit. Let's hear no more of it.'"

were identifying themselves at meetings as both alcoholics and addicts. My own feelings were that this was not altogether right, but at the time I could not put my finger on what specifically was wrong.

In the summer of 1980 I visited the United States for six weeks. The development of the "alcoholic-addict" syndrome was at a much more ad-

vanced stage there than in London. In fact, I remember at one point feeling as if I had to identify as an addict myself in order to belong to A.A.

I arrived back in London with, amongst other things, the feeling that something must be done about this, or A.A. would become unable to help the still-suffering alcoholic. I checked with a few older members to get their feelings on this alcoholic-addict thing and was pointed in the direction of an A.A. pamphlet, *Problems Other than Alcohol*. The pamphlet stated quite unambiguously where A.A. stood in relation to drug addicts:

Our first duty, as a society, is to ensure our own survival. Therefore, we have to avoid distractions and multi-purpose activity. An A.A. group, as such, cannot take on all the personal problems of its members, let alone the problems of the whole world.

Sobriety—freedom from alcohol—through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps is the sole purpose of an A.A. group... We have to confine our membership to alcoholics, and we have to confine our A.A. groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles, we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone.

I came to understand that what was happening in A.A. was against our Traditions. I did, however, seem to be swimming against the tide, in that I was alone in my opposition. Still, majorities were but majorities, and not necessarily always right in their thinking and practices.

I had a great deal of sympathy for junkies and was aware that there was nowhere for them to go if they were thrown out of A.A. Having discovered

what specifically was wrong about people identifying themselves as alcoholics and addicts at A.A. meetings also gave me an idea of what to do about the problem in a positive manner. The pamphlet I'd read said:

Certainly, there is every good reason for interested A.A.'s to join with outside groups working on the narcotics problem, provided that our Traditions of anonymity and of no endorsements are respected.

Thus, I set out to convene an N.A. group.

I contacted D— and J—, two A.A. friends who used to wind me up with their alcoholic-addict identification at meetings. They were keen. I also contacted others who used to profess, often at great length, their addiction to drugs, but got a less-than-enthusiastic response from them. During the course of my enquiries I discovered that P—, who originally had gotten sober in London but had shortly afterwards moved to Frankfurt, was in London and enquiring as to why there were no N.A. meetings here. I contacted P—, who gave me some literature—a group starter kit, I believe. We had all we needed then to set up a group.

At that time my home A.A. meeting was in St. George's Hostel in Chelsea [a London neighborhood] on Monday night. I arranged with J— and D—, who also used to go to that meeting on a regular basis, to meet them there. The A.A. meeting was held in the large dining room. As far as I can remember, we got permission to use the small dining room at the hostel on very short notice. There we would discuss setting up the N.A. group.

I remember walking from my home in Earls Court to Chelsea on the appointed evening, clutching the N.A. literature and thinking that this could be a very important night for a lot of people in the not-too-distant future. I collected the lads, who were in the main dining room drinking tea, and we went around the corner to the small dining room to have our meeting. Only a few of the other people I had contacted had turned up, but we had five people there, and I knew that two people were all that was needed to make a meeting quorate.

I forget the exact details of how we got started that night. But I seem to remember D— and J— saying, in prayerful tones, "To hell with it—let's have a meeting instead of organizing one." And so began England's first N.A. meeting.

N.A. News



N.A. in the United Kingdom: An Interview

The following is an interview with a member of the World Service Office Board of Directors from the United Kingdom. It was conducted in mid-November 1987 by an N.A. Way staff member.

Q: How did N.A. start in the United Kingdom?

A: I think that in the first year or so it was pretty slow. Then a variety of things happened, all at the same time. Various treatment centers started to take in addicts, where before they had been exclusively A.A. orientated. There were a couple in the West Country [the southwest of England] and one in London which was rather exclusive and very expensive. They started to take in more addicts, and when the addicts finished treatment they were told to go to meetings. It was at that point that we saw a serious increase in the size of the Fellowship.

One unfortunate feature in the growth of the Fellowship at the time was that these treatment centers were private—they had nothing to do with

our national health system, they were privately funded. You either had to have an insurance policy, which is not the norm in England, or you had to have money behind you. The result was that in '83 and '84 we had a prepon-

"One unfortunate feature in the growth of the Fellowship was that in '83 and '84 we had a preponderance of middle- and upper-class members. We were lucky at that time to be starting out in H&I and P.I. work. Those people helped N.A. finally spread out from the treatment centers and into the street."

derance of middle- and upper-class members, whose families either could afford to pay the treatment bill or who had insurance. And particularly since the first meeting started in Chelsea, which is actually quite a well-off area, N.A. very much had that sort of flavor

to it. It was fine from the point of view of the quality of the recovery that was going on in the meetings, but there was a stage at which it caused us problems in carrying the message. The image of N.A. was of something that was a middle-class phenomenon. I remember doing a P.I. community day and having some of the folk coming up and say, "Well, it's all right for those sort of folk, but for your average street junkie who's in my prison or in my hospital, they're not going to identify or feel at home with these people."

Here's one of those odd things, to see how it changed—because it did change. We were lucky at that time to be starting out in H&I and P.I. work. We had some people get involved with that who were diligent, conscientious and enthusiastic. Those people helped N.A. finally spread out into the street. Instead of being so dependent on treatment centers, H&I and P.I. work provided us with a greater diversity of sources for newcomers. As more and more people came in off the streets, the background and type of folk in the Fellowship changed too. And relatively rapidly over the next couple of years, the social spectrum of the Fellowship filled out.

We've mushroomed, I mean grown at a rate that's just extraordinary. From '83 when it was five meetings a week in London and three, four a week down in the West Country—and that was pretty much all N.A. in England had then—there's now, what, eighty-odd meetings in London and another eighty-odd around the whole of the rest of the country.

London is still the major center of N.A., in terms of numbers of meetings a week and membership numbers as well. While our eighty London meet-

ings will all be pretty well attended, some of those out and about will have fewer folk, maybe three, four people hanging about and keeping the meeting together.

"Since 1983 we've mushroomed from five meetings a week in London and three, four a week down in the West Country to eighty-odd meetings in London and another eighty-odd around the whole of the rest of the country."

Q: When was the first ASC formed?

A: Oh, golly...Before my time. Bristol had their area for quite some time—well, Weston-Super-Mare and Bristol had an area together. I'm sure London had an ASC by the spring of '83, and probably about six months before that, the autumn of '82.

Q: When did things start to pop from there as far as service is concerned?

A: Well, the London ASC formed sub-committees, and we went on in London as an area for another year or so. At a certain stage the area in London became unmanageable because of its size and the number of GSR's, so we had to make a decision to split into a certain number of areas. I can't remember

when the area split into three—that must have been '84 or '85. That was when we first came across the concept of forming a region. The idea at that time had nothing to do with geography; it was purely a function of having an ASC that was out of hand. It divided into three, and people from those three would get together, and that would be the region. Now the London Region has four areas.

Q: There's something I'm confused about. There is a London Region of the four areas there, and all of the other N.A. communities in Great Britain are just plain old separate areas, not part of the London Region, right?

A: No, that's not the case.

Q: Then has the national Fellowship all been included in the London Region?

A: No, that's not it entirely, either. You see, in England, because of the great predominance of strength in the London Fellowship, and then your outlying bits and pieces, it's in a small sense rather like N.A. as a whole. There you've got the great strength of America, with bits and pieces all over the world.

We've had our problems between different areas. There was a big problem about '84, between Bristol—the West Country—and London. Communication was poor. The West Country sort of felt left out, and some of the classic resentments came up. The West Country believed London felt they were the center of the universe and didn't think of anybody else outside—which was in fact all too common an attitude at the time. It took a long time to heal those wounds.

But when London got to the point in '84 and '85 of splitting into three areas and having the region, we bent over backwards to make the resources of the region available to the folk in the West Country. Because of our previous arrogance, we didn't want them to think that we'd just gone ahead and created a region for the U.K. We offered them the invitation to come along and be involved with it in affiliation, assuming that one day down the road in years to come they'd form their own region in the West Country. They were welcomed to take part with a vote for their ASR and every other right our London areas enjoyed. And that's what happened. And as the other areas popped up around the country during 1986, the same approach was used. In each case the new areas chose to affiliate with the London Region.

In April 1987, the N.A. Fellowship in Great Britain formed a new nationwide representative service body. It is made up of the representatives of each area or region in the United Kingdom. Called the U.K. National Assembly, it coordinates those N.A. services affecting the Fellowship across the country.

Q: How did the National Assembly development begin?

A: A bunch of us were on an *ad hoc* committee. We came up with five different ways of putting the Assembly together. Then we started going 'round and explaining the ideas to the folk on each area committee. That process was exciting, but it was also terribly frustrating at times. In some of the smaller places, getting them to appreciate the different options and what each meant was hard. And trying to cover every option in a positive way, without say-

ing, "Well, this one's actually nonsense but we put it in there because it's one way you can actually do it," was even harder. It was particularly frustrating when in some area you might find people actually going for one of the off ones because you'd put it so very sensibly!

Q: Narcotics Anonymous in the United Kingdom has a national office. Was the National Assembly developed primarily to oversee that operation?

A: Everything in the U.K.—the national health system, the prisons, the institutions, the media—is run at a national level. The great majority of our newspapers are published nationally with local editions. Some of us recognized early on that when you deal with those people, they like to talk to the national rep of whatever organization it might be. If you come along and say, "Well, I'm from London," and if they say, "Oh, you represent N.A. nationally," you have to say, "No, we don't, we just speak for London." So there's a credibility gap there. We knew that at some stage in order to carry the message, we would have to form some kind of truly nationwide service body.

Q: How has it worked?

A: It's still in its developmental stages. We're having to write guidelines and come to our own understanding of this as a completely new phenomenon, because unfortunately you guys haven't done this over here [in the U.S.]. The problem is rather like baseball. Nobody else anywhere in the world plays it, and yet the championship matches are called the *World Series*. You've had a national assembly for years in the United States. Because of your vision

for outreach, you've called it the World Service Conference. But in reality it hasn't been international at all until very recently. And the issue of the conflict between the WSC as a functional U.S. National Assembly and the WSC as a truly worldwide service body will keep coming up.

Q: So now that your National Assembly has been set up, how well is it actually operating?

A: Setting up the goals and aims of the National Assembly was one thing. Actually making the Assembly work is another. First of all, getting everybody to understand what on earth it is has been a much bigger problem than I had anticipated. There have been all the problems of people being afraid that we are creating some sort of national authority. Some of the London RSC sub-committees feel threatened. "Hey, what's this national thing; are they going to tell us what to do?" Prior to establishment of the Assembly, London RSC sub-committees had been operating on a national basis simply for lack of anyone else to do it. Suddenly their territories are threatened by this new thing.

We've started the process of setting up national sub-committees. The National Assembly has elected the chair-people of those sub-committees, and these people will be responsible for developing the sub-committees. And once you have the committees in place it's relatively simple. What it means is saying to the London sub-committees, "Okay, guys, now we can relieve you of a great burden and you can go back to the basics of dealing with H&I and P.I. in London on a local level." That had suffered because the London sub-committees had tried to do the national

thing. "Don't worry about that, guys. Get back to dealing with the greater London area, and the national sub-committee will take on the national responsibility."

Q: What developments can you see in the future for N.A. in the United Kingdom?

A: In five years we may have four or five regions in England. We're going to have a second region in England by the end of this year in the West Country. It's almost become fact, but not quite yet. Whether they'll be at the stage of being a formal region before the Conference meeting, and looking for recognition from the Conference, who knows? That's another question entirely, and not yet settled.

World Service News

Copies of the most recent issues of the Newsline and Fellowship Report have reached our desks, and we thought you might like to share in some of the highlights of each. We only touch here on items that we feel will be of broad interest, and only in summary form. For readers who want more detailed information, we suggest that you contact your area or regional service representative for copies of both the Newsline and the Fellowship Report.

Number of Meetings Outside the United States Increases

During the past six months some 300 new meetings have been started outside the U.S., bringing the total number

of those meetings to well over one thousand—more than 10% of all N.A. meetings.

World Convention

The world convention chairperson writes: "The board for the world convention has received bids from five different cities for the 1989 convention. The cities submitting bids by the October 1st deadline were: Sydney, Australia; Portland, Oregon; Seattle, Washington; Orlando, Florida; and Miami, Florida. It seems that an N.A. convention can be comfortably held in any of these cities.

"The Southern California Host Committee has begun work on the 1988 convention. [Their efforts will be reported in future issues of the N.A. Way.] Dates: Thursday, September 1 through Sunday, September 4, 1988. Flyers and registration forms will be available after the first of the year from the host committee."

International Ad Hoc Committee, WSO Board

The committee met in Denver following the regularly scheduled WSC workshop. They discussed a plan to establish a pool from which the travel expenses of regional representatives to the WSC would be covered. Regions participating in the pool would contribute to it an amount equal to the average cost for each region. Their actual expenses—regardless of how far they had to travel and how much it cost them separately—would then be covered from the pool. No region participating in the pool would have to pay more than any other in order to take part in the WSC annual meeting. The

committee requested input from the Fellowship on this idea.

Other items discussed included:

- 1) Possible further reorganization of the Fellowship to accommodate international decision-making;
- 2) Translation of N.A. materials into other languages, with a decision to proceed in the same manner as has been used to date; and,
- 3) The WSO plan to open a branch office in Europe. The WSO Board of Directors has delayed implementation of the plan because of the current financial circumstances of the office. The project has been tentatively delayed until 1988. As changes occur to improve office finances, the matter will be reconsidered.

WSC Chairperson

It was announced that the 1988 WSC annual meeting will be held April 25-29, with pre-conference orientation Sunday, April 24.

Public Information

The committee's report focused in part on the accessibility of N.A. to the community. Some of the problems (and solutions) include N.A. committee mailing addresses that are not stable (use P.O. boxes), people on N.A. mailing lists with outdated meeting lists (keep track, regularly mail updated lists), and making sure helplines are listed in local telephone books.

The committee chairperson wrote further about P.I. work: "A major priority of the WSC P.I. Committee for this year was a complete restructuring and refocusing. [Members of the committee have been assigned service territories within which they act as

resources to regional and area P.I. committees.] We have been able to reach out and actively involve P.I. subcommittees at the regional and area levels around the world. The enthusiastic participation of WSC P.I. members has been without parallel. Continue to send your input, letting us know how it is going, to the *P.I. News* c/o WSO.

"Plans for the future include a restructuring of the format of *The Guide to Public Information*. Further work will also be done on the following topics in 1989: N.A. in schools; dealing with non-N.A.'s; Traditions in public information; sample letter rewrite; upgrading our displays for regional and multi-regional non-N.A. events; and rural P.I."

Hospitals & Institutions

The committee chairperson writes: "We've been working on the *H&I Handbook*. Our first workshop took place in Annapolis, Maryland. We worked on the section of our handbook dealing with corrections, committee structure and function, general information, and learning days and workshops. The second workshop took place at the WSO. At this session we concentrated on the section of the handbook that dealt with treatment. This section had a considerable amount of input, and there were many different opinions about the philosophy of H&I. At the WSC workshop in Denver we reviewed and prepared a draft of the *H&I Handbook*. We hope to have the draft ready in January so that area and regional H&I committees can review it over the next year.

"The WSC Literature Committee has asked the H&I Chair and Vice-

Chair to participate in the review of the booklet, *For Those in Treatment*.

"We received the draft of a piece on the transition from a correctional institution to N.A., *From the Inside Out*, that was written by the Colorado Region's H&I subcommittee. After some minor editing, we will send it to the WSC Literature Committee for review."

Literature

The chair reported that the World Service Conference Literature Committee (WLC) had met at the Denver workshop in October. At that meeting they assigned development of a working draft of a pamphlet entitled *Unity* to the Georgia Regional Literature Committee.

At that same meeting, a Basic Text survey was approved for distribution to area and regional literature committees. The survey covered questions related to possible future revision of the Basic Text.

The Literature Review Committee (LRC)—a smaller body within the WLC—met separately at the WSO in November. Because of the magnitude of the work being done on the WLC guidelines, the LRC meeting focused primarily on those guidelines. Exactly what appears in the 1988 Conference Agenda Report will depend upon the full WLC's discussions at its December meeting. As of the *Fellowship Report's* writing, the committee expected that only part one—internal working guidelines—would be presented for Conference approval at the 1988 WSC annual meeting, to replace the committee's existing procedural guidelines.

WSC Vice-Chairperson

In his report he says: "The Denver

Workshop was productive, and again illustrated the value of having all committees meeting at the same time in the same location. The benefits of continuing this practice are numerous. The committees always have immediate access to one another. This is important in case the work of one committee affects the work of another, or if committees are collaborating on a specific project. The committees also benefit by having members of the WSC Administrative Committee, Board of Trustees, and WSO Staff and Board members present and available to assist as needed. Finally, areas and regions are able to send their trusted servants to the workshops to gather information first-hand from N.A. World Services. If committees met separately, areas and regions in many cases would not be able to draw upon those sources of information and experience either as easily or as cost-effectively. It would appear that our current workshop set-up provides for the most effective use of available resources in accomplishing the tasks assigned to each committee by the WSC.

"The Fellowship is supporting fully the expenses of the WSC. All current bills are either paid or soon to be paid, and we should have a small surplus."

Phoneline Directory

The first draft of a phoneline directory has been completed by the WSO. Instead of trying to keep up-to-date on individual meetings, it provides information on N.A. phonelines with maps showing the territory each phoneline serves. As soon as a final verification of the directory's accuracy is made, the material will be published for consideration by the WSC.

On a related note, the World Service Office has ceased distribution of the 1986 edition of the *World Directory*. Requests to the office for meeting information are being handled on an individual basis with the most up-to-date information that can be obtained.

World Service Office

The *Newsline* reported that the WSO is not on as firm a financial foundation as it had previously been on. The two things that have affected the office's financial condition are policy decisions made last year concerning discount sales, and reduction of shipping and handling fees. The cost for shipping merchandise to Fellowship customers has for some time now actually exceeded the revenues produced by shipping charges to those same customers. The office may have to begin charging all customers again for at least the cost of shipping. And in order to improve the office's financial condition it may be necessary to reduce by a small per-

centage the discounts to offices and service committees for large purchases.

Trustees

The World Service Board of Trustees reported that one of the Trustee ad hoc committees will be evaluating the merits of a long form of the Twelve Traditions.

The Trustees' chairperson wrote that, "Over the past several years, we have had much discussion both of the role of the Board of Trustees as a whole and of the role of each individual trustee. An ad hoc committee has been appointed to begin work on evaluating this subject in terms of World Service Board guidelines and our own experience.

"Another ad hoc committee has been created to make a report regarding the Seventh Tradition as it applies to Narcotics Anonymous today and in the future. The need for this work has become evident over the past few years."

OPINION



There have been some problems in my area with members who either misunderstand or choose to disregard the service structure, the Traditions, and the principles of N.A. recovery. They make announcements about events which have no connection to our Fellowship. They use the meeting as a

market place to sell "recovery" items. Often, they rationalize this activity by saying that some or all of the proceeds are going to the Fellowship. More often than not, the main motive for this activity is personal gain.

The reason that this type of activity exists is because it is tolerated by

members at the group level. In many cases it is allowed because members are intimidated by the entrepreneur. Perhaps they are close friends and do not care to jeopardize that friendship. Maybe they do not want to be part of the controversy, or they do not yet understand the principles of the Traditions. It is the responsibility of the group or its trusted servants to take action against this type of activity in order to protect the member, the group, and the Fellowship from the harm that these activities can cause.

An N.A. meeting is an "addict's sanctuary." It should always remain free of outside influences because of the harm that can be caused to the newcomer, the group, and the Fellowship. Ours is a philosophy of recovery from addiction through fellowship and through the practice of the principles of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in our lives. N.A. is here to help addicts to recover from their disease. The N.A. meeting is not a marketplace! Even when various service committees approve the sale of various bits of paraphernalia at social functions, they do not sell their wares at meetings.

The problem seems to stem from the attitude that says, "recovery is recovery. What harm can come from the sale of recovery-related items or announcements of recovery-related activities? So what if they have nothing to do with the N.A. Fellowship?" I believe that the Traditions hold the answer to these questions. They also give us an understanding of what N.A. is. While there are other recovery philosophies, they are not ours nor should they ever be misconstrued as being ours. Our Traditions are designed to protect the Fellowship from the harm that can be caused by aligning it with other enter-

prises. Groups which allow these non-N.A.-related activities compromise the Traditions.

How many Traditions are compromised when this type of activity prevails at the group level? If we look at this issue from a principal point of

"An N.A. meeting is an 'addict's sanctuary.' It should always remain free of outside influences because of the harm that can be caused to the newcomer, the group, and the Fellowship."

view, we can begin to see what can be expected at the group level as well as the effect this type of activity can have on our Fellowship as a whole.

When someone uses the group to announce outside functions, sell or distribute wares for personal gain, or when someone affiliates N.A. with any outside organization or enterprise, they are creating confusion between that activity and the Fellowship. When that is recognized, as it always will be, the unity of the group will be disrupted, at least long enough to deal with the controversy. The First Tradition just went to lunch.

It is doubtful that any kind of group conscience has been taken which would allow such activity. Therefore, the expression of a loving God is non-existent on this issue. The group leaders may be put into a position to

govern the meeting. The Second Tradition is up for grabs.

Newcomers, not knowing any better, may believe that they need to choose a side (not an uncommon trait among addicts) in order to maintain their recovery and their newfound N.A. friendships. Suddenly, in the eyes of that new member, the only requirements for membership are the desire to stop using and to choose the right side of the controversy. The Third Tradition becomes a question mark.

Forget about affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole; the members of this group have enough problems of their own. They have not been successful in applying the first three traditions to their group. That will affect newcomers who will think that this is N.A. If it is an open meeting, then outsiders will leave with the same impression. The newcomer may never come back. The outsider may tell others that N.A. is what they saw at this particular meeting. Their description may dissuade someone from attending a meeting or referring an addict to N.A. In any case, other groups and N.A. as a whole are affected whether they want to be or not. The Fourth Tradition takes a fall.

The primary purpose of the group slowly begins to focus on "who is right and who is wrong." The addict who still suffers has actually become secondary to the controversy. The Fifth Tradition just went out the door.

Well, here we are at the actual crux of the problem: trying to figure out if it is appropriate for an N.A. group to sanction the activities of a few individuals immediately inside or outside of our meetings. If the group approves, not only will it be endorsing their activities, it will be financing them as well. The Sixth Tradition is definitely

under heavy fire.

If we are "fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions," then why would the group want to accept financing from outside sources? It is doubtful that N.A. would ever see Penny One from any of these enterprising members. However, if the group even considers having outside sources raise funds on their behalf, then we can toss the Seventh Tradition out the window.

If the group is using outside professionals to raise funds for them through such marketing techniques, then the Eighth Tradition can follow the Seventh.

Certainly, these entrepreneurs are not a service board or committee created by any part of the N.A. Fellowship, so who are they directly responsible to? They are not even acting responsibly in relation to the group that allows them to exist. The Ninth Tradition is being ignored.

To accept this activity is to have an opinion on an outside issue. Even worse, if there was not a fair agreement between the group and these entrepreneurs, it is conceivable that we could end up in court. The Tenth Tradition is designed to protect us from this.

Allowing someone else to use N.A.'s name for their own gain can be construed as promotion rather than attraction. Press, radio, and film need not even enter into the picture at this juncture, though there would not be anything preventing them from entering in the future. Clunk! The Eleventh Tradition has been trashed.

If the name of the Fellowship is used in the public realm in connection with outside enterprises, the anonymity of individual members will soon be violated. Once an individual member breaks

his or her anonymity they can come under close public scrutiny. If that person goes back to using, it is almost certain that the name of the Fellowship will be dragged through the mud along with the name of the individual. Personalities will have risen above principles. The Twelfth Tradition has just lost its meaning and purpose.

Does this mean that all of the Traditions are in jeopardy just because someone makes an announcement about an outside activity or comes to the meeting to sell merchandise?

No, not because of the acts of this someone, but because the group allows the activity to continue. When one Tradition is compromised or minimized by the group, the domino principle prevails and all the Traditions become subject to compromise.

But what about autonomy? Each group has the right to govern themselves, do they not?

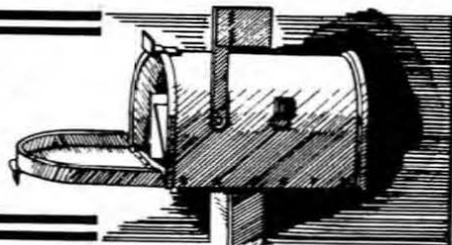
Yes, though the real answer to the question lies in the remainder of the Tradition, "except in matters affecting

other groups or N.A. as a whole." Each group has a responsibility to the whole Fellowship, to take caution in applying the Traditions while being autonomous so that they do not affect other groups or N.A. as whole. One tradition should not be violated to uphold another one. "Spiritual principles are never in conflict." If conflict exists, then the spiritual principles are not being practiced.

The unfortunate thing about all of this is the effect that it has on the newcomer. Newcomers do not come in with an understanding of spiritual principles. They come in looking for support and a way to recover from their disease. It should be clear at all times that the Traditions of the Fellowship are not there to be compromised or manipulated. They are there to protect us from ourselves. The very nature of the disease of addiction is to be self-centered, obsessive, compulsive, destructive, rebellious, manipulative, and indifferent. Knowing this, is it any wonder why these Traditions exist?

R.C., Illinois

From Our Readers



Letters and reflections from N.A. members worldwide.

Dear N.A. Way,

In response to "Just For Today Prayer" in the August 1987 issue, I feel that if Anonymous in Ohio wants to rid N.A. of anything that might remotely sound religious, he/she might as well do away with N.A. I think some people try so hard to make sure that nothing sounds even remotely religious that

they ignore a lot of good *spiritual*, not religious principles.

Ultimately it's up to each group to decide what format they want to use in closing a meeting. One thing Ohio said: "The fewer opportunities we give to find differences or stigmas within our Fellowship, the greater the chance that no addict seeking recovery need die

without having had a chance to find a better way of life." Granted this is true, but that does not mean we should become people-pleasers. If someone truly wants recovery, they will not concentrate solely on the differences.

Anonymous, Texas

Dear N.A. Way,

At the present time I am at work and feeling pressured, so I've taken some time out for me. This is one thing that helps my recovery: writing to you and knowing you listen.

My job has been very stressful lately. We recently went on strike for a month, walking the picket line for five hours a day. During that time, I saw my sponsor once a week. I attended meetings regularly and did whatever I could to get out of myself.

This last month I've had to work my program very hard. The Third Step, which my sponsor suggested I stay on, has come into my life a lot. I've had to turn everything over to God because I am emotionally, physically and spiritually tired. Through all of this I know one thing: my recovery comes first.

Despite what is happening in my life today, Narcotics Anonymous has given me choices. I have taken some positive steps for myself in the last two weeks. God blessed me with Twelve Steps, a sponsor and a Fellowship full of people who love and accept me. The choices I have today are unlimited.

N.E., New Jersey

Dear N.A. Way

I just wanted to express my gratitude for your magazine. It always comes at the right time when I am feeling lonely or hurting. I usually read it on the way to work in the morning and more often than not one of the articles/stories

helps me to take a look at myself and what I need to work on. Maybe one day I can send a story in and share my own experience, strength and hope.

Love you all.

B.P., Indiana

RECOVERY

God help me write.

I'm grateful to have celebrated two years clean tonight. My life has changed a great deal as a result of Narcotics Anonymous. During the process of my recovery, God has given me things to grow by. One has been a relationship which turned me every which way but loose. I'm still growing from it eight months later.

But I'm just now realizing how much I need God, the Steps and this program. Reality is just now hitting me, and it's scary. I've dabbled in the Steps, but now I'm going to have to really work and live them if I'm going to go on. I like what's happening, though. I'm growing and I have no intentions of letting up today. I want to live and be in line with my Higher Power and experience life to the fullest.

Thanks, N.A.

K.C., Kentucky

I WANT BALANCE

When I heard the saying, "recovery equals balance," I liked it. As an addict I often find myself at one extreme or the other in various areas of my life. I become over-committed in service to the Fellowship or I hold no positions, I work a few too many hours or none at all, I take a couple extra classes or not enough, exercise every day of the week or only a couple times a month, eat way too much or barely enough to function properly, go to meetings every day or one every other week...

Well, you can continue this list on

your own, so I won't. I guess this points out two facets of our disease—obsession, and compulsion. Often I wonder which path the disease will choose next.

I have realized in recovery that the extremes aren't like they used to be, though I have to admit are still show up. I recognize them faster and start working my way back to the middle sooner. But the pendulum still swings. As I stay clean I will deal with life each day, and as a result I will grow up in the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. Much gratitude for understanding and being there for me throughout the ultimate striving for balance.

T.S., Michigan

REDRESSING THE BALANCE

It has been said that the great creative power is everything. If we leave out one whole chunk of it, by making God only masculine, we have to redress the balance.

I am an addict. My intentions for writing are simple. They spring from a need for us to begin looking at a spiritual imbalance in our program. I am aware that within the N.A. Program spiritual principles are never in conflict. Our words, however, are.

Allow me to shed light on a monumental contradiction underlying the wording of two of our spiritual principles.

On the one hand, we impress upon newcomers the necessity of finding a Higher Power of their understanding. We suggest only that their Higher Power be loving and understanding. On the other hand, the Third Step reads, "We made a decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of God, *as we understood Him.*" This is where the contradictions abound.

At this point, we have used the word

"Him," implying explicitly that God is of masculine gender. This is very confusing and contradictory to newcomers and oldtimers alike.

A much more neutral wording of this Step could possibly read, "We made a decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of the God of our understanding." The Eleventh Step might go, "We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with the God of our understanding, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out."

The one thought that runs through my mind when I hear our exclusive, gender-biased references to God is this: "Addiction doesn't discriminate; why should we?"

Anonymous, Michigan

THERE IS A WAY— THE N.A. WAY

While I was using drugs, I wondered at times if I was an addict. For a long time the question went unanswered. I know now that I am an addict; I've been clean almost six months.

I started using at ten years old with friends who were two or three years older than I was. I used in an effort to be a part of the crowd, to be looked upon as an equal.

I went through school with no real problems, even though I was already experimenting with a whole variety of drugs. After graduating, I went into the army and then college. Again, no real problems.

When I reached my early twenties, I started using more and more. I still thought I had things under control, but I was wrong; things were starting to get out of control. I was unable to keep a job for any length of time, and I would spend entire paychecks on drugs.

When it came to relationships with family and friends, well, I just didn't give a damn. In truth, my life had become completely unmanageable. My addiction had been controlling my life instead of me being in control.

At this time, even the simplest things became major tasks. I began not caring about how I looked, nor did I care about how my family and friends felt. The people in my life that cared for me tried to help me, but I had made up my own mind that they were trying to run my life as they had before.

At the age of twenty-four, because my family thought I had a problem, I spent six and a half months at a drug rehabilitation center. I went through the program with the attitude that it wasn't going to do me any good, and that I didn't have any problems. It didn't help. The more people told me I had a problem with drugs, the more I used.

About nine months ago, I hit bottom. I knew that nothing could possibly get any worse. Even death would have been welcomed. I found I could not stop using, and I couldn't go on the way I was living. I started to attend one or two N.A. meetings a week in the hope of finding the answer to the question, "Am I an addict?"

I first attended meetings in jail last summer on a weekly basis. That was when I started to think differently about my using.

But still, when I was released in September after sixty-two days of not using, I didn't feel like I had a drug problem. Well, I was wrong. I started using more than ever after my release. I went through seven jobs in six months before I was arrested again, loaded. I spent another thirty-two days in jail.

I had grown tired of my life, so I

started going back to N.A. to get help. I was familiar with the program this time, so I felt a little more at ease. I met people there who had gone through the same things I had, and sometimes more. They made me feel very much at home in the program. I was able to make friends who were capable of understanding me and my disease.

The people in N.A. have taught me more than just how to stay drug-free; they have taught me how to live. I found that I could achieve and maintain my clean time by working and living the Twelve Steps of recovery.

I was still having problems, though. I was feeling emotions that I had hidden for so long that I didn't know how to deal with them. By listening to the people I met through the program, I started learning how to live with myself and my emotions.

I would like to say that my life now isn't a bowl full of cherries. It takes a lot of hard work to achieve anything that I want this badly; but it's so much easier to deal with life's little bumps and ruts now that I am in recovery that it's worth the work. I'm in jail right now waiting for a transfer, but at least I know that when I get out, I will still have my clean time, my recovery, and my friends in N.A.

I owe many thanks to everyone that I met through N.A. for showing so much love and understanding, and all that they've shared with me in the last few months. Through N.A., I was given a chance to start over again with the help of a Higher Power and the Twelve Steps. With that help, I can overcome my past and deal with today—and succeed.

B.B., Colorado

READING IN RECOVERY

I've not been much of a reader most of my life, but when I got disabled and clean at about the same time, that changed. I found myself liking to read more and more as I began to work my program and recover from addiction.

Being disabled, I couldn't get around much for the first two years of my recovery. During that time I became very attached to the *N.A. Way*, the Loner Group, and the Basic Text. They are my best friends. When I'm not able to get out to attend meetings, and I begin to feel frustrated, lonely, and uncomfortable, I grab an *N.A. Way* and I read it. I open it up and focus on words such as recovery, steps, gratitude, the Serenity Prayer, Higher Power, meetings, honesty, miracles, Fellowship, "carry the message," willingness,

open-mindedness, sponsorship, meditation, and I could go on and on.

Those words make my mind focus on recovery. With the help of the members of the Fellowship who have written articles for the *N.A. Way*, and the letters I receive from members of the Loner Group, I get in a recovering frame of mind again.

I'm grateful that the *N.A. Way* articles are alive with recovery, and that letters are pouring in from recovering addicts all over the world. I want to thank all the recovering addicts for their stories shared, and encourage other isolated addicts to use these resources available for your recovery. God bless you all.

T.S., California

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 three months in advance. Include title, location, P.O. box, dates and contacts.

ALASKA: Mar. 11-13, 1988; ARSCC IV; Lake Lucille Lodge, 1300 Lake Lucille Drive, Wasilla, AK 99687, (907) 373-1776; Michelle (907) 745-1052; ARSCC IV, PO Box 874935, Wasilla, AK 99687

AUSTRALIA: Apr. 1-4, 1988; 4th Australasian RCNA; Fremantle, Western Australia; 4th Australasian RCNA, Box 668, Subiaco 6008, WA, AUSTRALIA

CALIFORNIA: Mar. 4-6, 1988; NCCNA; Oakland Hyatt Regency Hotel & Convention Center, 12th & Broadway, Oakland, CA; Steve

(408) 446-4445; NCCNA 10, PO Box 59114, San Jose, CA 95159

CANADA: May 13-15, 1988; 1st Ontario Regional Convention; Toronto, Ontario; Rachel (416) 789-0264; Susan 252-6686; ORCNA 1, 5468 Dundas St.W. Box 620, Toronto, Ontario, CAN M9B 6E3

FLORIDA: June 30 - July 4, 1988; FRCNA-7; Stouffer Hotel, 6677 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando FL 32821, (305) 351-5555; contact Charlie M. (305) 588-6273, Lovell H. 291-6138, Richard C. 891-1867; Florida RSO, 2727 E. Oakland Pk. Blvd., #203, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33306

GEORGIA: Feb. 25-28, 1988; GRCNA VII; Hyatt Regency Ravinia, 4355 Ashford Dunwoody Road, Atlanta, GA 30346, (800) 228-9000; Shirley (404) 535-1626; Mitch 264-9540; Rhonda 252-7137; GRCNA VII, P.O. Box 2226, Gainesville, GA 30503

HAWAII: Feb. 12-14, 1988; 4th Annual Fellowship Weekend; Camp Erdman, HI; Tom C. (808) 262-4631; George K. 262-4394; C.C. 261-3869; Regional Office 533-4900; NA Fellowship Weekend, P.O. Box 27909, Honolulu, HI 96827

INDIANA: Apr. 1-3, 1988; KRCNA II; Executive Inn, 6th & Walnut St., Evansville, IN, (800) 457-3841; Mike W. (812) 424-1673; Donnie A. 422-5815; Bernie T. 426-0357; KRCNA II, PO Box 3184, Evansville, IN 47730

KENTUCKY: Feb. 12-14, 1988; 3rd Annual Traditions Workshop; Days Inn, 101 E Jefferson St., Louisville, KY 40202, (502) 585-2200; Ro S. 935-2481; Steve D. 937-1760; KRSCNA, PO Box 72305, Louisville, KY 40272

2) Apr. 1-3, 1988, KRCNA II, Evansville, IN--see under INDIANA

LOUISIANA: Mar. 4-6, 1988; LPRCNA VI; Holiday Inn, Covington; Hotel res--Cheryl Hunt, (504) 893-3580; Info--Peter or Mary, (504) 626-7298; John or Kat, (504) 893-9265; LPRCNA VI, P.O. Box 1693, Covington, LA 70434

MAINE: Sep. 9-11, 1988; We're A Miracle V; Bruce & Kim (207) 772-4558; Stan & Jane (207) 784-5863; Bill (617) 563-5885; ASC of Maine, Convention Committee, P.O. Box 5309, Portland, ME 04101

NEVADA: Feb. 5-7, 1988; SNCNA II; Las Vegas, NV; Debi A. (702) 453-6653; Dave T. 452-6938; Nancy T. 451-0899; SNCNA II, P.O. Box 4771, Las Vegas, NV 89127-0771

NEW HAMPSHIRE: June 24-26, 1988; "Vision of Hope," 9th ECCNA; University of NH in Durham; Jay N. (603) 437-5501; Brian 452-7875; Shirley 458-4808; 9th ECCNA, PO Box 388, Pelham, NH 03076

NORTH CAROLINA: Mar. 11-13, 1988; 1st Capitol Area Family Reunion; Sheraton Imperial, Exit 282 off I-40 between Raleigh and Durham, NC, (800) 222-6503; info Dayne W. (919) 839-1219, David C. 553-3439, John H. 479-2040;

2) Apr. 15-17, 1988; Grtr. Charlotte Area Convention; Marriott Hotel, Charlotte, NC; Libby Bolch, C.I. Chair, Grt Clt Area, 18021 Nantz Rd., Huntersville, NC 28078

3) July 1-3, 1988; 9th Carolina Regional Convention; Sheraton Greensboro Hotel, 3 Southern Life Center, Greensboro, NC; contact Marc (919) 855-3294, Ed 565-4913; C.I. Chair, 9th Carolina,

Regional Convention, 6518 Dusty Road, Liberty, NC 27298

OHIO: May 27-29, 1988; OCNA VI; Holiday Inn Eastgate, 4501 Eastgate Blvd., Cincinnati, OH 45245; Carolyn R. (513) 863-9870; Buck F. 752-8281; send speaker tapes; OCNA VI, P.O. Box 9234, Hamilton, OH 45014

OKLAHOMA: Apr. 1-3, 1988; Oklahoma Regional Convention; Camelot Hotel, 4956 S. Peoria, Tulsa, OK 74105, (800) 331-4428, (918) 747-8811; Leo S. (918) 664-4883; Sarah L. (918) 742-4816; Chuck G. (405) 372-4007; Tonja H. (405) 787-4007; OKRSC, PO Box 52465, Tulsa, OK 74152

PENNSYLVANIA: Feb. 26-28, 1988; Mid-Atlantic Regional Learning Conference IV; George Washington Lodge, Allentown, PA, (215) 433-0131; Bill A. 398-8438; Lou or Mike 432-8719; Dave or Brenda 437-3285; 24 hour helpline 439-8440; MARLCNA4, P.O. Box 4475, Allentown, PA 18105

2) Mar. 25-27, 1988; 6th Grt Phila RCNA; Adams Mark Hotel, rsvn.s (215) 581-5000; conv. contacts Dennis N. (215) 879-1172; J.R. 482-6186; Margie 534-8782; Grtr. Phila. RSC, P.O. Box 42628, Philadelphia, PA 19101-2628

RHODE ISLAND: Apr. 1-3, 1988; NERC III; Marriott Hotel, Providence; Info--Steve (401) 789-2569, Ken N. 728-2714; NERC III, Attention, Mishell L., P.O. Box 3009, Newport, RI 02840

TEXAS: Mar. 25-27, 1988; LSRCA III; Rodeway Inn, Hwy 360 at Six Flags Drive, Arlington, TX 76011, (817)640-7080, (800)228-7080; Vince 924-0939; Don 738-5329; Rick 573-3201; LSRCA III, Prog. Committee, PO Box 5540, Fort Worth, TX 76108

2) Apr. 15-17, 1988; Texas Unity Convention, Whitney, TX; David (713) 332-8236; Texas Unity (Whitneys), 1612 Second Street, League City, TX 77573

VIRGINIA: Mar. 4-6, 1988; 2nd Annual Chesapeake/Potomac Regional Convention; Stouffer Concourse Hotel, Arlington, (703)979-6800; Lonacia C. (703)437-6433; Dave H. 860-2880; Kevin A. 941-7474; Registration Committee, P.O. Box 6821, Arlington, VA 22206-0821

WASHINGTON: Apr. 8-10, 1988; 3rd Annual Washington-Northern Idaho Regional Convention; Holiday Inn, 1515 George Washington Way, Richland WA 99352, (509) 946-4121; to submit a tape contact Rhonda A., 6622 W. Yellowstone, Kennewick, WA 99336; gen.info. Crystal (509) 735-3952, Rhonda A. 783-4060; WNIR Convention Committee, 7403 W. Canal Drive #400, Kennewick, WA 99336



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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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*My gratitude speaks when I care,
And when I share with others, the N.A. way*

Inside this month's N.A. Way

Features on N.A. in the United Kingdom:

What it was like, what happened, and
what it's like now

PLUS:

How can you keep your attitude fresh?

Visualizing the patterns of
addiction and recovery

The N.A. meeting: a marketplace or
an addict's sanctuary?

News from N.A. World Services

Group conscience: a weapon or God's will?

And a lot more!