

THE N.A. Way

M A G A Z I N E

May 1988 \$1.50

**The leading edge of recovery:
the N.A. Loner Group**

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The war is over

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**Our name: do we
need to change it?**

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**Recovering behind
closed doors**

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

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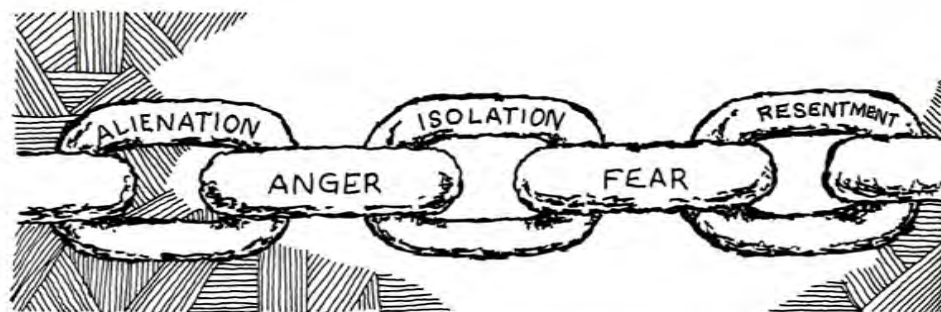
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Miracles behind bars

using or die in prison. How ironic: I had to lose to win.

Each of us falls to our own depth, but whatever the bottom, it is always hard, devastating and painful. In the past I blamed life's problems on mom and dad, friends, women, judges, pro-



Jail never stopped me from getting high. I would make jailhouse wine, hustle the prison doctors for pain pills, pay a guard to bring me in a drug package, or get a visitor to mule me some dope.

When I was on the street, I built my own prison. My addiction wouldn't let me wander any further than the dope-man's house. Alienation, isolation, anger, resentment and fear were the links in the chain that bound me. They were much stronger and much more immobilizing than any razorwire fence or hundred foot wall that I have seen to date.

When I came to jail this time, I continued the "same-o, same-o" routine. I got a guard to bring me drugs. After five days of no food or sleep, I finally said to myself, "What the hell am I doing? I'm not out of jail yet and already I'm trying to come back!" I was beaten. Surrender was no longer a choice; it was a fact. I had to stop

bation officers, cops, district attorneys, etc. Suddenly after twenty-one years of active addiction, eight years in prison (in and out), and no veins left in either arm, there was no one left to blame but me.

When I realized this, I hit my knees for the first time since childhood. I told God that I didn't want to use drugs anymore. Then I said, "Wait a minute, God. I'm so messed up, I'm probably lying to You. I've been lying so long I don't know what the truth is, but I think I want to change." Looking back on that moment in my life, I can clearly see that those were the most honest words I had ever spoken.

Shortly after that, I found N.A.—or N.A. found me. I have not had any drugs since that day, December 7, 1986. A miracle was truly performed in my life. I am the "fruit of the labor" of the H&I (Hospitals and Institutions) Committee.

I told the N.A. members on the outside that I wanted to do a 90/90

(ninety meetings in ninety days), but I couldn't because we didn't have meetings here every night. They told me to start my own meeting. I replied that I was incapable. They said, "You can do it. Do whatever it takes to stay clean."

With that thought in mind, I began what was to become the most rewarding experience of my life. On January 15, 1987, the first meeting of the Open Arms group was held. In attendance was God, myself, and another addict. At that time we didn't know that we were making prison history. Never before had a meeting been formed by inmates to be held every night. As we held on blindly to faith, membership grew. Today the attendance exceeds twenty addicts per night. We made it possible for addicts that are incarcerated here to do a 90/90 while still in prison.

As our numbers grew, we overflowed the one cell that was available to us. Finally we went to the administration to ask for more space. You guessed it: they accommodated us. Small miracles were growing behind those bars.

Have you seen the N.A. informational pamphlet, "The Loner"? Well, that's us: staying clean in isolation. We make phone calls, correspond with addicts all over the world, and get a weekly visit from the H&I guys.

I got a sponsor, and we went over the first three steps through the mail. Then he suggested I do a fourth. After eight weeks and three hundred pages of writing, I had a book! The N.A. members on the outside said that I put new meaning into the words "searching," "fearless" and "thorough." I explained that I had very

little to do with it. All I did was say a prayer and hold the pen.

Visitors are only allowed to visit for one hour per week. This presented me with a problem for doing my Fifth

*Never before had
inmates held a
meeting every night
inside a prison.*

Step. By the grace of God, the prison officials understood what I was doing. Not only did they let my fifth stepper stay as long as we needed, but they set up a private room we could share in.

The truly remarkable part of this incident is that I'm not serving time in a small country prison where guards and inmates are cordial to each other. I'm in one of the nation's largest prison systems, where guards are guards and inmates are numbers. Kindness, consideration and understanding are words that have been forgotten here for the most part. What has happened here is truly miraculous.

Today, even though I am incarcerated, I enjoy a certain sense of freedom that I had never experienced in my past. I no longer lie in my cell thinking of how I will get my next high. The obsession to use has left me.

Today when I look out my cell window, I look beyond the stars for strength and guidance. I have hope for whatever my future might bring, faith in the fact that things do get better, and courage to do whatever it takes to stay clean.

T.M., Pennsylvania

The final comment to Gary A.

I want to thank you, N.A., for teaching me about surrender and letting go, both painful but necessary tools for recovery. I want to thank you for helping me feel again and letting me share this with you. I especially want to thank you for the Serenity Prayer—which now works for me—and for showing me how to use it.

One of the most tragic things about our disease is that we can die from it. All of us will sometime be touched by the death of someone we are close to, someone who died not knowing about recovery, never knowing that there is an out, a way to live outside the continuing horrors of addiction. We will feel rage over a needless death,

and we will want to make people know how serious this disease is.

Sometimes I get angry at my fellow addicts because they don't seem to

sense that seriousness. It almost seems like a big joke. Maybe I am wrong in my perceptions, but I have become aware of how fortunate I am

in being allowed so many chances to recover. I will always have another relapse available to me, guaranteed. But another recovery, that is not guaranteed.

One addict in particular never gave up on me in this fellowship, even at my sickest. He was always there extending his hand and his love to me. Through his example, I glimpsed the miracle.

When I had one day clean, he hugged me and told me I was a

Gary taught me a lesson by bad example. He kept secrets.

miracle, but I did not believe him. As the days grew, he helped keep the miracle alive in me until it could sustain itself. Gary taught me that I had a choice, that I could recover.

We kind of grew together. Gary was not a guru, nor did he allow himself to be treated like one, but he had that second level of vision that some of us lack. He could look beyond the sickest part of me and see something of beauty, and he never gave up on me. He kept giving me that "wordless language of recognition, belief and faith, which we call empathy." [*Narcotics Anonymous*, 4th ed., p. 80.]

He made me feel welcome, because he always stood by the door and hugged everyone who came in. Gary was not afraid to be himself, and he taught me to be myself. He was one of the few people I never had to wear a mask for. Gary taught me how to love

when I could not or would not love myself.

Like me, he too had a hard time recovering at first. I remember having two weeks clean and sitting with him so he would not use. Many times he turned over the keys to his Fleetwood so he could not cop.

I remember sitting with him while he went through withdrawals, not knowing what to say. I knew that even in my sickest time I cared for him and felt bad. But we made it. He went on to get a year, and I kept playing games. Others had written me off as a waste of time, but he stuck with me. That is why I am clean today.

Gary taught me a lot, just by setting an example. But he taught me a greater lesson: that there is nothing I can't share with another addict. That lesson he taught by bad example. You see, he kept secrets inside him. He just would not share his pain. He stuffed it because he did not want to burden anyone with it.

Gary stayed clean a year that way before he went out and used. He forgot that he had a disease, but the disease remembered. It took his life. Those who knew him like I did banded together. His death brought us closer to one another. Some openly mourned, some just talked about it for awhile, and some went out and used. I did none of these; I stuffed my anger and my sense of loss and grief.

I must not have learned much from Gary because I stuffed my feelings, forgetting that my disease is based on denial. I never dealt with them, but out of spite and anger I stayed clean. I told myself I would be damned if I would use behind this.

Gary's death is not talked about

much anymore. All the faces have changed, and those who are here have no idea of the contributions he made to my life and to the lives of others he touched. His death has made me finally see that it is necessary to accept the reality of this disease.

*He forgot that he had
a disease, but the
disease remembered.
It took his life.*

Through this tragedy I can see how blessed I am that I was allowed to live. The truth—that it could have been me—is a sobering fact.

Sometimes I wish I could pound it into other people's heads that this disease takes you out. Fortunately, I have not found it necessary to use, and have found myself recovering in spite of myself.

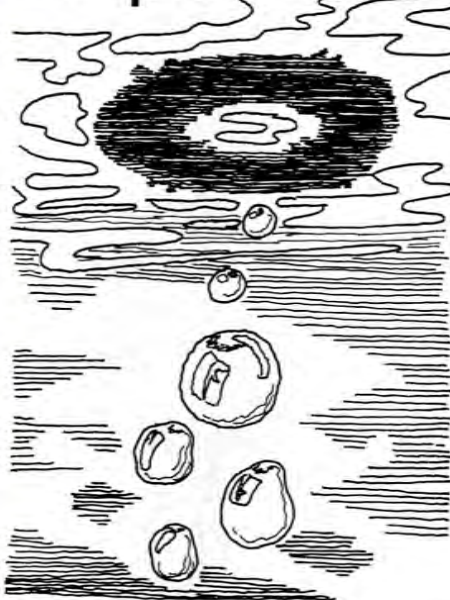
I loved Gary, and I feel the loss every day. But through practicing acceptance and gratitude, I am beginning to allow myself to feel the pain and to deal with it as it is, a fact of life.

I wrote this as a surrender, a letting go, perhaps even as a goodbye. But more importantly, I wrote it as a reminder that no addict need die from the horrors of addiction.

Looking ahead, I have hope, because "Just For Today, my thoughts will be on my new associations, people who are not using and who have found a new way of life. So long as I follow that way, I have nothing to fear."

D.M., Ohio

Ships



I look back on my old life as if it were a slowly sinking ship. The ride started out fun at first and felt really good. Then the skies got dark and gloomy and the seas got rough. There were lifeboats and supplies on board—I could have gotten off and returned to safety any time. I chose to stay on the ship anyway. All I could think about were the good old days of sunshine and smooth sailing. The chance that someday we might hit smooth sailing again somehow made all the danger seem worthwhile.

As time went on things got worse. The rain came, the seas became more turbulent, and the wind cut like a knife. Still I chose not to get off the ship. I had become so obsessed with those memories of smooth sailing that I had lost the ability to make a good decision. Life in the storm, lit only by the after-image of a now absent sun,

became all I knew. I lost the ability to choose, and the ship began to take on water.

God threw me a life preserver on several occasions, but I ignored it. I wanted clear skies, not life preservers! I chose to stay and bail desperately.

Eventually the ship became submerged and my lungs filled with water. At the last minute God pulled me from the wreckage, breathed life back into my body, and set me on dry ground.

*God threw me a life
preserver, but I
ignored it. I wanted
clear skies, not life
preservers!*

He gave me back my soul, slowly nurtured me back to health, and helped me get my land-legs back.

I still ride ships today: relationships, hardships, friendships and sometimes battleships called internal spiritual conflicts. Sometimes seas get rough and skies get dark, and I remember the ride to the bottom and the hopeless, helpless, desperate obsession with clear skies and feeling good. I also know that good things seldom come easy, and I must work in order to grow.

So today I will try not to act on my obsession for what feels good. Today I will ask for God's will and "the wisdom to know the difference." And today I will do what I feel is best and leave the results in God's hands.

D.D., West Virginia

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I have a purpose

I learned at age twelve when I smoked my first joint that I didn't need to hurt anymore. I didn't need to feel anything anymore. During that time, I was being sexually abused by my grandfather. I didn't discover how much this abuse affected me until fifteen years later.

As far back as I can remember, I had a feeling of not belonging. I had no self-esteem or self-confidence. I went through life feeling like I was trash.

By the time I was sixteen I was dealing drugs to support my habit. I



went through life feeling that I wasn't needed, but when I sold drugs I felt needed. That is how addiction had

filled my soul. Using and dealing drugs became my way to survive in a world I did not understand.

My addiction led me through many hard times, and it caused me to lose a lot of things that should have meant a lot to me. Because of my addiction I went through a marriage that ended in divorce, entered treatment four times, and was sentenced to a year in prison for delivery of a controlled substance.

I believe my suffering was for a purpose—so I can carry the message.

My disease ruled and controlled fifteen years of my life.

Today I am again facing a long term in jail. The last time I got out of prison, it only took me three months to start using again. With using came dealing, which insured my supply. The dealing made me feel like a whole person, because once again people needed me for something.

So that is my life of addiction. I did not understand any of it until now, nine months into recovery. I can say that these have been the best months of my life, and at the same time, the hardest.

Nine months ago I thought the only way out of this insanity was to kill myself. The drugs were no longer taking me away from the reality of the life I had lived. Then I had my first contact with a higher power. Somehow God came into my life and led me to a better one, starting with another round of treatment. This time treatment was different, because I had hurt long enough and had become ready to do whatever I had to do to get clean. I

had to get completely honest with myself and everybody else.

Looking back at that time, I see that too many things happened to me to have been mere coincidences. I believe my higher power had a definite plan for me. In that treatment center there was an N.A. H&I meeting. It was my first N.A. meeting, and it fired something up in me. I knew I had found something I had never felt before. I found a group of people who understood me. There was a lady at this meeting I had known several years before, and I was able to get phone numbers of contacts in N.A. when I got back home. I believe my higher power set this up for me.

When I was released and returned home, I found out that the N.A. group had folded. This made me mad, so I got it started again. I got involved in service work right away. I became the GSR and went to the area service committee meetings and learned a lot about the traditions. I learned that our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

Narcotics Anonymous has become my life. The Twelve Steps have shown me a way to live with my defects of character. The fellowship has shown me what unconditional love is. I have learned in this program that people can love me and not ask for anything in return.

My higher power has really given me a lot of opportunities. I guess he has always given me all the opportunities I needed, but I hadn't been in a position to take him up on them until I got clean.

In the past nine months I have struggled with my higher power. I have questioned how he could have let

all these bad things happen to me. I came to the conclusion that God does not let bad things happen to me. God gives me the strength to make it through the bad situations I create for myself.

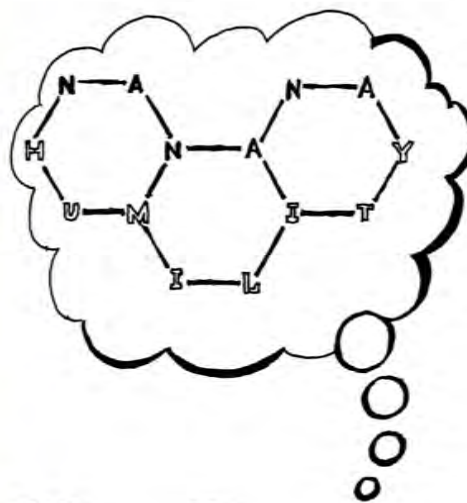
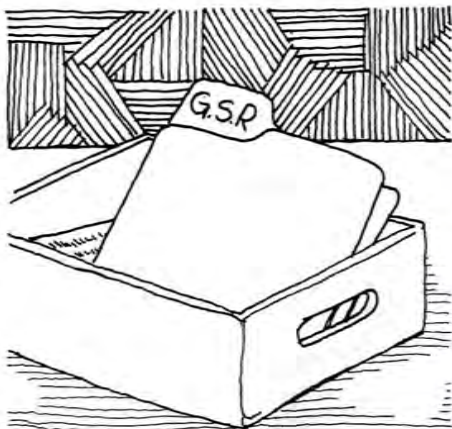
Today I believe my suffering was for a purpose—so I can be doing what I am doing. I believe I made it through all this to carry the message that recovery is possible under any circumstances.

My higher power has given me the strength to face prison and take responsibility for my past behavior. If my higher power has gotten me through everything that has happened so far, he will certainly get me through anything I might face in the future.

Today, when things get tough and I am struggling, I have people I can call. I get down on my knees and pray for strength to make it through what life throws at me. That is all I ask for: strength. I am also able to thank God for nine months of clean time.

I am proud to be a recovering addict. N.A. and the Twelve Steps have shown me a way to live. I have true friends. I feel like I was chosen to carry the message and do God's work.

C.B., North Dakota



Humility: a unifying idea

If all the principles that make up the program of N.A. could be boiled down to a single unifying idea, what would it be? I got to wondering that after reading an article that was exploring a similar question about the principles of physics. I wonder what exactly are "these principles," the principles that we are supposed to practice in all of our affairs, and what single force binds them together?

Certain ideas come to me upon a careful look at the steps. The word "we" is used a lot: sixteen times. In my using days I had to do everything by myself. What especially caused me to suffer was that I could not ask questions or seek help. I had to do it all alone. I did not feel connected to others. I was alone, even in a crowd. It was me against a hard, critical world.

So it seems that "we" are to do things with others instead of by our-

selves. References to a Higher Power or a God as we understand Him appear frequently—in six of the Twelve Steps—so I know that's important. The word "humbly" occurs only once, yet I believe it could be the unifying element.

Each of the Twelve Steps implies humility, or being humble. The best

What exactly are these principles that we are supposed to practice in all of our affairs, and what single force binds them together?

comment I have ever heard at a meeting about humility was that if you have humility, no one has to put you in your place, because you are already there.

Where do I see emphasis on humility in the Twelve Steps? Step One requires enormous humility. It's humbling to admit not only that we cannot handle some little drug, but that we cannot handle our lives. The step does not say that we have trouble with only a certain part of our lives. Rather it says "our lives had become unmanageable."

What makes this step extra humbling is that at the time we try to take it, we have usually already spent much time and effort trying to prove that we could handle our drugs and our lives. Just to challenge that belief is a humbling experience, and here we

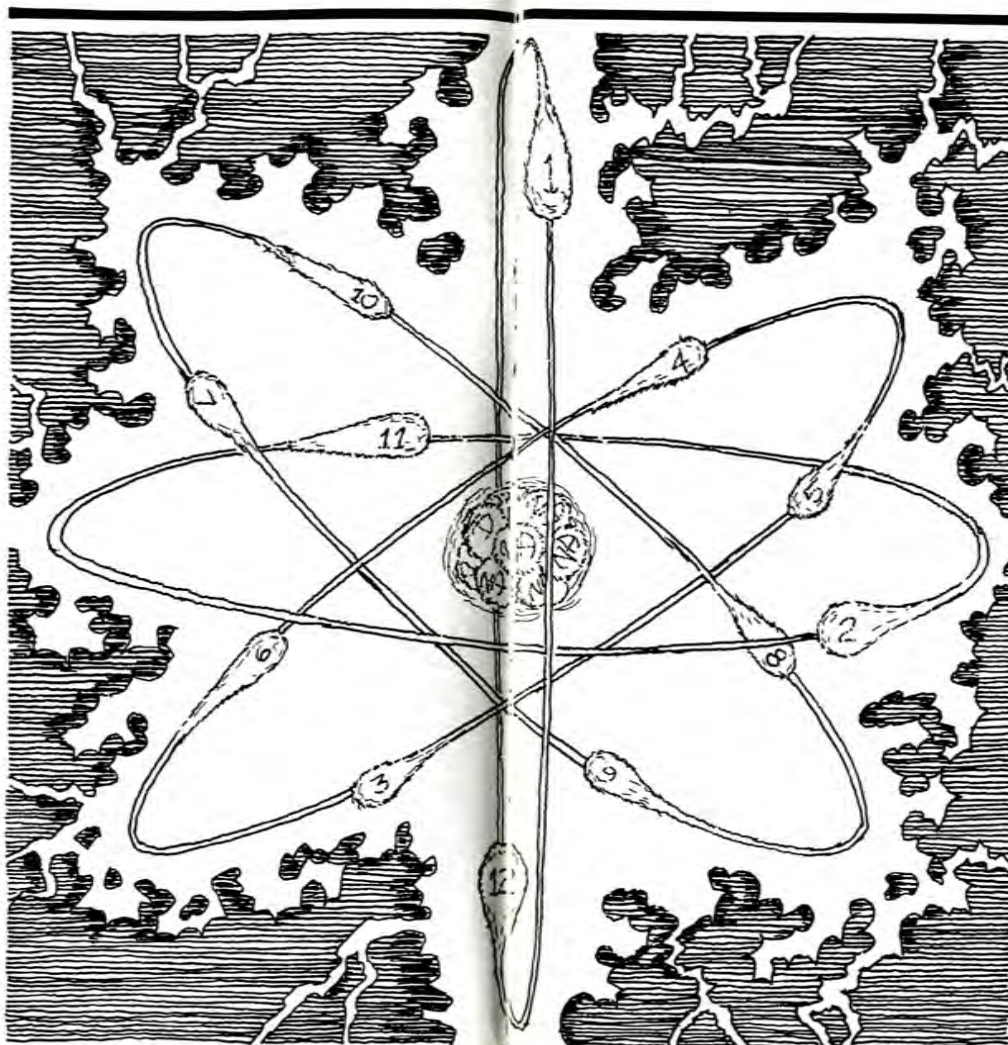
have to admit that we have screwed up our whole life.

Step Two says that we came to believe in a Power greater than ourselves. To admit that something was more powerful than me was a humbling experience. Then comes the *killer phrase*: "restore us to sanity." Implicit in this statement is the idea that we are not sane. My dictionary defines "insane" as "mentally deranged or unsound, crazy, demented." What is worse is that we must come to believe this. It does not say that we have to listen to a doctor or judge accuse us—we come to *believe* it.

Step Three continues by saying that we have to allow some force or power to take care of our will and our lives. I can remember many times when my self-will told me that no one was going to make me do something that I did not care to do. A baby, a prisoner, a slave, all are controlled and taken care of by others. In this step I had to allow someone or something else to take care of me. Making the decision on this matter was humbling. Sometimes I think being forced with a gun and a club would have been easier on my ego.

A shift of thinking occurs in Step Four. "We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." Notice it does not say to tell someone how good we are. It explicitly states, "our wrongs." Step Six further deflates our egos by calling our attention to our defects. Step Seven is the shortest of the steps, eight words, each a powerful reference to humility.

Step Eight demands humility. We have to remember all the people we have harmed. The choice of the word "harmed" is excellent. I like the choice



ourselves, God, and another person. Notice it does not say to tell someone how good we are. It explicitly states, "our wrongs."

Step Six further deflates our egos by calling our attention to our defects. Step Seven is the shortest of the steps, eight words, each a powerful reference to humility.

Step Eight demands humility. We have to remember all the people we have harmed. The choice of the word "harmed" is excellent. I like the choice

of "list," which means not just one or the worst. The use of "all" is good. The writers did not say one, some, or many. Using both "all" and "list," the authors knew that we can be good con artists; hence, both words are necessary.

If Step Eight was tough on our ego, Step Nine is worse. In this step we have to actually make amends. So we have to admit that we were wrong or that we did wrong. All this is humbling.

Step Ten tells us to keep doing Steps Four through Nine. We have not reached perfection yet. Like Step Ten, Step Eleven reminds us to keep up what we started in the first three.

And Step Twelve reminds us yet again to continue doing all these humbling things. It is interesting that the word "tried" was put in. Just saying "to carry this message" might

*If you have humility,
no one has to put
you in your place—
because you are
already there.*

have been enough. Using "tried" implies that we will not always be successful, or perfect, or powerful in carrying the message—but that we should try anyway.

In all Twelve Steps the word "we" is used. Therefore, we do these steps with others rather than by ourselves. We do not take the credit by ourselves; we share it with the fellowship. I am always amazed when I hear someone who has just received an award list all the people who helped. For me, if I won an award and had an audience, I would want to say, "I'm Number One and I did it all by myself; I'm great." I need to read and hear the word "we" over and over again so that I do not take full credit for achieving something I couldn't possibly have done alone.

J.S., New York

Acceptance becomes trust

I am all too aware of those who have come to N.A. and who have, for whatever reason, been unable to stay and become a part of our fellowship. In reflecting back, I can recall several of those I knew and loved who are no longer with us. I have come to accept that N.A. is not for everyone. Anyone may recover, but not everyone does.

Learning to accept that things are not going to be what I want them to be has been painful. I started with acceptance early in recovery, when I had to honestly face the unmanageable facts of my life for the first time. If I wanted to recover, I had to accept my childhood, my failed marriage, the woman who no longer wanted me, my insanity, my insecurity, my fear, my anger and my resentment. With that

surrender I embarked on the way of life offered in Narcotics Anonymous. There I found hope, and through that hope, direction.

I know that I cannot afford the excuses and reservations that keep me sick. I can no longer afford the luxury of blaming others or circumstances

beyond my control for how I feel or what I do.

Contrary to what I thought for several years, doing what I want when I want to is not freedom. Freedom comes with acceptance. Acceptance for me implies responsibility, and responsibility means action.



I have come to rely on a power greater than myself for the courage I need to stay clean and to do those things I could not do before N.A.

A part of that courage comes from the belief that I can not do it "wrong." The action I take in my recovery will not harm me. It is my practice of

I started with acceptance early in recovery, when I had to honestly face the unmanageable facts of my life.

spiritual principles, not the results, that will save me. Today I seek recovery, not perfection.

I thank God for those members who allowed me to make my mistakes in recovery. They allowed me to realize that I am a human being and lovable as I am—not for what I strive to be or want to be, but for what I am today. They love me now. They told me that it didn't matter what I had or what I had done, that even I could recover to find happiness and peace of mind.

Time and again I have challenged the faith I have learned through the steps which are N.A. I have taken risks in my recovery, jumping blindly into the unknown, hoping that God would be there and that it would be okay.

Through those risks I have come to believe that the same God that was with me during those times of misery and despair is with me today. I am able to risk the belief that it really works.

Anonymous, Iowa

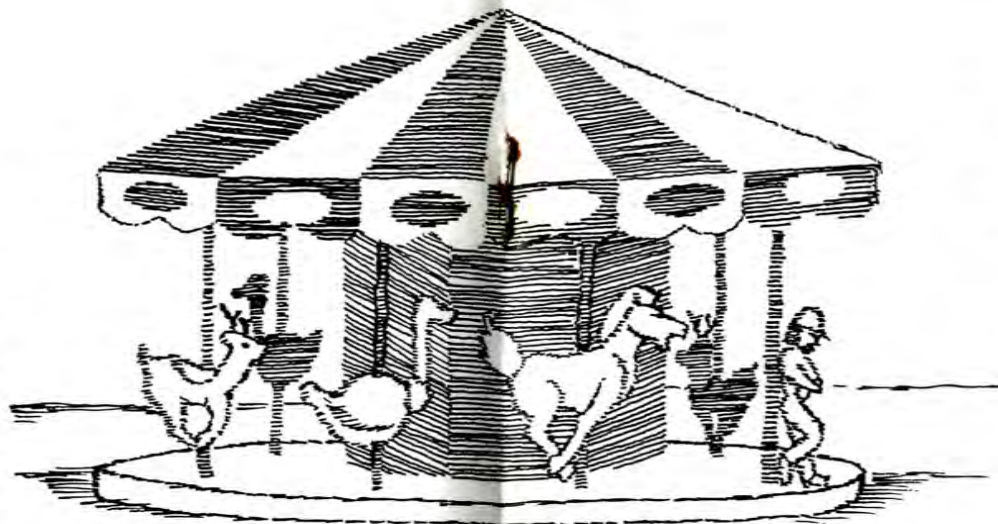
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A winner

When I first came into the fellowship, powerlessness did not mean much to me because I could not see that I was powerless. I readily admitted that I was an addict—no problem there. I was all that society said I was, but I was not powerless. And the more that people shared with me, the more angrily I resisted the truth. I used to get back on the merry-go-round of relapse and recovery just to show them how powerless I was not. I was always the last to know the truth about myself, and when the truth came it came rudely.

I am glad that my identification as an addict is not about what or how much I used. I can reflect now on my resistance to the truth and see just how into my disease I was. After all, using was the only thing that I had ever done well. I had taken pride in my ability to use a lot and in my system's tolerance.

I had no problem with my life being unmanageable. I knew by the time I was sixteen that something was wrong. But already I was finding people I could compare myself to, and of course their lives were worse than mine. I did not ever try to control my using; I did not play those games like using only one drug, or using only on



weekends. I just used constantly. I knew that wasn't normal, but it did not matter because my life did not matter. Using was the only consistent thing in my life until I found recovery.

Then you laid it on me: not only was I powerless (which I equated with moral weakness), but I had a *disease*! I hated anyone who said that; I was *not* morally weak. I had a personal code, things I would not do under any circumstances; and I used that code as a way of saying, "I did not have to do *that*." With that I walked out, continuing down the road of disillusionment which eventually led me right back to Narcotics Anonymous, as predicted, beaten.

I could not find lasting recovery until I came to terms with my powerlessness over my disease. Thank God that I did not have to do it alone. I had to see for myself that addiction is what the Basic Text and the people in N.A. said it was: a physical, mental and

When truth came, it came rudely.

spiritual disease that truly affects every area of my life.

I had run out of lies to tell myself. I couldn't even buy my own rationalizations and justifications any more. I had to become totally isolated, and in my own eyes, the epitome of degradation.

Now I can see that this is a progressive, incurable, fatal illness. I had lost many friends to this disease, yet even in those tragedies I could not see my own powerlessness. After all, I had not died. Then I heard in N.A. that rebuttal, "Not yet." And now I see the truth in that. We're powerless over addiction. One of the people who nurtured and loved me into wanting recovery proved that to me. He forgot he was powerless and died from this disease. So who the hell am I?

In the past, my reservations robbed me of any possible chance of finding recovery. Just for today, I do not have any reservations. My surrender has come through a lot of pain and agony. When people ask me why I had to suffer so much, I simply say, apparently God's plan was that I hit my own bottom. It was like I was drowning and there was a Hand reaching out to me. The more I tried to grab it, the more I came short. Just when I had given up, the magic of recovery happened. The grace of God came into my life and I was able to grab the Hand.

I have truly come to understand that in order to win I have to surrender each and every day. I just throw my hands up, admit my powerlessness, and let my Higher Power take over.

Today I can feel the pain of others, not just my own. I can understand the frustration newcomers feel, and the joy of seeing a perpetual relapser like myself grab hold of the Hand and finally let recovery happen. It happens every day. My powerlessness has given me the freedom to feel. I don't need to pretend to be so strong.

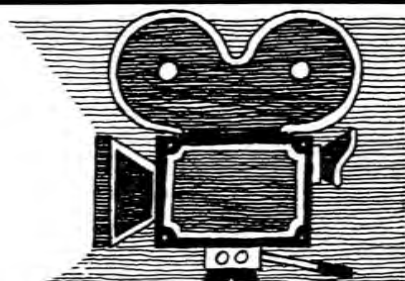
I cried out to my Higher Power in the loneliness of my addiction. He gave me a whole fellowship that I can let into my life if I choose. Even when I don't want to be loved, they love me in spite of myself!

Instead of a life of dereliction and death, I have been given a meaning and purpose. Even if I can only find it within the realm of this fellowship, that is okay for now. The rest will come later. Today I am going somewhere. I am winning, because I have surrendered.

Anonymous, Ohio

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Feature



The N.A. Loner Group

Isolated N.A. members anywhere in the world can tap "the therapeutic value of one addict helping another." Here's how.

Every N.A. group is special. One group, though, is more than just special—it's an international miracle. This group holds no meetings where its members can actually see one

another—in fact, it has no meeting place—yet it is responsible for the birth of new N.A. movements in countries around the world. Its members celebrate birthdays together, share joys with one another, and encourage each other in times of distress. They hold their meetings in hundreds of mailboxes on every continent each month. They are members of a unique N.A. community called the Loner Group. This is their story.

Beginnings

The Loner Group was established by N.A.'s World Service Office in 1984 to link isolated addicts seeking recovery with N.A. members who had access to regular meetings. As in normal N.A. communities, the real recovery goes on between individuals—but in this case through the mail. In order to provide some way for numbers of loners to share with one another at once, as other N.A. members do in Narcotics Anonymous meetings, a newsletter was established. The newsletter publishes letters from loners written especially for their *Meeting by Mail*, as it is called. In its first issue (September 1984), the group's WSO coordinator wrote about the Loner Group's beginnings.

"Last year, loner type mail was received by the WSO at a rate of

approximately one piece a week and was handled on a letter by letter basis, the response being different for each letter. But about four months ago, the receipt of this type of correspondence increased. By May of 1984, the need for a unified and structured Loner Group became apparent.

"Creating this new group was one of my first assignments after being hired May 1 of this year. After reading stacks of loner correspondence, I realized my inability to handle all responses personally. Since the correspondence was almost equally divided between loners and N.A. members wanting to share with loners, the solution was obvious. Indexes now list members designated as loners and those members we call 'loner sponsors.' The loner sponsors are members who are fortunate enough to live in areas where N.A. meetings, clean addicts and support are bountiful. They are able to share that abundance with loners, who are unable to attend regular N.A. meetings.

"Some of the loners live in foreign countries where N.A. has not yet been firmly established. Others living in the U.S. are prevented from attending regular meetings because of physical handicap or distance. Regardless of the reason, the loner member needs support from those able to attend meetings.

"We all know that without meetings and support from other recovering addicts, recovery is difficult. Slowly but surely, contact is being made between loners and sponsors. Although changes and improvements may be needed in our procedures, the basic concept of one addict helping another should continue and grow stronger as our numbers increase."

The early group

The Loner Group originally served three types of loners: institutionalized addicts, addicts outside the U.S., and American addicts unable to attend meetings. The WSO initially approached the project of linking loners and N.A. members in established communities with a great deal of caution. The primary concern was that an open N.A. correspondence list

The Loner Group's significance goes far beyond mere numbers.

might bring inappropriate mail to the loner. To prevent this, all letters were initially posted through the WSO and forwarded to loners. This safeguarded the loner's anonymity and privacy.

With the hiring of a staff coordinator for service to hospitals and institutions committees in November 1984, direct support for institutionalized addicts was initiated. The following spring, a periodical especially for institutionalized addicts, *Reaching Out*, began publication. Institutionalized addicts had formed the vast majority of the Loner Group. With more specialized service available for them through WSO's H&I Department, the Loner Group was left to focus on its other members.

With the much smaller mailing list, *Meeting by Mail* began experimenting with open correspondence. As soon as it was determined that loners were not being imposed upon, the

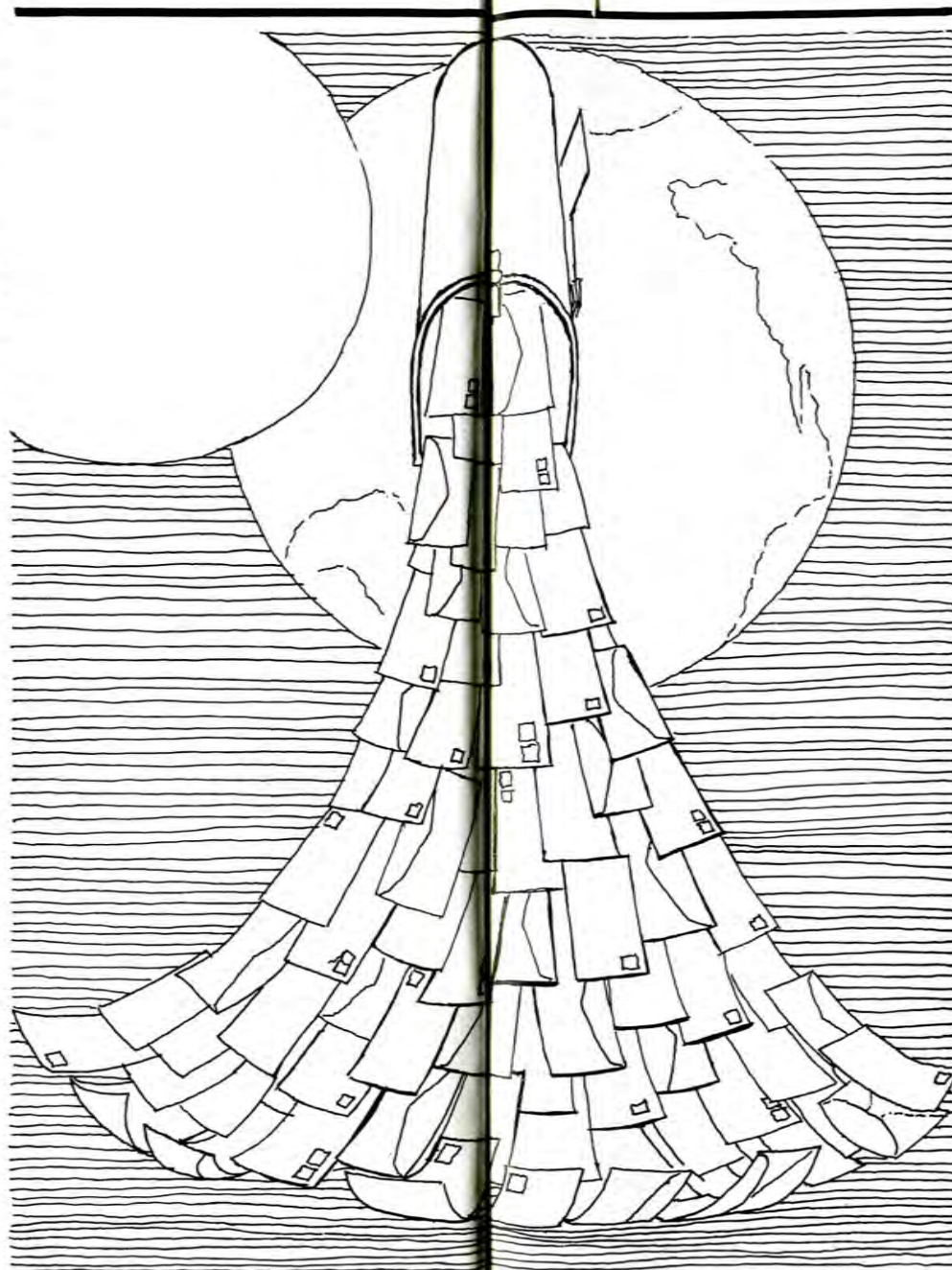
entire loner address list was published in the newsletter. This helped bring more mail more quickly to the loner. Still, isolated addicts were not getting a great deal of support.

Loner sponsors

The N.A. loner is only one half of the Loner Group equation. The other is the Loner Group sponsor. Loner sponsors are usually members of well-established N.A. communities. From their base of regular meetings and ready local access to other N.A. members, they sponsor loner N.A. members.

The need for non-loners in the Loner Group is tremendous. Though there are only eighty loners currently registered with the group, five times that many regular N.A. members also receive the *Meeting by Mail*. Why so many? Well, if each non-loner wrote one letter a month, each loner would get about a letter a week. Loners' only contact with N.A. recovery is through literature and these letters. The more Loner Group sponsors, the better the support for these isolated addicts.

Though Loner Group sponsors today far outnumber loner members, this has not always been the case. In its first year, almost no one knew of the group's existence. The WSO used a number of means to recruit Loner Group sponsors. Mailings were sent to area and regional service committees, articles were printed in the *Newsline* and the *N.A. Way* magazine, and a new informational pamphlet, "The Loner—Staying Clean in Isolation," was developed. Slowly, the number of regular N.A. members taking part in the Loner Group grew. Today, N.A. loners are well supported.



What does a loner sponsor do? Pretty much what any sponsor does—except they do it through the mail. "We can help new people learn the

principles of Narcotics Anonymous," writes one loner sponsor, "try to make them feel welcome, and give them the opportunity to learn what the program

has to offer." Having a Fifth Step shared with you by mail may seem a little awkward, and responding to one even more so. What makes it work? The same basic principles that apply to any kind of sponsorship, says another loner sponsor. "A simple,

*They hold their
meetings in hundreds
of mailboxes all over
the world.*

honest message of recovery rings true." [Narcotics Anonymous, 4th ed., p. 47.]

Sometimes, from what we read in *Meeting by Mail*, it's the non-loners who seem to be getting the greatest support from the Loner Group. In the June 1986 issue, one non-loner wrote, "I went through a period in April where I had the compulsion to use. Being an addict with pride and ego, I felt it terribly wrong to confess my desire to use to others during a meeting. The compulsion grew stronger. In desperation I wrote to a few loners. I admitted I wanted to use. It felt okay saying that to people I had never seen, and I can be much more honest in writing than speaking. After mailing the letters, I felt sure I would get through that time without using, and was in good spirits. I did not make it.

"After my relapse I was very confused. Part of me wanted never to return to N.A.; the other part did. But I was dealing with a lot of guilt and pride. I was afraid of hearing the *I told you so's*. Then I received some replies to the letters I had written earlier.

They were very positive. I will always remember one special letter from my friend Betty. She told me how much difference I had made in her life. She pointed out a few things I should be grateful for. At the time I got the letter, the only thing I thought I could have been grateful for was death. But I started to see that I made a difference, that my life had meaning.

"The letters I received directed me back to the meetings to introduce myself as a newcomer. The rejection I had feared turned out to be acceptance like I never had before. Thanks, Loner Group."

New meetings

From the beginning, loners have been encouraged to start new N.A. meetings so they wouldn't be loners! An article in the November 1984 *Meeting by Mail* explained, "Many of the letters to the Loner Group are from members wishing to start meetings in areas where N.A. is nonexistent. Others come from members who have started groups but have little or no support. These people are sent starter kits with literature, added to our various mailing lists, and invited to join the Loner Group until meetings are established and support is available from other clean addicts."

The Loner Group has been a part of a number of new N.A. communities started in countries where there had been no Narcotics Anonymous groups at all. Loner members can share experience in setting up first meetings, and get support for their personal recovery while they're doing it. In India, addicts in a number of cities wrote in to the WSO for help and were

linked together through *Meeting by Mail* and direct correspondence. Today there are fifteen meetings in four cities in India—six a week in Bombay, five a week in Calcutta, and four others—and an area service committee has been formed.

In the Australasian Region—serving New Zealand and Australia—the regional magazine used *Meeting by*

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Mail and Loner Group support in their own outreach to isolated addicts. N.A. Today's editor: "Copies of your newsletter have finally drifted across the Pacific to us here in Sydney. I was very pleased to hear about the Loner Group, of which I'd heard rumors. Setting up a written communication network and a store of contact addresses for Australasia has been a pet project of our newsletter. Isolated addicts have quite a struggle down here, particularly when the nearest meeting may be hundreds of miles away.

"When I saw your newsletter, I realized that you'd already created the kind of network that we were trying to establish. Rather than duplicate your work, I've been trying to think of how we can contribute to one another. Perhaps if you were to send N.A. Today a number of copies of *Meeting by Mail*, we could include those in our mailings here and suggest that iso-

lated addicts join the Loner Group."

Following the initiation of this cooperative effort, a number of members in the Australasian Region started correspondence. Over the period of about a year, *Meeting by Mail* readers heard two addicts from Dunedin, New Zealand, tell of their first meeting, the growth of their group, and finally of their linkage with the rest of N.A. in New Zealand as the group attended their first area service committee meeting. Month after month, the same story is told from Guatemala, Brazil, Israel, and other countries. And as more loners become parts of established N.A. groups, they reach back to the Loner Group as sponsors to give away what was given them.

Special workers

"I was always surprised," says one of the WSO staff who has worked with the Loner Group. "For me to imagine someone having to stay clean on waiting for a letter in the mailbox—I couldn't even conceive of that. But I would keep seeing these letters month after month and year after year, these people staying clean on this. Then they'd finally get a meeting started. They'd write back saying, 'I don't need to be a loner anymore because we've got a group going. There are three of us.' This little thing, people writing to one another—it's really worked!"

Most of the time, WSO staff members are occupied with very ordinary office work. The Loner Group has been a breath of fresh air for those who have had the privilege of working with it. Another worker currently assigned to the Loner Group says, "It's neat to watch. One of the guys from

Spain wrote in the last *Meeting by Mail*. He was frustrated because there were only A.A. meetings he could go to. He really wanted to identify with N.A. members, but it wasn't possible, so he was writing. Another Loner Group member responded the next month to his letter, relating how he had gone through the same thing and how he had just started a new N.A. meeting. You can't actually hear people's letters, but you can see their handwriting and tell that these people are real. They're sharing their experience, strength and hope with one another."

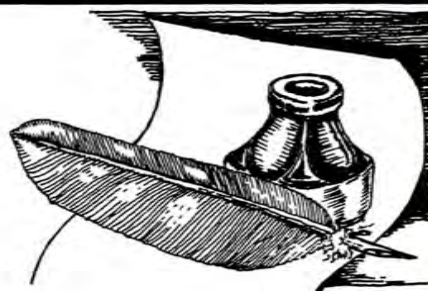
Taking part

The Loner Group and its bimonthly newsletter, *Meeting by Mail*, presently serve eighty loners in thirty countries. But the Loner Group's significance goes far beyond mere numbers. The group is a living demonstration of our First Tradition: "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity." Over the past three and a half years, N.A. members in established recovery communities have shared their experience with isolated addicts seeking recovery all over the world. The numbers may seem small, but the support given just one addict can lead to a brand new national N.A. movement—and has, time and time again. Truly, "the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel!"

If you would like to take part in the Loner Group, you can write:

The N.A. Loner Group
P.O. Box 9999
Van Nuys, California 91409
USA

Editorial



What does “Narcotics Anonymous” mean?

The word “narcotics” means “sleep inducing drugs” or “drugs of the opiate family.” So what does “Narcotics Anonymous” mean? “Unnamed sleep inducing opiates”? Our name doesn’t make a lot of sense. Because it is misleading, are there addicts out there who aren’t finding us, in effect being condemned to continued suffering, insanity and death?

Alcoholics Anonymous doesn’t have this problem. “Alcoholics” means people who habitually and compulsively use alcohol—alcohol addicts. Reasonable people who speak English, even those who somehow haven’t been exposed to A.A. over the last five decades, will understand something about A.A. just from their name. In the context of a society where A.A. is universally known, one would guess

that we are a group of narcotics addicts similar to A.A. who don’t know how to use the language—kind of poor dumb cousins or something. People have no reason to think anything else, based on our name.

Using any word referring to a specific kind of drug in the name of our fellowship is contrary to our most basic written philosophy. Yes, once an addict gets here our message gets clearer, but our name can keep many from getting here at all. Even some professionals who believe that “a drug is a drug” might think that we’re about recovery from narcotics addiction, based on our name, and refer only those addicts with narcotics problems to us.

From our Basic Text: “When ... there was no N.A. I found A.A., and in that fellowship met addicts who had also found that program to be the answer to their problem. However, we knew that many were still going down the road of disillusion, degradation and death, because they were unable to identify with the alcoholic in A.A. Their identification was at the level of apparent symptoms and not at the deeper level of emotions or feelings, where empathy becomes a healing therapy for all addicted people.” [*Narcotics Anonymous*, 4th ed., pp. 79-80.] Unfortunately, I believe many

continue down that road of horrors today. They cannot make the connection between their “apparent symptoms” and our name.

Nobody would suggest that changing our name to something more appropriate and less unattractive—more in line with our basic philosophy and Tradition Eleven—would be easy. However, we ought not allow inertia, self centeredness or fear to overrule our primary purpose.

A new name would take some getting used to, and would present some administrative and public relations difficulties. But in the area of public relations, our current problems with overcoming the misleading, negative implications of “Narcotics Anonymous” are greater than the short term problems of a name change. On a personal level, compare the difficulty of getting used to a new name with the difficulty of the suffering, insanity and death of addicts who can’t identify with the word “narcotics.”

We have recently (and I join those who would say, “about time!”) begun to try to help addicts with additional needs. Even though they constitute a small minority of the addicted population, we recognize our spiritual obligation and dedication to the proposition “that no addict seeking recovery need ever die.”

Nowhere in our program does it suggest that getting responsible, becoming open minded, or cleaning up the wreckage of our past is easy. A name change will not be easy, but it is not impossible. Without getting into rationalization, justification, minimizing or other forms of denial, can anyone present a sound spiritual argument against changing our name?

Some argue that our name must be okay because we have many members who found us even though they weren’t “narcotics addicts.” That argument is short sighted and self centered. It’s similar to the arguments raised in years past against starting our fellowship at all: “I’m clean in A.A. and so are these other addicts. We just substitute the word ‘narcotics’ for ‘alcohol’ and we’re fine.”

And please, let’s not beg the question by avoiding it with quarrels over what to change it to, over procedures, or over anything else. We are condemning many addicts to death through our discrimination, closed mindedness, laziness and unwillingness to face difficult issues.

Our experience shows that when we provide the “honesty, open mindedness, and willingness,” a loving God will provide “the power to carry that out.” We realize that He will do for us many things we cannot do for ourselves, but not necessarily those things we *will* not do.

And of course, overcoming difficulties in order to carry the message to those who still suffer is to our own great spiritual benefit. Please, let’s not ignore these facts any longer. Let’s change our fellowship’s name. Now is the time.

S.L., Pennsylvania



Time— rushing literature development

Do we need to be in a hurry for more literature? We could always use more, but do we have to have it right now?

At first it was the White Booklet and five pamphlets: a program that I could carry in my pocket wherever I went. Then the white approval form of the Basic Text appeared [November 1981]. I was working in printing, so copies were made available to many members. Soon, the Basic Text was printed and a flurry of pamphlets needing approval were rushed through, with many members being unsure of what they were doing.

The flow of material needing approval or review continued, and some members became indifferent as business meetings occasionally outlasted recovery meetings. Patience grew thin.

The question is this: what's the rush? We already have everything we need to achieve recovery and to be of service. We have service manuals that we revise every single year because more is revealed to us. Instead of trying to write perfect books that cover everything, we should make guidelines that generally illustrate right thinking and can easily be applied in different situations and different countries. We have a lot of

pamphlets, some better than others. A few could use revision as our understanding of the disease of addiction grows.

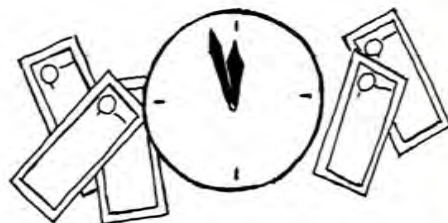
We have a book out for review, *A Guide to Service in Narcotics Anonymous*, that few members have seen and even fewer have given input on. Maybe the problem is that it came out for review during the time when the fellowship was busy working on *It Works*, and most addicts are more concerned with the steps and tradi-

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tions than with our service structure. It could be too much to ask the fellowship to attempt to work on two books at the same time. Slow down.

I have heard that patience is a virtue and that perfectionism is a character defect. We might take it easy and stop trying to write perfect pieces of literature.

J.E., Illinois



Editorial replies

The following is in response to the comic strip, "Gidget Gets Clean," published in the January 1988 N.A. Way.

From Massachusetts:

"Gidget Gets Clean" is incredibly offensive and an insult to all female recovering addicts. It trivializes the pain, anguish and desperation that I, as a woman, experienced while I was an active addict.

It perpetuates a view of women as pampered, brainless and insipid. These images do damage to women. They are not amusing. They convey the message that women are contemptible. These are the images of women we grew up with. Do you have any idea how much drugging I and other women have done to numb the pain of self hatred implicit in these messages?

Self esteem is a central issue for me as a recovering addict. It does not serve my recovery to see negative and demeaning characterizations of women in a publication of Narcotics Anonymous.

The line about losing one's "girl next door charm" and the smarmy drawing which accompanies it lets us know that it's cherry and not charm that's been lost. So you want to talk about sex? What I and other women addicts did sexually while we were using? In order to get drugs? In order to survive? Do you want to know

where the disease of addiction took us sexually?

Not much of it is amusing. Many of us suffered extensive sexual, emotional and physical abuse. (My guess is that the author of "About This Hugging Thing" [January 1988] is a woman who has experienced this vio-

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lence.) It will take us the rest of our lives to heal. It isn't material for a comic strip. The real losses were not those of my charm or my cherry, but the losses of self respect and self love.

With regard to the drawing of "Gidget as Streetwalker"—short tight skirt, fishnet stockings and a fistful of money. In our disease some of us sold our bodies; all of us sold our souls. This is where the disease of addiction brought us. It does not serve my recovery to see women characterized as prostitutes in the pages of the N.A. Way.

Which brings me to what I ultimately find most offensive about this cartoon, and that is its utter lack of sympathy and compassion for sick and suffering addicts. "Gidget" (and by extension all female addicts) is the object of scorn and derision.

N.A., for me, has been about healing the madness and self hatred of my

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active days. It has been the empathy and caring I've received from other addicts when I've told my story that makes my recovery possible.

If "Gidget Gets Clean" is your idea of carrying the message you are sadly misinformed. The cartoon carries no message of recovery, it carries disease. You owe an apology to the women of N.A.

K.S.

And in response to "Just for Today Prayer," August 1987:

From Hawaii:

Recently I was reading an article in the N.A. Way about the prayers we use to close our meetings. It talked about one of the most common ones, the Lord's Prayer. I'm writing because in our N.A. community we have been using a new prayer. Although most of our meetings close with a "prayer of choice," most of our fellowship have come to use and love this prayer.

God, "take my will and my life. Guide me in my recovery. Show me how to live."

This prayer comes to us right out of the Basic Text in the chapter on the Third Step [*Narcotics Anonymous*, 4th ed., p. 25]. It's simple, easy to learn, and very powerful. It is a definite key to recovery. I use it to start my day; it's a great way to get centered.

When I first came to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, the last thing I wanted to hear about was religion. I was very closed minded. When they closed the meeting with the Lord's Prayer, I knew I was up the creek. I had been raised in a religious

environment, and that's what I was led to believe N.A. was. Only later did I find out I was wrong.

We know that inconsistency in our literature and language causes confusion and disunity. I feel using a Christian prayer in our meetings also causes confusion for people who are not comfortable with Christianity.

The Serenity Prayer and the Third Step Prayer begin with the word

When I came to N.A., the last thing I wanted to hear about was religion.

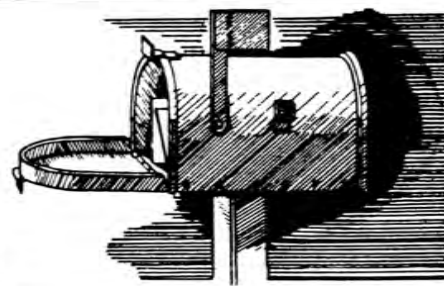
"God," but they use it in a way that leaves room for individual interpretation. God as we understood Him is whatever we choose, whether the power be the fellowship, the God of a specific religion, Good Orderly Direction or our own small quiet voice.

I feel the spirituality of Narcotics Anonymous is what makes the miracle of recovery possible. The steps and traditions were inspired by this spirit, the same spirit that expresses itself in our group conscience. So if we as a fellowship need an N.A. prayer, let's look to our group conscience as a guide.

I am deeply grateful to N.A. for giving me a loving, caring Power greater than myself. And I am deeply grateful to this Power for giving me Narcotics Anonymous. I need them both for freedom from the fatal disease of addiction.

Secure in the love of the fellowship,
Anonymous

From Our Readers



Inventory deja vu

Having been stuck on my Fourth Step for over a year, I finally got the honesty, open mindedness and willingness to finish it. That was followed by a Fifth Step with God and my sponsor a couple of weeks later. While I felt good and grew from doing it, I was troubled because many periods of my life were quite hazy.

A couple of weeks later, I was taking a fellow addict home. While driving, I was trying to piece things in my past together. While on this trip I drove through my hometown. I drove past my old school, former girlfriends' houses, the police station, and my old home. An overwhelming sense of loss and sadness set over me. I felt the need to cry.

Talking to God later, some of the answers came. My past is not where I belong. I don't need to know all the answers. And I do not control my future; it's in God's hands.

As I sat looking at my oldest daughter sleeping in the front seat, I realized today is all I have. But I can live today well, with God's help, and I'm free to enjoy what I have been given. Thanks, God. With the help of the Fourth and Fifth Steps, I'm finally at peace. If it's this nice now, what's it going to be like when I get to the

"having had a spiritual awakening" part?!

T.R., Illinois

Bridge to normal living

When I was using, I often dreamed of a world where I was unconditionally loved, where I could live as myself and be accepted, where I could be "part of things"—because I always felt "apart from things." I stood on land but my feet were sinking.

One day, I was led to a beautiful bridge that would carry me out of my misery. I slowly and cautiously walked (and sometimes crawled) across this bridge, but along the way I found love and acceptance from my fellow travelers. I have now reached the other side, far from the despair and destruction I had always known. Today, living and experiencing life, I am a productive part of society.

You see, N.A. is the bridge to life for me today, not life itself. I do not burn that bridge, because I still return to it to get my "fix" of love and acceptance and to help my fellow travellers. I am not saying I am *recovered*, but that I am grateful. I have the bridge to walk over, not cling to.

Today, having incorporated the principles of N.A. into my daily life, I have become family- and God-centered. I no longer cling only to N.A.

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and exclude other things from my life. I believe I needed those first four years of clinging, but I am now ready to put faith in God in one hand, put N.A. in the other, and walk on to wherever I am supposed to go. Thank you, N.A. You saved my life.

V.E., California

More than friends

My reason for writing this letter is to let those who read the *N.A. Way* and attend meetings know that the fellowship, in so many ways, is to me more than just friends; this is *family*.

This year at WCNA-17, I had a very special moment. Being at the World Convention was itself a big moment, but I would like to share something that really let me appreciate what I have.



I celebrated my two year birthday on the night of the banquet. To my surprise, my N.A. friends remembered. They gathered around the table where I was sitting, at least forty-five or fifty people in a circle, and sang "Happy Birthday" to me. I am writing this letter knowing that if you publish it in the *N.A. Way*, all of those people that were there that night—and the rest of the fellowship as well—will know how I feel. You see, they—and you—are more than just friends; *you are family* to me. My heart goes out to all of my brothers and sisters in N.A.

S.K., Tennessee

The oak

I am sending you this letter to share with you what I wrote to a young lady in our program about fourteen months ago. She was in a treatment center and really doubtful about her future, deeply depressed and very worried about everyone and everything in her life. She had about one month clean at the time her natural birthday rolled around. I wrote out an analogy of the program called "The Oak" and gave it to her. I would like to share it with the N.A. Way readers.

Look to the oak trees. Each oak tree has deep roots, and every one has its roots in something bigger than itself.

Look for the oaks in the people in this program. The people who seem to stand alone only appear that way. They have their roots in something greater. These people are winners, and winners never quit—never quit trying, learning or believing.

Oak trees try to grow strong and tall. They reach up toward their Creator. Oaks have rough exteriors, yet their interiors are capable of being polished to a mirror finish, smooth as glass. Oaks don't depend on others' attitudes or thoughts about them for their well being.

The oak's strength comes from within. They know how to depend on their Inner Strength, placed there by their Higher Power.

Stand among the oaks; live life on life's terms, one day at a time. And remember, victories carry a price, and everyone can win if they try and are willing to pay the price.

Becoming an oak takes time; nothing happens overnight. It took God six days to create Earth and the heavens

and all the marvelous creatures. So don't despair when a storm comes along, and shakes your branches, and pulls at your roots, and almost blows you over. After the storm, when you feel weak, reach into that Higher Power. Feel the strength and bear the pain; where the roots have been moved or loosened, reach with them even deeper.

G.M., Texas

Indian summer

As I was driving to work this morning, I noticed the frost lying perfectly on the well kept lawns that framed my path. It was dawn, and the sun had just started putting colors across the early sky. The area that I travel through is open fields and woods, so I can watch every day as the October foliage makes its gradual and then sudden change into brilliance.

As I looked out at the morning sky, I said hello to my Higher Power and thanked Him for this day, a new day, fresh, unmarked thus far, one that can be as fulfilling as I wish it to be if I let the Twelve Steps guide me through it.

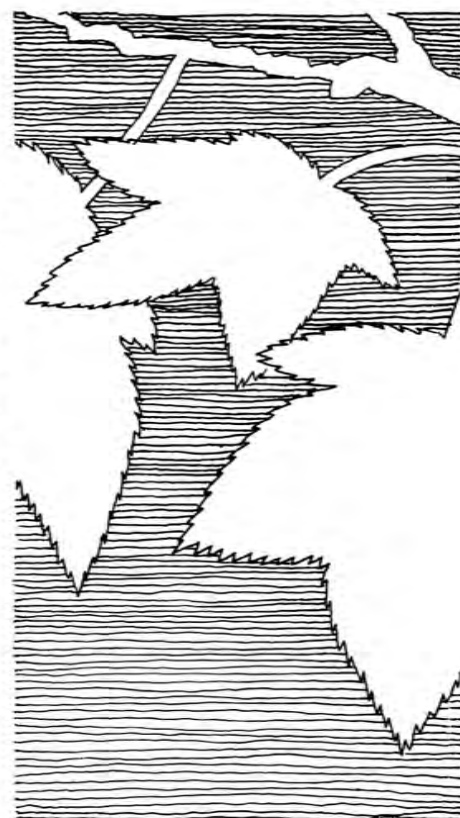
Recovery reminds me of autumn. I compare my growth and recovery from this disease to the changing of summer into autumn. Change is ever so gradual and subtle. All the while it is occurring, as we go from one meeting to another, as we talk with our sponsors, as we read the literature, we are changing just as the soft colors of summer change into the flaming colors of fall. The awakening of feelings brings life, full and enriching. Love emerges, coloring our lives once more; acceptance and understanding make everything so much simpler.

Sometimes Indian summer happens so quickly that we wonder why we

missed it. Living one day at a time helps us miss nothing. When we take in the splendor of nature in her finest wardrobe, we can be assured that through our program we are becoming more than we had ever dreamed we could become. A day will come when each of us will see our own beautiful colors and flaming brilliance. As we see it in ourselves, we will also see it in each other.

I am so grateful for having been able to share with all of you, and to have you all share with me. A finer gift could not be bought, for you all have led me into my own Indian summer. I love the colors I see, the colors of my life unfolding into a majestic tribute to what recovery can hold for each of us.

P.C., Illinois





Comin' Up

ALABAMA: Sep. 8-11, 1988; Alabama-Northwest Florida Convention; Gulf Shore Park Resort; Regional Convention, P.O. Box 115, Decatur, AL 35601

ALBERTA: Jun. 3-5, 1988; Third Edmonton N.A. Convention; speaker Jack B., Los Angeles; Highlands Community League, 11333 62nd Street, Edmonton; Barb H. (403) 423-0850; Barb H., #3-9321-101 A Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5H 0C4

ARIZONA: May 27-29, 1988; ARCNA-2; Sheraton Phoenix Hotel (800) 325-3535; Richard R. (602) 247-2076, Rosemary H. 577-6136, Karen C. 247-2076; AZ Convention Committee, P.O. Box 11422, Phoenix, AZ 85061

ARKANSAS: May 20-22, 1988; Fourth Annual Beaver Roundup; Lake Leatherwood, Eureka Springs, Arkansas; Kathryn P. (501) 253-7602; Velma R. 423-2765; Eureka Springs Group, c/o Kathryn P., 32 Benton, Eureka Springs, AR 72632

AUSTRALIA (NSW): Sep. 30-Oct. 3, 1988; Australasian Regional Convention, "Living Proof," Petersham Town Hall, Sydney, New South Wales; Sydney phone contacts, Melinda 698-2563, Brett 309-2135; Australasian Convention, P.O. Box B88, Boronia Park, Sydney, NSW AUSTRALIA

BRITISH COLUMBIA: Jul. 1-3, 1988; British Columbia N.A. Rally; send speaker tapes; Henry B., (604) 434-8314; BCNAR, 4650 Ferngleng Place, Barnaby, BC V5G 3W1

2) Aug. 12-14, 1988; Third Annual Northern Lights Outdoor Campout Roundup; Bidnisti Lake Resort, 35 mi. w. of Prince George; send speaker tapes; contact Phil H. (604) 562-2931; Warren, Chris 563-5719; ROUNDUP, c/o Warren & Chris M., 2510 Upland Street #113, Prince George, BC CANADA

CALIFORNIA: July 8-10, 1988; San Diego Regional Convention; speakers with 5 yrs. clean, strong N.A.-oriented message send tapes w/ return address and phone number; Harold D.

(619) 283-7220; San Diego Convention, 3768 El Cajon Blvd., San Diego, CA 92105

2) Sep. 1-4, 1988; World Convention of N.A.; Anaheim Hilton and Towers, 777 W. Convention Way, Anaheim; convention info (818) 780-3951; addl. info. Anaheim Convention Bureau, (714) 999-8939; World Convention of N.A., P.O. Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999

CONNECTICUT: May 14, 1988; Fifth Annual "Pigs in Space" Pig Roast; East Hampton Fireman's Grounds, Rt. 16; 10 a.m. until ?; rain date May 15; Pigs in Space, c/o Rob Hamilton, 180 Old Baldwin Ave., Meriden, CT 06450

2) Jun. 3-5, 1988; Second Family Campout; Lone Oaks Campground, East Canaan; Jim S. (203) 264-0911; Sparky M. 598-7889; Denise R. 264-0049; 1988 Campout Committee, P.O. Box 1075, Woodbury, CT 06798

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 RCNA, P.O. Box 17807, W. Palm Beach, FL 33416

FRANCE: Jul. 22-24, 1988; European Service Conference; for more information, call Kevin at the U.K. Service Office (London), 1-352-8356; European Service Conf., 38 Rue des Amandiers, 75020 Paris, France

HAWAII: May 27-29, 1988; "Ride the Miracle," Second Annual Gathering of the Fellowship; Black Sands Beach, Kalapana; Big Island Gathering, P.O. Box 10842, Hilo, HI 96721

2) Jul. 1-3, 1988; Fifth Western States Unity Convention, Beachcomber's Hotel, Honolulu; Tom C. (808) 262-4631, Steve S. 254-1647, RSO 533-4900; WSUC-5, 1305 Aalapapa, Kailua, HI 96734

ILLINOIS: June 24-26, 1988; 4th Annual Flight to Freedom; Coy & Wilma's Campground, Rend Lake, Sesser, IL; Earl (618) 735-2409; Jim (217) 347-0305; Lawrence (618) 829-5387; Campout, 107 E. Lawrence, Effingham, IL 62401

2) Aug. 5-7, 1988; Fourth Midcoast Convention; Continental Regency Hotel, Peoria; Susie & Steve H. (309) 274-5675; Linda E. 382-3742

IOWA: Jul. 1-3, 1988; Fifth Iowa Regional Convention; Hotel Fort Des Moines, 10th & Walnut, Des Moines, (800) 247-8057; Kelli O. (319) 354-7625; Dannie G. (515) 628-4677; Iowa Regional Convention, P.O. Box 1960, Des Moines, IA 50306

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

MASSACHUSETTS: May 7-8, 1988; Martha's Vineyard Area 1st Annivention; Martha's Vineyard Island; Tony L. (617) 693-5976, Jessica S. 693-3002, Don C. 693-5850, Steve G. 693-3384; Martha's Vineyard ASC, P.O. Box 2754, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568

MICHIGAN: Jul. 1-4, 1988; Freedom IV; Hope College, Holland, MI; Bob W. (616) 857-2583, Carl D. 344-7530; tickets, John F. (313) 987-8620; 4th Michigan Convention, 523 Butternut #106, Holland, MI 49424

MISSOURI: May 13-15, 1988; Second Annual Campout, Greater Kansas City Area; Smithville Lake, Crows Creek Campgrounds, Smithville; Nancy F. (816) 459-7326; David P. 421-6670 or 421-3424; James R. 232-8958

NEVADA: Jul. 15-17, 1988; Sixth Annual Stampede for Serenity campout, Stampede Reservoir, Truckee, Nevada; proceeds to Sierra Sage RSC and the World Service Conference; information call hotline (702) 322-4811; Sierra Sage RSC, P.O. Box 11913, Reno, NV 89510

NEW HAMPSHIRE: June 24-26, 1988; "Vision of Hope," 9th ECCNA; University of NH in Durham; Jay N. (603) 437-5501; Brian (617) 452-7875; Shirley (617) 458-4808; 9th ECCNA, PO Box 388, Pelham, NH 03076

NEW JERSEY: May 27-29, 1988; Third N.J. Regional Convention; Berkeley-Carteret Hotel, Ocean Ave., Asbury Park, NJ, (201) 776-6700; Bud H. (215) 271-2760; Paul N. (609) 665-4269; Jerry N. (609) 482-5675; RCCNJ Inc., P.O. Box 515, Collingswood, NJ 08108

NEW MEXICO: May 28-30, 1988; High Hopes ASC Campout and Retreat; Bandiler National Park; for fliers and info call (505) 662-0669; Hal, 2130 A 37th, Los Alamos, NM 87544

NEW YORK: Aug. 5-7, 1988; Second Annual Recovery in the Woods; Yorkshire, NY; Lynne B. (716) 895-4916; Dan Z. 825-5334; Recovery in the Woods, Buffalo ASC, P.O. Box 64, Buffalo, NY 14207

NORTH CAROLINA: 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: Jun. 24-26, 1988; Seventh Annual Clean'n' Crazy Campout; Cherokee Land-ing, Wildcat Park (Area C), Lake Tenkiller, OK; Mike A. (405) 382-8741; Chuck G. 372-4007; Patrick D. 372-1875

ONTARIO: May 13-15, 1988; 1st Ontario Regional Convention; Toronto, Ontario; Rachel (416) 789-0264; Susan 821-7562; ORCNA 1, 5468 Dundas St. W. Box 620, Toronto, Ontario, M9B 6E3

OREGON: Aug. 6-8, 1988; 3rd Oregon-Southern Idaho Regional Convention; Eugene Hilton Hotel; send speaker tapes; Laurie P. (503) 726-2449; OSIRCNA-3, 3255 Gateway #68, Springfield, OR 97477

TENNESSEE: May 20-22, 1988; Second Annual Surrender Under the Stars (VRC6 fundraiser); Mike (615) 344-8343; Ron 875-2976; Surrender Under the Stars, P.O. Box 23222, Chattanooga, TN 37421

TEXAS: Jul. 8-10, 1988; Texas Unity Convention, Whitney; David (713) 332-8236; Texas Unity (Whitneys), 1612 Second Street, League City, TX 77573

2) Nov. 4-6, 1988; First Best Little Region in Texas Convention; Koko Palace, 5101 Avenue Q, Lubbock TX 79412; info Kerry W. (806) 745-4309, N.A. Helpline 799-3950; BLRCNA-1, P.O. Box 3013, Lubbock, TX 79452-3013

UNITED KINGDOM: May 28-29, 1988; West Country Convention, Gloucester; info Dave or Tom, Stroud, Gloucesters., (04536) 72732; N.A. Bristol Office, P.O. Box 285, Bristol, England, UK BS99 7AS

WEST VIRGINIA: May 6-8, 1988; Mountaineer Regional Convention, "Back to Basics," Cedar Lakes Conference Center, Ripley, W.Va. (304) 372-7000; Jim D. (304) 525-8411, Danny W. 925-7088; Mountaineer RSC, P.O. Box 2381, Morgantown, WV 26502-2381

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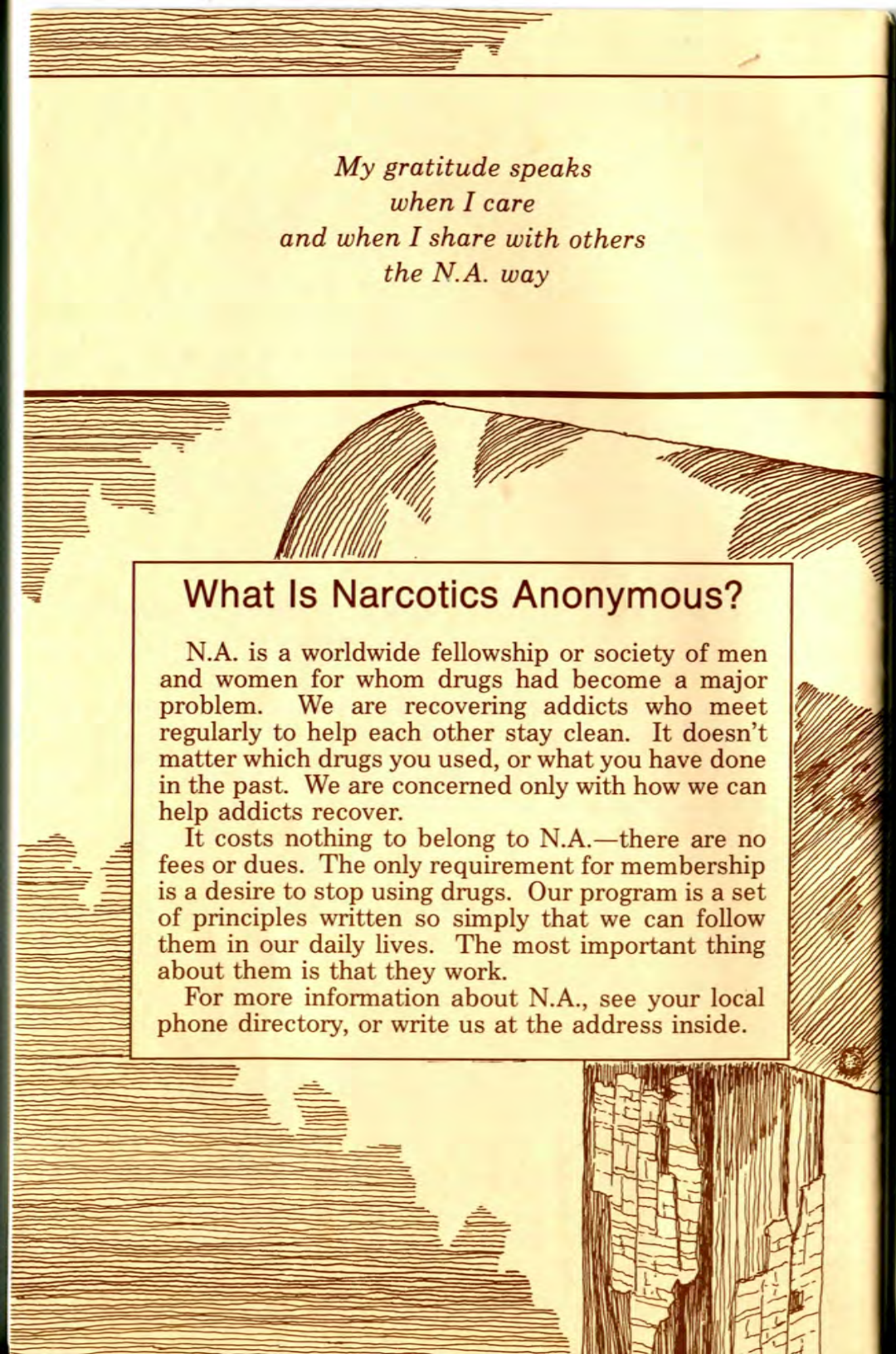
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The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
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.
6. 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.
7. Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. 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.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



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

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 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 belong to N.A.—there are no fees or dues. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using drugs. 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 N.A., see your local phone directory, or write us at the address inside.