

THE N.A. Way

M A G A Z I N E

September 1988

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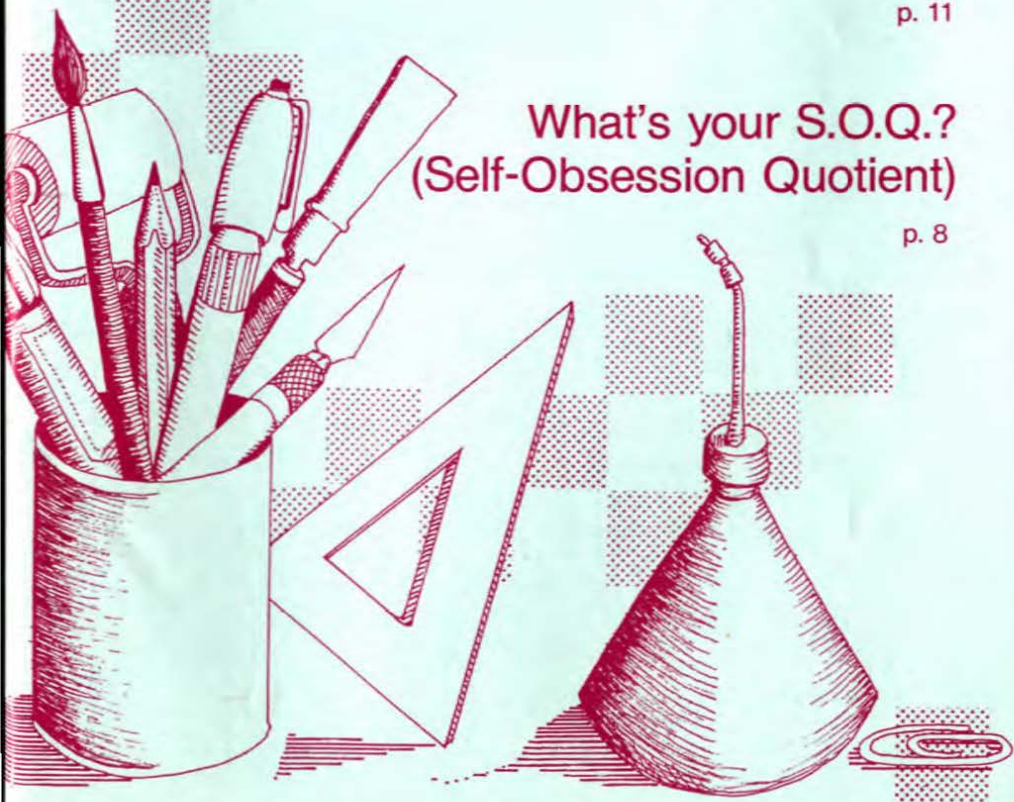
Annual newsletter issue

Pooh-bear
a dope-fiend?

p. 11

What's your S.O.Q.?
(Self-Obsession Quotient)

p. 8



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.

THE N.A. Way

M A G A Z I N E

Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409
(818) 780-3951

volume six, number nine

meeting in print

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The N.A. Way magazine welcomes the participation of its readers. You are invited to share with the entire N.A. Fellowship in our monthly international journal. Send us your experience in recovery, your views on N.A. matters, and feature items. All manuscripts submitted become the property of World Service Office, Inc.

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A story

"A long black ham and cheese toasted roll, and a mineral water," said Clyde.

He looked around the Capricorn, the local coffee shop hangout. Good, no one he knew was here. He didn't like the Cap when he was using, but now he liked it even less. He'd been doing a lot of things he didn't like lately, but what his sponsor suggested, he did. It wasn't too bad. He'd kept using drugs a lot longer than he'd wanted to. The only difference was that this stuff kept getting better. He felt kind of safe here talking to NA-NA's, even if he did bump into some of his old using friends.

He cringed and sat down at a vacant table. He didn't feel too good today. In fact he felt bad, real bad. He was a million miles away, barely noticing the waitress slide his food onto the table.

That morning he had woken up and Angie, his long time girlfriend, wasn't in bed. He heard the radio, got up, put on his dressing gown and Angie's pink fluffy slippers, and stumbled into the kitchen.

"Morning, darling," she said.

"What's wrong?," he asked. She never looked happy this time of day.

"Nothing," she said and turned away. He knew something was up.

"It's okay, you can tell me," he said, trying his hardest to be spiritual.

"It's my birthday. I don't believe it. You never remember. Last year you

were hanging out, and this year you're so caught up in your meetings, your new friends and your precious little recovery..."

He was stunned.

"Well, maybe if you went to some meetings that could help you, you'd understand."

"I do understand," she said, and stormed out.

He winced as the door banged shut. He felt six inches tall. And now he was sitting in this all-too-cliche cafe, facing a greasy toasted roll and a bitter black coffee. Life didn't look too good.

"Hey Clyde, how you doing?" He recognized the voice. It had that "Hi, I'm a recovering addict" ring to it. He stared at the face. He'd met so many people in the nineteen days he'd been clean that no name popped into his mind to go with it.

"Er, hi, I've forgotten your name." He was sick of hearing himself say that.

"I'm Eric. Mind if I sit down?," said Eric, sitting down. "How are you today, Clyde?"

"Fine," said Clyde, noticing Eric's skin problem. He wondered if he'd get pimples in recovery too. Someone had told him it was the toxins coming out.

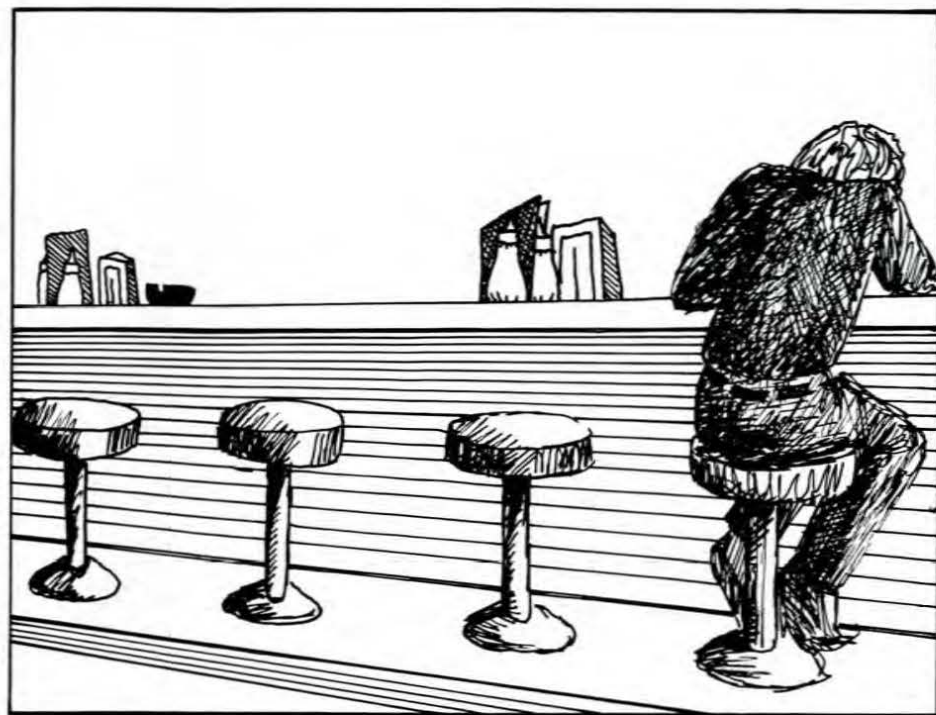
"Going to the lunchtime?," asked Eric.

"Ah, yeah," said Clyde.

"Good," said Eric.

Silence. It went forever. He got up, knocked over his chair, cringed and smiled weakly. "Well, I've got to go. See you." Eric looked concerned.

Walking the streets of Darlinghurst, memories of using days flooded back. That all too familiar feeling of running away joined him as he looked for



something, anything to take away the anxiety and fear.

He found himself at the meeting without knowing how he had got there. He walked in looking at nobody and sat down. A woman was speaking, stuttering nervously about detox, the fellowship, recovery, people, unconditional love...

Same old stuff, he thought. His mind raced. Speakers came and went.

He didn't feel too good today. In fact he felt bad, real bad.

He looked at his watch. He heard very little; the voices were whispers. He wanted to scream and run out, but something kept him there. He didn't want to be seen losing his cool.

Before he knew it, he was holding hands and mouthing the Serenity Prayer. He heard his name. Oh no, it's that Eric again, he thought.

"Hi, Clyde, you forgot to pay at the cafe, mate. I fixed it for you. How are you?," smiled Eric.

"Oh, yeah, I forgot," he said and laughed for the first time that day.

"Thanks, Eric. I wasn't thinking too clearly. What are you doing now?"

"Thought I'd go to the Cap," said Eric.

"Great idea, my shout."

"Sure, it's a date," said Eric, laughing.

"Okay, but I just have to drop into the florist and buy a bunch of flowers. It's my girlfriend's birthday."

*Anonymous
from N.A. Today
Australasian Region
April 1988*

Who is an addict?

"Most of us do not have to think twice about this question—we know!"

I came into the program of Narcotics Anonymous because my life was unmanageable. Not because I wanted to stop using or because I was trying to beat a case, but because my friends and family had cut me loose, I had nowhere to go, and I had no connections left that I could pick up from.

But none of that was my fault, you see. It was your fault. I was just in the wrong places with the wrong people using the wrong things. All I wanted was a chance to regroup. I'd do things differently next time.



When I checked into a recovery house carrying everything I owned (totally in control, mind you), one of the first things they wanted me to do was admit that I was an addict. I said, "Yeah, right, addict. Where's my bed?" If that doesn't sound too sincere, it's because it wasn't. I wasn't an addict; I just couldn't stop using drugs.

I had what you call your basic drug problem, see. I wasn't an addict. An addict was a sleazy, slimy, scum-of-the-earth dope fiend junkie that would cut your throat for a fix. I wasn't a junkie—I was a heroin user. Sure, I

*I had what you call
your basic drug
problem, see. I
wasn't an addict, I
was a heroin user.*

lied, cheated, manipulated, stole and worse to get what I needed, but that didn't put me into the scum-of-the-earth category. You were addicts, not me.

Then I found out that my idea of what an addict is was totally off base. An addict, folks, is a person with the disease of addiction. Period. As simple as that sounds, it hit me like a two-by-four between the eyes.

I thought I used because of a defect in character. When I found out it was because I had a disease, that explained a lot of things to me that my best thinking hadn't been able to. It was then that I began to wonder if I was an addict. I decided to check out this disease before I made any com-



mitments. It was one thing to tell you that I was an addict, but quite another to admit it to myself.

I started going to Narcotics Anonymous meetings on a regular basis, like every night. And I listened. And I watched. And I found that I could identify with almost everything that was being said. All of the feelings that you talked about, all your reactions to life on life's terms—that was me! And the more I related, the more clues I found that fit the puzzle.

Finally I knew. I was the person in the Basic Text. I was the person talking at the podium. I was one of the "we" that make up this fellowship. I thought that admitting I was an addict would be admitting defeat, giving up. Instead it was surrendering and being set free.

Who is an addict? I am.

*D.H.
from Steppin' On
Bay Cities Area, California
October 1987*

The most important person

I've been beaten by drugs. I know I can't use anymore. I want to use so bad, but I know what will happen if I use again.

They told me in detox that if I wanted to stay clean I should come to these N.A. meetings. I don't know anybody here. A couple of people shake my hand and walk away.

You all seem to be happy and having a good time. Some of you are hugging each other. Are you all gay? You all must be high or something. This is a bunch of bull.

I'll sit in the corner and check this out. I want to talk to you, but I don't know what to say. I just don't know how to talk to people without drugs in me.

I feel like dirt. Everybody is so dressed up and looking good, and look at me with my long hair and dirty blue jeans. No wonder nobody will talk to me.

Why doesn't somebody tell me what's going on here? You all can't be drug addicts. This is crazy. I should leave.

A couple more people introduce themselves, tell me to keep coming back and walk away. What the hell do

they mean, keep coming back? The coffee ain't even any good.

All right, this thing is finally starting. "Is there anyone here for their first time?" Yeah, me, but I sure ain't standing up in front of all these people. You crazy or something?

Now who the hell is this? Listen to this guy, will you? I wonder how much they paid him to get up there and say all that stuff? I'd never tell anybody I did anything like that. I sure can relate, though. That dude was tough. Maybe he's for real. I'd sure like to talk to him.

It's finally over. I got to get out of here. No way, man, you ain't hugging me. Oh, what the hell, I'll take your phone number. I ain't gonna call you, though.

It's good to get out of there. Maybe next time somebody will ask me for my phone number and offer me a ride to a meeting.

I heard them all talking about going to a restaurant or something. I wish they would have invited me. I feel like crying.

I wish I could lie down and die. I wish I could get high, but I can't. I wish I would have told somebody how bad I'm hurting. I just don't know how to do it. Maybe next time one of them will sit down and really talk to me.

*I want to talk to
you, but I don't
know what to say. I
feel like dirt.*

That guy who was speaking said all kinds of people had helped him. Everybody at this meeting seemed in such a hurry to get somewhere, or to



go talk to somebody else.

I need help, I know I need help. I'll go to a meeting tomorrow. Maybe it really does work. I just felt so out of place tonight. Most of those people didn't even pay any attention to me. Who needs them anyway?

That one guy gave me his phone

number, though. Maybe some of them do care. Maybe there is some hope for me. I sure hope they meant it when they said, "Keep coming back."

*Anonymous
from Miracles Happen
Tri-State Region, Pennsylvania
August 1987
N.A. Way • 7*

How self-obsessed are you?

We all know what self-obsession is in N.A., don't I? We've even got a pamphlet about it in its triangular form. Now here's a chance for all of you to find out, in an entirely light-hearted way, how your recovery is progressing. We're even going to provide you with some solutions. So go home, lock yourself in the airing cupboard with a torch and fill in this multiple-choice questionnaire.

When you have found out how self-obsessed you are, you'll be able to look for a compatible partner, somebody who's equally self-obsessed. Yourself, in fact. Then you'll be able to come out of your airing cupboard and walk tall with the rest of humanity, hand in hand with yourself. Remember, self-obsession is a great way of getting 'round the one-year ban on relationships.

1. You're at a party and somebody asks, "What do you do, then?" Do you:
A: Mutter inaudibly.
B: Say that you're unemployed and recovering from a long and debilitating illness.
C: As (B) and also admit that the

disease is addiction.
D: Lie.

2. You're at a meeting and finding it unbelievably dull and irritating. You hate everything that everyone has said and you think they're all boring and stupid. Do you:

A: Share what enormous gratitude you have for your recovery.
B: Call them all a bunch of self-obsessed jerks.
C: Share honestly, admitting you're in a bad space, tell them what you're feeling, and ask for help.
D: Don't share and leave the meeting early.

3. You go out for the evening and meet a complete sex beast who drags you back home with him/her. Do you:

A: Leap into bed with him/her without a second thought.
B: Tell him/her about your recovery and settle down for an all-night conversation about the nature of sexuality.
C: Tell him/her in the nicest possible way that you need to get to know him/her better, exchange phone numbers and go home.
D: This situation is so implausible that you cannot give an honest answer.

4. Someone asks you if you have a lover. Do you:

A: Say "What do you mean, a lover?"
B: Say you are looking for the right person with whom you can have a sincere and spiritually productive relationship.
C: Giggle hysterically.
D: Lie.

5. You are asked how old you are. Do you:

A: Multiply your clean time by your shoe size and give that as an answer.
B: Tell the truth.
C: Say archly, "As old as my tongue and a little older than my teeth."
D: Tell him someone else's age.

6. You have been invited to do a chair in a meeting some way off. The secretary asks you how you plan to get there. Do you:

A: Say "I'll whizz up the motorway in the Porsche."
B: Say "The camel is proving refractory."
C: Ask for the train fare.
D: Walk because you're too embarrassed to ask for the train fare.

7. You are asked to a party where you know there are going to be a lot of powerless people. Do you:

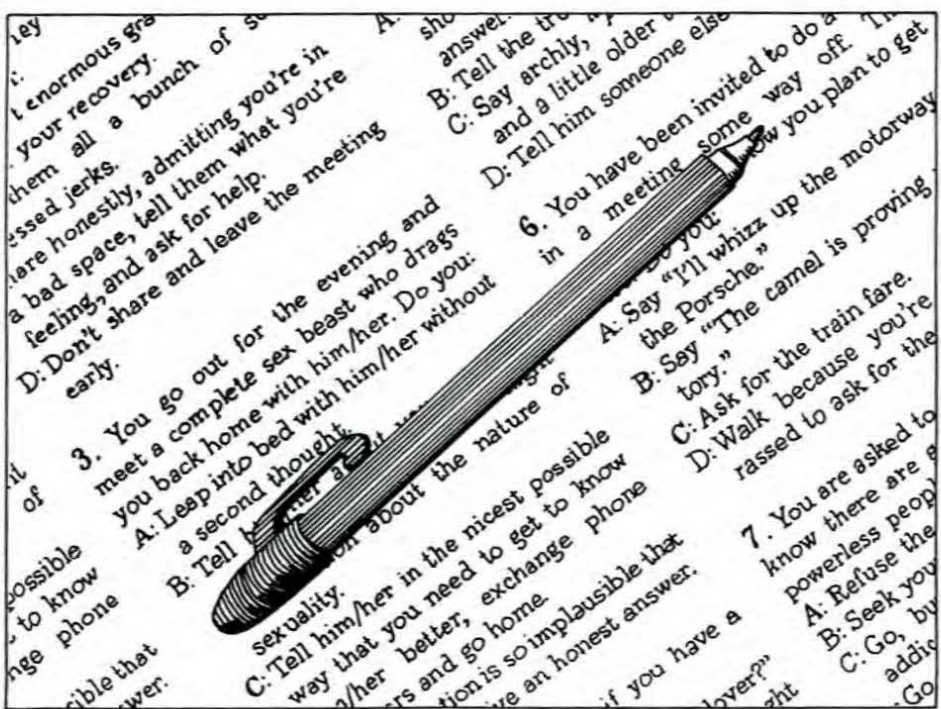
A: Refuse the invitation.
B: Seek your sponsor's advice.
C: Go, but take a fellow recovering addict with you for moral support.
D: Go and stand in the middle of the room ostentatiously drinking a goldfish bowl of Perrier all evening.

How did you score?

1. A,5; B,3; C,1; D,10.
2. A,10; B,5; C,1; D,7
3. A,10; B,10; C,1; D,3
4. A,10; B,5; C,3; D,10
5. A,10; B,1; C,3; D,8
6. A,10; B,5; C,1; D,7
7. A,1; B,1; C,4; D,10

Results

If you have scored between seven and fifteen points you are extremely spiritually healthy and not in the least self-obsessed.



You should immediately take on five more service commitments and three more sponsees. And come and work for *Clean Times* as well.

A score of between sixteen and forty points indicates a healthy degree of self-obsession. You obviously think about yourself only about ten times more than other people think about themselves. It would be a good idea if you were to phone your sponsor occasionally, but still go on ignoring his excellent advice.

Forty to sixty-nine points. You really are utterly self-obsessed. You obviously believe that other people think about you all the time. But what you

It would be a good idea if you were to phone your sponsor on occasion, but still go on ignoring his excellent advice.

don't know is that they also have photographs of you in intimate and revealing situations. That makes you feel uncomfortable, doesn't it! Why don't you think about someone other than yourself for a change. Someone who owes you money, for example.

Seventy points. You are obviously so self-obsessed that you have had to cheat. Unfortunately, you are also rather stupid, or you would have aimed for a lower score.

T. & S.
from *Clean Times*
United Kingdom
March 1988

We need articles!

Remember that this section of the *N.A. Way* is *your* meeting in print. Like any other meeting you're a part of, you'll get the most out of this one by participating. Let your voice be part of the message that gets carried during the meeting. WRITE! We are in need of material right now, so don't wait.

Who writes these articles?

You do!

The articles you see in this magazine are written by N.A. members. You need not consider yourself a skilled writer. You don't have to know all the mechanics of English. We have an editorial team whose job it is to take care of those details. What we need is your unique perspective on this program of recovery. Without it, we don't have a message to carry. In every sense, that's the *N.A. Way*.

What do I write about?

Write on any topic related to recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. Share with our readers as you would with your fellow members at any other meeting. Is there a topic you've enjoyed hearing or sharing about at a recent meeting? Are you on a particular step, and having some eye-opening experiences? Has there been a recent turning point in your personal recovery? Tell us about it. We'd love to hear from you!

Powerless Pooh

Scholars and literary critics have puzzled over the popularity of A.A. Milne's Pooh stories ever since they were first published in the 1920's. Every conceivable interpretation of the stories has been published except, I believe, the correct one. There was even a book published called "The Tao of Pooh," which attempted to recast the bear of very little brain as a spiritual seer. When you think about the real meaning of the stories it is easy to unravel, certainly when you consider the author's initials.

Let's face it. Pooh is a card-carrying, fully paid-up member of our very own fraternity. All the hallmarks of classic addiction are there. The isolation, living in that tree the whole time, only going out when his main enabler, Piglet, comes 'round to see him. The paranoia! Pooh is frightened of the most irrational things, such as fictitious animals called Heffalumps. The false humility! Pooh constantly runs himself down as far as brain-power goes, and yet he's always trying to control other people's lives. Forcibly rehousing Eeyore is just one example of this kind of behaviour.

And what about Pooh's relationship with Christopher Robin? A co-dependent if ever I saw one, and a child to

boot. Pooh even goes so far as to let Christopher Robin drag him downstairs by the paw. I am sure plenty of us can identify with that! As I see it, it's when Tigger arrives in the Three Acre Wood that Pooh's addiction really reaches a chronic stage. There's a lot of "yets" for all of us contained in this little episode. Pooh drags Tigger around the place getting him to



sample a whole load of drugs—nettles, thistles, grass, even Pooh's own drug of choice—until eventually he foists the poor beast on an unmarried mother who already has a child of her own to feed. I refer, of course, to Kanga.

Naturally, it's in relation to his drug of choice that we see Pooh's addiction in full spate. During the flood that strikes the Three Acre Wood, Pooh knows that he only has a limited supply, but his increasing tolerance gets the better of him and he consumes the lot! Even when he finds a jar of something he's not quite sure about, he experiments until it's all gone. It isn't the honey that's to blame. We all know there's nothing intrinsically harmful about the stuff. The disease is within Pooh himself. Let's face it: Pooh is powerless.

Anonymous
from *Clean Times*
United Kingdom
September 1987

Ninth Step resistance

"We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."

Do you ever think that the Twelve Steps are incorrectly numbered? When I first got clean, I was sure of it. "Step Nine should come first so that I can relieve myself of my horrible guilt." I had a desperate need to say "I'm sorry" to all those I had hurt in my addiction. In the joy of my new-found recovery, I had forgotten how many times I had said those words and how meaningless they had become. After twenty-two years of active addiction, my thirty days clean didn't carry much credibility.

In the enthusiastic, desperate light of willingness, I set about to make things right. I wanted to explain all my lies to my family, friends and employer. In my enthusiasm, I failed to realize that as a result of my addiction I no longer had friends or an employer.

Fortunately, at about the time I was ready to tell my mother all the things I had done to support my using, I found a sponsor. He said to me, "Just how bad do you want your mother to feel at

the end of this conversation?" I found a sponsor just in time. He helped me to understand that I didn't have the right to injure others to relieve my guilt.

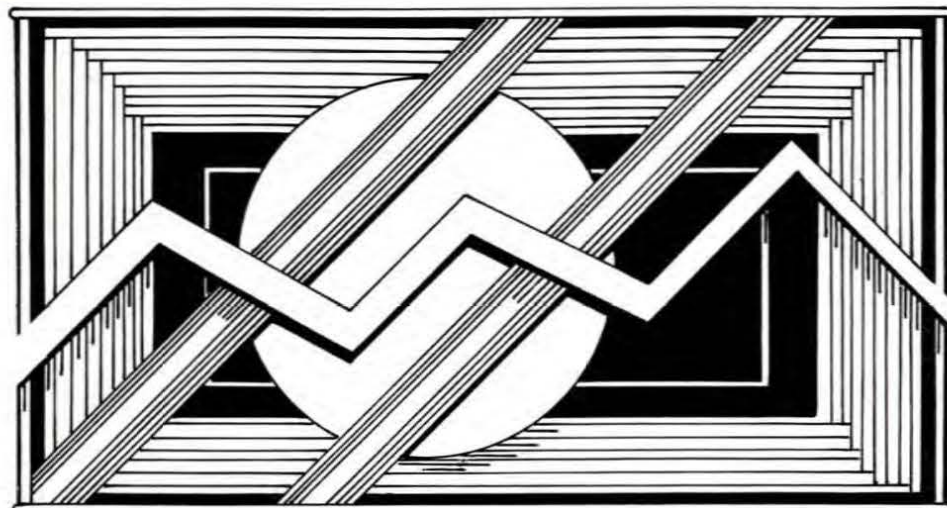
My sponsor helped me to understand that the steps are numbered for a reason, and that each step prepares me for the next. I had made my Eighth Step amends list using my Fourth Step inventory and the writing I had done on Step Six as my guide. I sat down with my sponsor and took direction from him as to what my specific amends should be.

My sponsor took the time to explain some things about this step. He told me that making amends was much more than saying, "I'm sorry." He told me that to amend something is to change it, like when our government amends its constitution. Many of my amends to my family were nothing more than changing my old behavior: staying clean, not borrowing money,

*"Just how bad do
you want your
mother to feel at the
end of this
conversation?"*

showing respect and consideration. These amends are fairly easy to make, and are ongoing as I continue in my recovery.

My amends to women I had been involved with and had used or mistreated were fairly easy too. Following my sponsor's direction, I stayed away from them. He told me that I did not



have the right to re-enter their lives and stir up old memories and old feelings of hurt and anger. I was directed to pray for their happiness and be willing to make more amends should the situation present itself at some future time.

So far, so good. I found myself thinking that this making amends was pretty easy stuff. And then came the area of financial amends. I have a number of people to whom I owe several hundred dollars. Desiring to continue in my recovery, I opened a savings account and began setting aside \$50 per month toward making amends. I was so proud to see that account grow. I felt a sense of accomplishment every time I made a deposit.

And then a funny thing happened. I spent the money. Life threw a curve at me, and I found myself in a place of needing the money to pay rent. It wasn't like I had relapsed and spent the money on drugs. But I still spent the money, and was forced to look at my character defects of pride and

greed.

I was forced by this program's demand for honesty to admit that I had wanted to look good by repaying the whole sum of my debts all at once rather than making payments. By saving the money, I had procrastinated facing the people to whom I owed amends. I had rationalized that I was working Step Nine when I wasn't. I hadn't been willing. I had resistance.

I know from reading our literature and listening to old timers that Step Nine is the step that finally frees us from our past and opens us up to a spiritual way of life. My life has improved through staying clean and working the N.A. program. What I have today in terms of happiness and peace of mind is wonderful.

But I want it all! I know Step Nine is vital to my continued recovery and spiritual growth. I pray that I will have the willingness to complete my amends. They're long overdue.

*Anonymous
from Steppin' On
Bay Cities Area, California
March 1988*

Service benefits

Who benefits from service work? We all do! N.A. quite literally saved my life, and I am grateful today to live without the misery drugs provided. A loving God revealed a solution to the mess I had made of my life at a time when I needed help the most, at a time when I was hitting a spiritual, emotional and physical bottom. Suddenly N.A. was in the path of my self-destructive ways.

Wearied from the battle I had waged with myself for so many years, my denial was breaking down from overexertion, and I stopped to take a look at another way of life. What I saw, I liked; it was very attractive. What has happened since is nothing short of miraculous. Now I look back at how God managed to get the message of recovery through to a stubborn addict like me.

I found myself in a drug treatment facility. Believe me, it wasn't my idea, and I certainly didn't plan on becoming abstinent upon my release. There were no N.A. meetings held in this facility at that time (things have changed since!), but they did tell me about the fellowship and suggested that I attend.

They gave me a meeting list and an I.P. called "Who, What, How & Why," and sent me on my merry way. I noticed on the meeting list that there

was a phone number to call, so I did. The person who answered was pleasant and told me of a meeting that evening which was not far from where I lived, so I went, not knowing exactly what to expect.

When I got to the meeting someone came right up to me and introduced himself with a friendly smile. I told him my name and we talked for a while before the meeting started. He gave me his phone number and said to call anytime I wanted to, especially if I felt like using drugs. Coffee was on, and we got ourselves a cup.

Everyone who started reading during the opening called themselves an "addict." I couldn't believe it! Soon I found that everyone there was an addict, so it didn't much matter. I even introduced myself as an addict as I began to identify with the beautiful people in that room. Life would never be the same again, thank God.

It seemed to be a divine coincidence that I was given the message of this daily reprieve from drugs. But as I

*I can never repay
Narcotics
Anonymous for what
it has given me, for
it has given me so
much—my life.*

grew, I found out how God accomplishes this task. He has help! Without a hand, foot or mouth of His own, God has us to provide the legwork, handiwork and voices of His spiritual program for addicts called Narcotics Anonymous.

It seems that someone from N.A. had called upon the working staff at the treatment facility I had attended and told them about the program. Someone compiled and printed the meeting list they gave me. Someone wrote, published, and distributed the I.P. they gave me.

Someone answered the phone when I called. Someone made me feel welcome at the meeting, and someone else had made coffee. Who were these wonderful people, and why would they do all these things for me when they didn't even know me? They were the instruments God used to save my life!

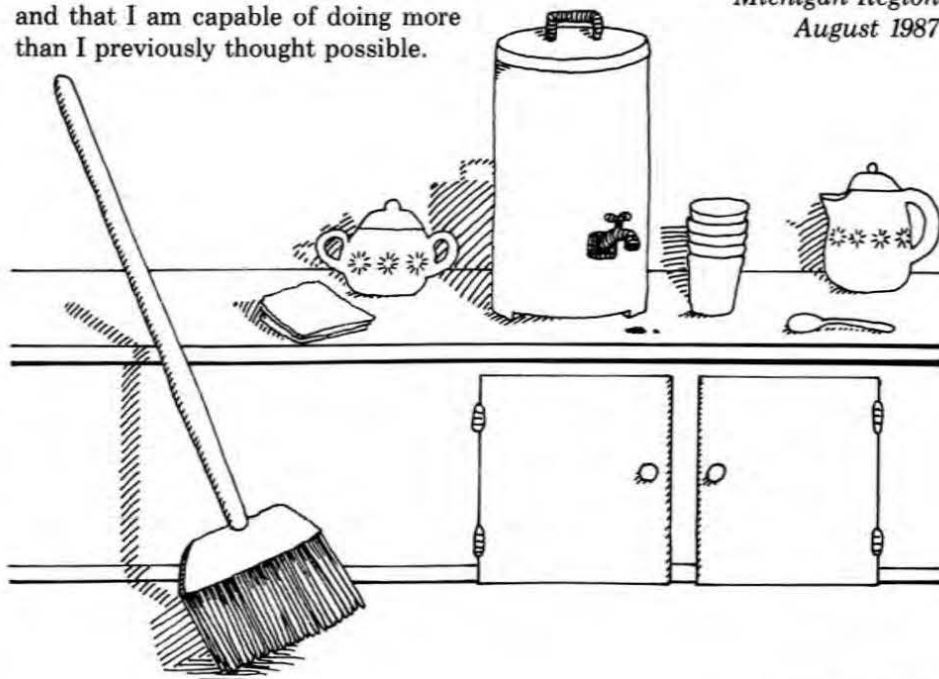
Life became much better and staying clean much easier when I awoke to realize that we do it together. Trying to recover alone sure didn't work. We need each other. I can never repay N.A. for what it has given me, for it has given so much (my life). I have learned that I can do my part, and that I am capable of doing more than I previously thought possible.

The true strength comes from working with others. Collectively we are greater than the sum of our parts, but I don't benefit unless I am a part! One of my single most important lessons in life came from a decision I made to participate in service work with Narcotics Anonymous.

I learned how to make, keep, and fulfill a commitment. I learned to better communicate with fellow human beings. I learned to disagree without being disagreeable. (Still working on that one. It gets better with practice!)

I learned more about the Twelve Traditions and how this fellowship works. I learned to find hidden talents and develop them into skills. To state it simply, service work has been a great learning experience, a true lesson in a better way of life.

*Anonymous
from The Daily Surrender
Michigan Region
August 1987*



Simpler and simpler

When I sat in my first N.A. meeting, there were about ten crazy people sitting around a table babbling about a lot of stuff I couldn't quite grasp. From their expressions, the way they looked, and the feelings that were in that room, though, I knew right away that they were "my kind of people."

I'd been going to A.A. for a couple of years already, doping most of the time, and getting drunk when I ran out of dope and/or money. I was still "just having fun" with cocaine and Valium, etc., and therefore didn't need to quit those.

After several trips to jail the year before I got to N.A., I was "forced" into treatment as an alternative to prison. After a couple of weeks there, I realized that I'd been under the influence of one kind of chemical or another just about every day for eighteen years.

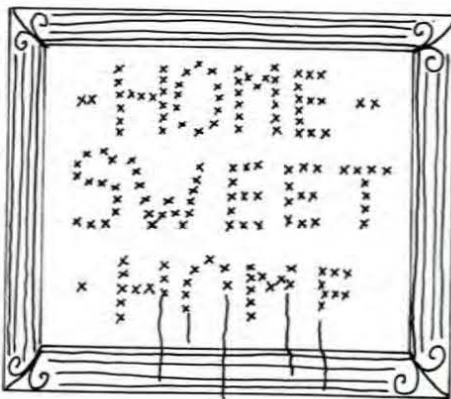
I also realized that I hadn't just had a gentleman's taste for high-priced drugs, but that I was stealing, cheating my family, and avoiding most of my friends in order to get away from a reality I couldn't stand (me), and doing it with any drug I could get my hands on.

I felt the loneliness inside me, the remorse over how I'd hurt those who loved me, the fear that I wouldn't ever really be able to change. I heard the

constant chatter of my brains, and I saw the financial and emotional mess I had lived in every day. I knew then that I wanted the program very badly. I didn't know if I could make it and keep making it, but I wanted it more than anything else.

That was how recovery started for me. I wasn't even sure I wanted to give up my favorite mood-changers, but I was absolutely certain I didn't want to live the same way even one more day. So I started following directions. I began learning exciting new ideas, but most of my job was (and still is) unlearning old ones. For example, I had to set aside the idea that God had a grudge against "people like me."

The people I met excited me. I got lots of hugs. The old feeling that I was separate and different from everyone else began to fade. I saw through them that there was a power at work here that could do what I couldn't. It became the Power I adopted as-I-



understood-him, and it was easier then to decide to turn my life over to it. I had already stayed drunk and loaded for eighteen months over my objections to God-as-my-parents-understood-him, and I wanted to quit that crap any way I could.

I made hard going of recovery for several months, and eventually had a one-snort slip when my spiritual resources were low. It was humbling, but it convinced me even more that "I" had no power over my addiction, and that I had to have a bigger power than me on my side.

Every day, I got even more involved in N.A. I went to nearly every meeting that was held in Dallas (there were only four or five a week then). I talked more often to my N.A. sponsor, and tried more seriously to turn over all areas of my life to the care of God-as-I-then-understood-Him.

It dawned on me that "one day at a time" just meant making it 'til bedtime. That made a lot of things seem easier. I began helping out with group responsibilities and the phone service. I took some newcomers to meetings, took meetings to a hospital, and started to really be a part of N.A.

After a couple of years, I had to face the fact that my home life and financial style were still a complete shambles. I began to get the message more and more clearly that this is an action program, and that no amount of awareness or so-called faith would change anything unless I also changed what I was doing.

My marriage was unraveling then, and so was my career. I had learned not to medicate myself, but a lot about my approach to life hadn't really changed. The old feelings of fear and failure, shame and resentment, crept back into my attitude. I felt that God must be a pretty grim dude to want to lay this crap on me now. What I was doing was going to ten meetings a week, serving this group, that board, this committee, that sponsee, and all

the while my own ass was falling off.

I was using the fellowship to hide behind. Up until then, I had found one loophole or another to avoid taking responsibility for my life, and didn't want to give up that habit yet. It didn't work. The great job went one year, and the marriage was over the next

I was using the fellowship to hide behind. I had found one loophole or another to avoid taking responsibility for my life.

year. I was in a boatload of big hurt. My mother died, then my grandmother, and my creditors got more and more rude to me. I felt ripped off all the time but, as always, some things began to happen that I hadn't expected.

I was forced to accept the loving kindness of my friends, and had to ease off on service work to tend to my own life. I learned that my precious image of "having it together" was never what my friends had loved about me. They had always just cared about the real me.

Losing all that stuff cleared the way for a more direct contact with a Higher Power and with you. It came to me that no relationship, no job, no amount of power or money could ever have worked as a substitute for the knowledge that we are precious, loved, magnificent human beings, without any extras, just as we are.

Now, more than ever, it seems clear that there are no loopholes in reality (except the one that lets us squeak into recovery before it's too late). If I

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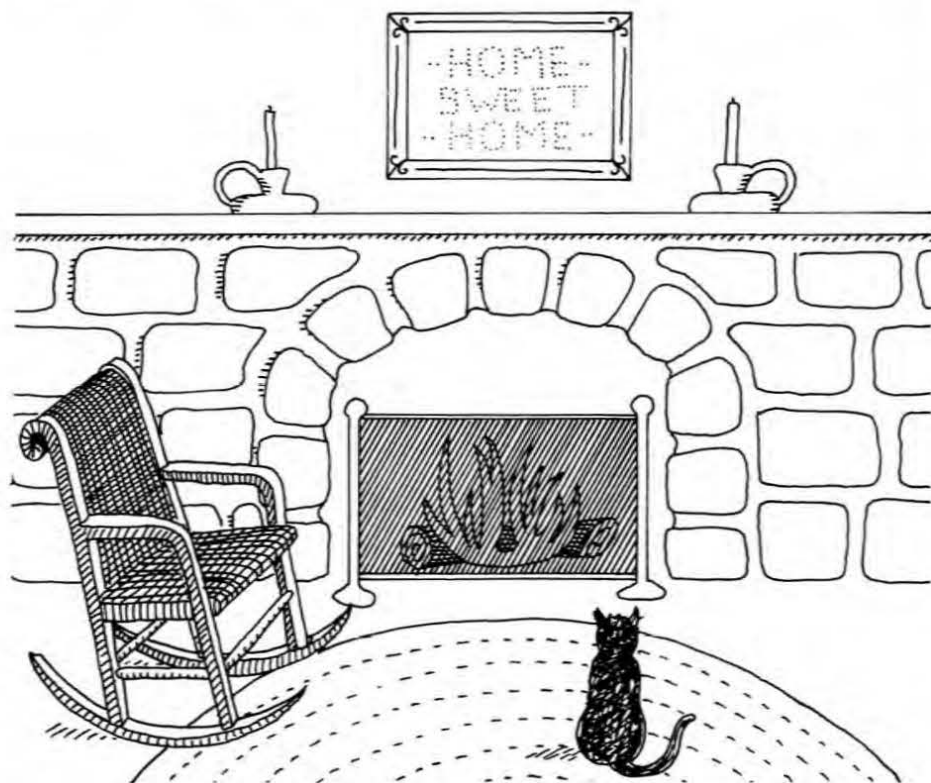
want healthy relationships, I have to do what healthy partners do. If I want a more sane financial life, I have to do things differently than before. If I

want to feel better, I have to do better. If I want friends, I have to be a friend.

I never was being ripped off, I was just going through what was necessary for me to learn these things. I have been asking for serenity, courage, wisdom, balance, and freedom for my own little self for over five years now. In proportion to my cooperation with my Higher Power, those gifts are exactly what is being given to me every day.

If you want the freedom and joy this program has to offer, and are willing to do whatever it takes to get them, no one—nobody on earth—can keep you from doing the same.

S.S.
from *The Clean Sheet*
Dallas, Texas
November 1987



The Twelve Steps for intellectuals

And now, for alla youse what are too smart fer yer own good, General Gratitude and Captain Clean present an intellectual version of the steps (along with the straight skinny).

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.

I recognize as genuine and valid that I am not in a position of ascendancy over my self-destructive behaviors, that in my manner of living I had lost the ability to handle, control, or carry on business and affairs effectively for my own welfare.

(My best efforts at life are self-destructive. I can't fix me.)

2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

I have a strong belief and accept as true that a mental and moral vigor more mighty than myself restores me to a state of mental soundness and health.

(There is something stronger than my ego, and it can fix me. I believe something can fix me.)

3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Through my best judgement I take the action of turning my life and my power of controlling my own actions and emotions over to the supervision and charge of the Supreme Reality as I agree upon it.

Through my best judgement I take the action of releasing the responsibility for my thoughts and actions over to the supervision and charge of the Supreme Reality as I agree upon it.

(Cheat by getting the boss's help. I will let something bigger than me fix me.)

4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

I bravely compose and prepare a critical examination of my principles of right and wrong, and their acting upon my mind, character and will by reflectively itemizing my past actions and behaviors.

(Made a list of all the ways I have tried to play Supreme Reality.)

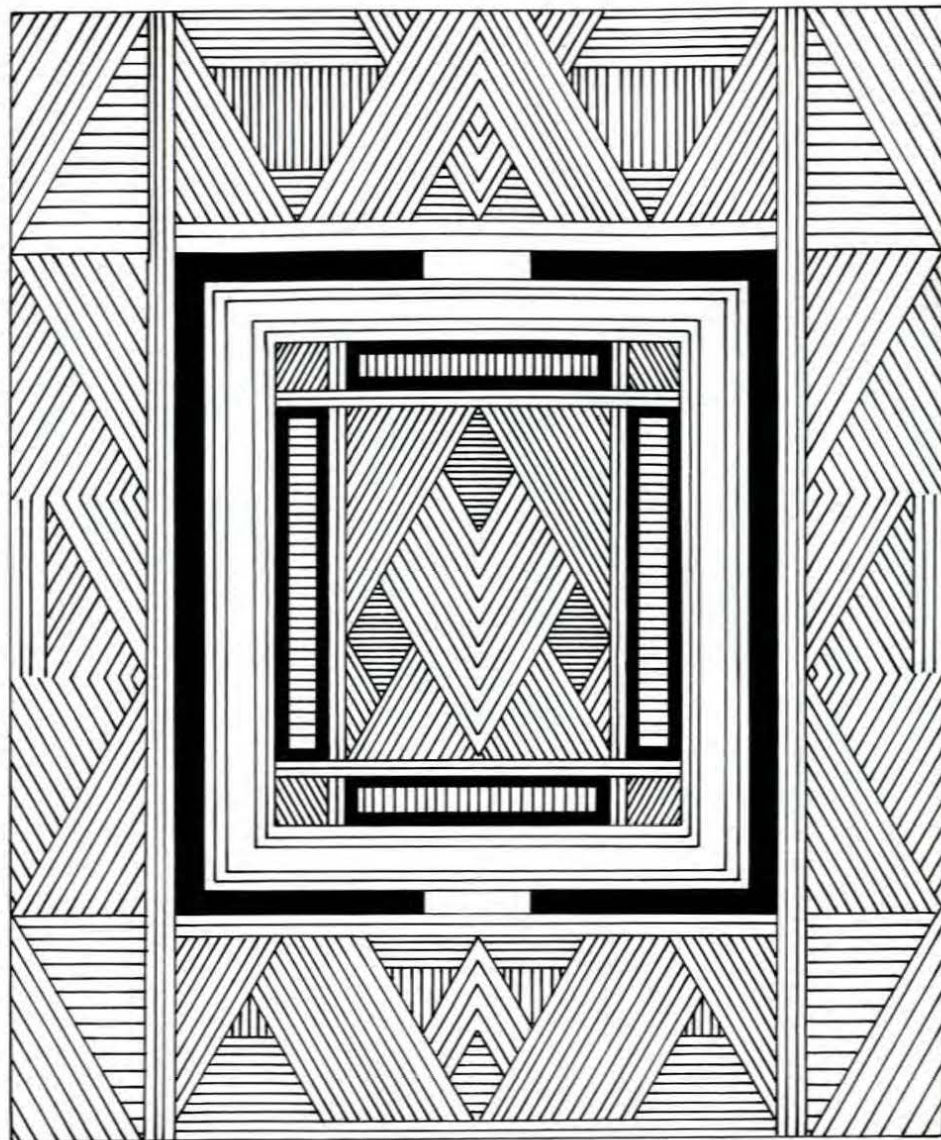
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

I reveal to the Supreme Reality, my own self, and another living person, precisely and accurately, the peculiar qualities of my malignancy.

(Told someone else the stuff I usually use over.)

6. We became entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

I am wholly prepared for the action of the Supreme Reality to eliminate



every one of these faults in my complex of mental and ethical traits.
(Became ready to *do* and *be* different.)

7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

I unpretentiously request and invite the Supreme Reality to elimi-

nate the self-destructive aspects of my mental and ethical traits.
(Begged it to make me different, regardless of my opinion.)

8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

I here compose a simple series of names of every one of the indi-

viduals I had caused physical, mental or emotional injury to and voluntarily, without reluctance, am prepared to compensate every one of these individuals for their injury or loss.

(Made a list of all the poor folks what got in the way of me playing God.)

9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

I perform, straightforwardly and without intervention, compensation for injury or loss to each of these individuals, unless doing so could cause physical, mental or emotional harm or loss to them or another.

(Cleaned up my side of each situation, except when somebody else could get hurt by loss of ignorance. Apologized to the ones who were in the wrong place at the right time, unless there are others who could get busted for it too.)

10. We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

I persevere in performing a private itemized list of my current liabilities and assets, and when my behavior is unsuitable, inappropriate, or incorrect I readily and immediately acknowledge it.

(Keep track of my behavior, and when I boo-boo, cop to 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.

I search by means of earnest request and contemplation to enhance and increase the mental awareness and communication in my relationship with the Supreme Reality as I agree upon it, earnestly requesting solely a clear perception of truth, of its authority and strength for me, and the mental and moral vigor to support that in my daily life.

(Talk and listen to the boss, making it a point to do what he says, believing that I'll get what I need to do it.)

*I made a list of all
the poor folks
what got in the way
of me playing God.*

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.

Having experienced awareness of the life-giving force and active presence of the Supreme Reality as a beneficial effect of these sequential measures, I endeavor and strive to support and carry this knowledge to people who suffer the disease of addiction, and to systematically exercise proficiency in these fundamental codes of conduct in each and every one of my concerns.

(Having had the wake-up, I share it and continue to earn it.)

*Anonymous
from The Rolling Paper
Phoenix, Arizona
August 1987*

A funny thing happened to me on the way to the meeting...

I was at a meeting the other night and the topic was "Higher Power." The direction of the meeting went toward spiritual experiences.

A newcomer wanted to know if he might be doing something wrong because he had not caught a glimpse of the face of God yet, had not seen blood on a wall or a burning bush.

A friend of mine shared that she had always waited for her palms to bleed but had finally given that up because she had seen that staying clean was a miracle much greater. I watched her hands the whole meeting, thinking how shocked she'd be to see blood. (I did notice a band-aid on one of her fingers.)

I could understand the newcomer. I had yearned for the dramatic. I wanted it more than anything, and that anticipation can be partially credited for keeping me clean in the early days. I waited for the skies to light up, the waters to part, God's voice to speak to me. I wanted indisputable proof of

God's existence, and more specifically, of His concern for me.

One Sunday night, with about three weeks clean, as usual I couldn't sleep. I turned on the TV in my room to watch a late-night movie. The plot of the movie is not important. I was too toxic to follow it. What I did hear was an old Supremes song which touched something in me. I knew then that everything would be all right, that God existed and did care for me. I became open-minded.

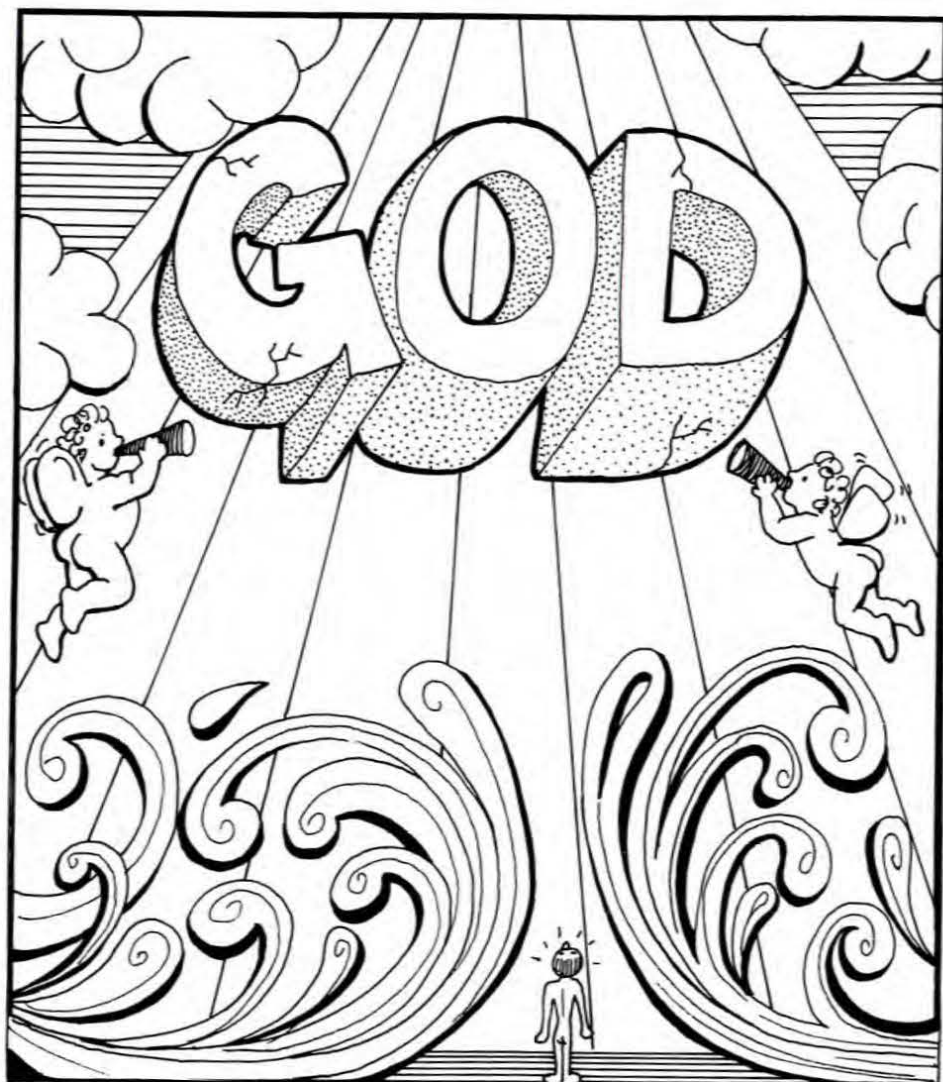
I can guarantee that every time since that night, when my life has become shaky, the radio plays that song.

The validity of these spiritual experiences are always questionable. Most people may see nothing more but pure coincidence coupled with a vulnerable psyche. Analysis may show

*What seems to me
the greater miracle is
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N.A. who decides to
stay.*

nothing more than an immature, incomplete and flaky personality. I suspect that my spiritual experience, shared here, is more flaky and ridiculous than most. But it fits me perfectly and has done the trick; I became open-minded.

In many ways I am no different than the newcomer who yearns for the Cecil B. DeMille spectacle of spiritual experience. Even though I may sigh knowingly when I hear the immediacy



in their voice, I am still somewhat disappointed in my Higher Power's subtlety. The wind on my face is certainly God, but where are the burning bushes? Objectively, I know my emotional self could never handle that type of fire. The Supremes have always been enough to carry me through.

What has become the greater miracle today is the newcomer who comes to N.A. and decides to stay. Watching

a self-pitying, defensive and confused addict work through the steps and become their own person is a spiritual awakening that has much more meaning and relevance than any of Cecil B. DeMille's movies ever could. Quite frankly, I never did sit through one, not even on late night TV.

N.M.
from The Recovery Review
Oregon/Southern Idaho Region
April 1988

Decisions and the first year

I came to my first several N.A. meetings riding a very tall horse, chips balanced precariously on both shoulders. It wasn't long before I fell off my horse, and I got tired of daring addicts around the tables to knock the chips off my shoulders. They just kept saying, "Don't use, work the steps, and keep coming to meetings."

Eventually I was able to take the First Step. I admitted I was powerless over my addiction, and that my life was unmanageable. I came to understand that I had a disease, that my life was unmanageable because I had made it so, and that it didn't have to be unmanageable anymore.

I kept coming back to meetings, and I worked the steps to the best of my ability. I listened and I learned—slowly. It took over a year to become aware of how fogged and musty my mind had been, and how it slowly but surely cleared with time in the program.

I came into Narcotics Anonymous with the walls of about seventeen years of addiction encasing me in denial, anger, fear. Not only did I have to somehow dispose of all the garbage, I had to begin to recover enough to

learn what to replace the garbage with, and how to do that.

N.A. offered Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, a bunch of recovering addicts, the concept of a Higher Power and more. I had to learn to use these tools not only to stay clean, but also to live in active recovery.

Between learning how to surrender, how to work the steps, how to apply the principles of recovery to my life outside meetings, how to develop a working relationship with the Higher Power of my understanding, and how to live my life one day at a time, I was boggled.

Talking the talk is not difficult. Understanding the talk, living the talk—that's hard work. The only concrete, wholehearted, feel-good decision I was capable of making during my first year was to stay clean no matter what.

I didn't know how to make decisions. For me, making a decision is akin to making a commitment, which is a first

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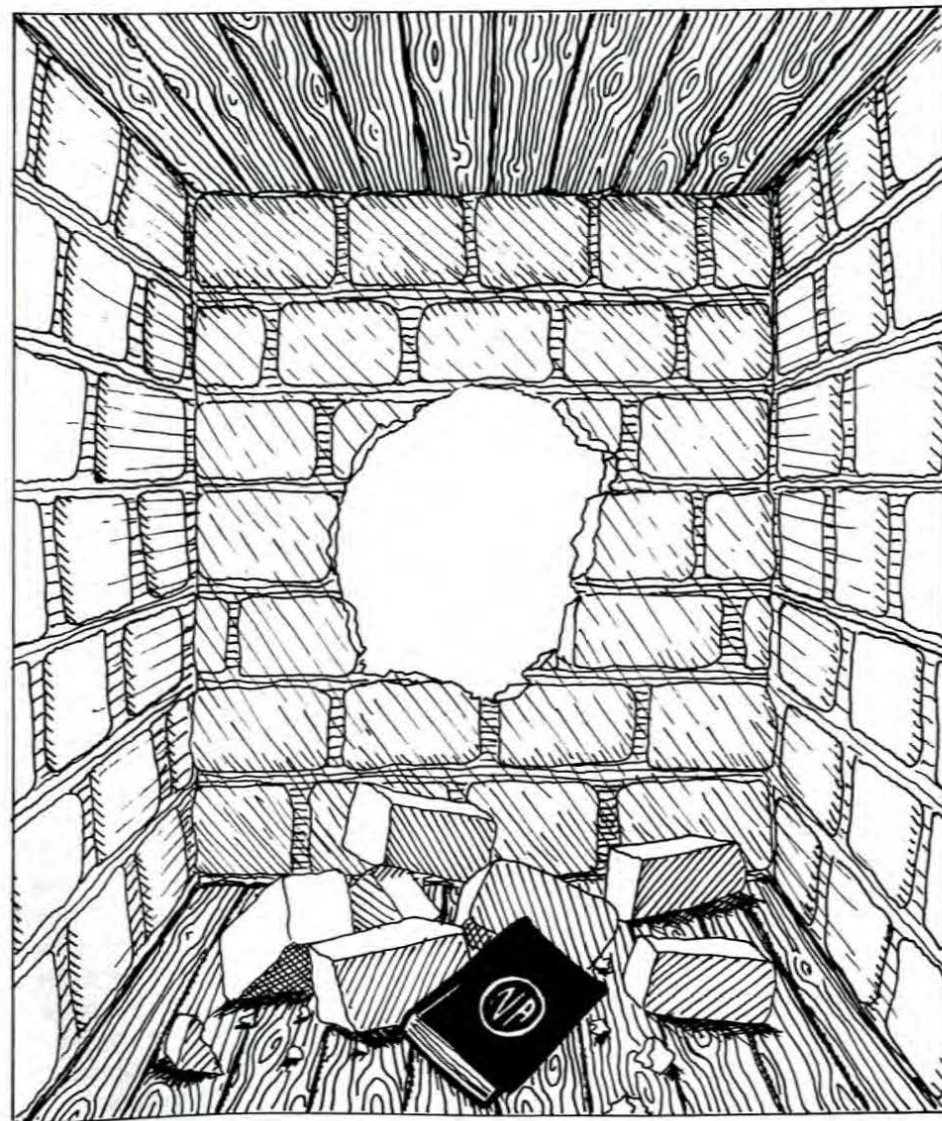
cousin to accepting responsibility. As a using addict, it was completely against my nature to make commitments or accept responsibilities. Both scared me, confused me, and were best avoided so I could keep myself to myself.

I spent the first year of my recovery detoxing from the mindlessness of leading a life built on drug use and the distortions in thinking and reasoning my disease encouraged and embellished. I didn't know how to be open-minded, knew next to nothing about willingness, and I had an innate fear of honesty. I didn't know how to make rational decisions; I operated on im-

pulse.

So I'm grateful I had to make no big decisions my first year. I just had to stay clean and learn to live in N.A. recovery. That was plenty!

*Anonymous
from Not Necessarily the Newsletter
Oregon/Southern Idaho Region
October 1987*



Dear Mom and Dad,

I'm writing this letter to help you understand my addiction to drugs and how Narcotics Anonymous has helped me. The first thing that I want to tell you is that I love you and that you were in no way responsible for my addiction to drugs. A lot of parents seem to worry about where they went wrong, but please don't do that.

When I was young, I started using drugs a couple of years before the serious problems started. In those days no one ever talked about drugs. I was in denial, and my guess was that even if you knew that I was using drugs you wouldn't want to believe it. We never talked about it.

I now take pride that I am a recovering addict. Please don't deny that I am an addict or think that I'm cured. The addiction is still inside of me, and that is why I continue to seek out the company of other recovering addicts in N.A. That helps me remember my disease and not to go back to it.

When the problems started, there was a lot of screaming and kicking me out. But we always made up and you would either bail me out of jail, give me some money, or let me come back until I got on my feet. In other words, you always rescued me. This rescuing almost killed me. It was only when you

gave up on me that I truly felt and saw the consequences of my actions.

Although recovery was not an instant by-product, it gave me a major shove in the right direction. I didn't thank you at the time because my disease is an ungrateful one that will lie, cheat and steal to get the drugs it needs. I do want to thank you now, that you cared enough to get tough with me.

I want to tell you about Narcotics Anonymous so you can understand my life today. I don't expect you to trust or respect me because of the words I'm writing. Trust and respect are earned by an ongoing demonstration that my behavior has changed. My

guess is that you have little faith in N.A. because you've seen me fail to stay clean after being treated through inpatient and outpatient clinics, by psychiatrists, psychologists and other skilled doctors.

I have faith now because I see men and women at N.A. meetings that have been clean five, ten, fifteen and even thirty years with the help of the Narcotics Anonymous program. There are those who don't make it in N.A., but I intend to stick with the people who have something I want: a happy, drug-free life.

Narcotics Anonymous is not a cult. It is a fellowship of men and women

who come together to stay clean and to deal with the business of living. It's not a program that you complete or finish. It's a program of lifelong growth.

They don't ask me to give them all my money, to give up my family, or to give up my religion. They do suggest that I stop using drugs, take an honest look at myself, admit when I'm wrong, allow a higher power as I understand him to help me, and to call on other recovering addicts whenever I choose to. Finally, they ask me to help the

*N.A. is not a cult.
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newcomer to Narcotics Anonymous by sharing my experience, strength and hope with them.

Nobody bosses me around. They just make suggestions and give me the tools I need (Twelve Steps and some slogans) to carry them out.

Mom and Dad, if you want to find out more about Narcotics Anonymous, there are several things you can do. You can read the literature; you can attend open meetings of Narcotics Anonymous; or you can call me, and I'll explain it the best I can.

Love,

*Anonymous
from Steppin' On
Bay Cities Area, California
December 1986*

Viewpoint



Us or them?

I was discussing issues in service with some members after a meeting this evening. One member asked my opinion on an issue that was important to them. It was the first I had heard of it, but it really didn't sound like a big issue to me, and that is what I said.

"We've got one of *them* here," said the addict who had raised the issue. This was a surprise to me—I thought I was one of *us*. I have been hearing a lot of *us* vs. *them* talk lately, and I can't say I'm too excited about it. I hear this sort of thing almost exclusively from those involved in formal service work.

I suppose for every committee I do not support I could be considered one of *them*. For every H&I meeting that I don't support I could be considered one of *them*. For every committee that I do support I risk becoming one of *them* to all those members who aren't impressed with the services delivered by that committee. If my area makes mistakes I am one of *them* to all the other areas. If I support the regional service committee, I risk becoming one of *them* to all of the areas.

I have heard members speak of committees, subcommittees, the

World Service Conference, the regional service committee, other regions, and others as if they were not a part of *us*. The fact is that we are all incredibly good at attacking, blaming and pointing fingers. It is only possible to blame someone else when you can separate *them* out from *us*.

It is only possible to blame others when we are able to set ourselves apart and imagine ourselves to be blameless. The fact is that *we* are responsible for what is happening in Narcotics Anonymous—both the good and the bad. We are both the solution and the problem.

*It is possible to
blame someone
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"them" from "us."*

I keep hearing members say, "If we do this or that, everything will be all right." Nonsense. *We* are always going to have problems in our fellowship—this is real life. No single sweep of the wand is going to solve our problems because of *us*. We, the membership of Narcotics Anonymous, are addicts, and the disease of addiction still affects many of our actions.

We can be grandiose in our schemes. We can be arrogant. We can procrastinate. We can run from difficulties by perpetually fiddling with our fragile service structure. We can blame others for our problems. We can become obsessed with issues—for a long time.

We can fail to fulfil our responsibilities. We can become greedy, angry, impatient, manipulative, fearful, willful and resentful. We not only can do all these things—we do all these things. It's only with the kindness of a loving God that we don't all do all of them at the same time.

Each of *us* also acts out of our recovery in our service efforts. We can be loving, forgiving, and kind. We can be responsible, consistent and willing. We can be honest, open and supportive. We can be giving, have faith, and seek to do God's will for our fellowship. We can be realistic, accepting and humble in our planning. We can face our problems and build solutions out of group conscience. We can do all of these things too—and we do. With the help of a loving God we can learn to do more of these things more of the time.

We are sick people suffering from a disease for which there is no known cure. However, it can be arrested. We can work toward solutions by working the Twelve Steps in our lives, each of

us. We can work toward solutions by attempting to apply our Twelve Traditions in our efforts to serve. Much as we stumble in our efforts to work the steps, so will we continue to stumble in our efforts to apply our traditions.

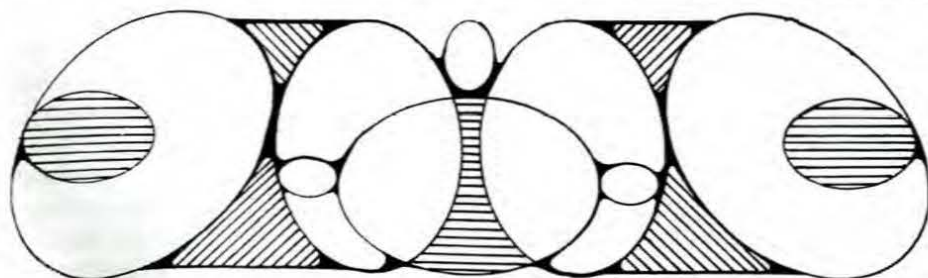
We do get better, as long as each of *us* personally works on getting better. But it is only together that we do recover. I do not want to set other addicts apart by calling them *them*, and I do not want to be set apart myself. I am one of *us*, and *together we can*.

*Anonymous
from The Daily Surrender
Michigan Region
February 1988*

Purist

I just got back from the convention in Albuquerque. It was great, but there was a lot of discussion about the traditions and N.A. "purity." The speaker on Sunday morning carried a strong message of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous, yet she used the "s" word ("sobriety") frequently, and a number of people shut her out as soon as they heard that.

I have to admit that I am a purist at heart. It may come from my early



recovery, going to meetings of other fellowships and hearing them ask that we not share about our drug use. It may be a sick desire for revenge or one-ups-manship.

I know that I can get so carried away that when I hear a recovering addict—one with a lot of time and a strong program—share that their parents were alcoholics, I want to tell them their parents were addicts who used alcohol. But I also know that my sick addict brain will use anything it can grab to keep me from hearing the message of recovery.

My brain has learned to use the traditions as a weapon against my personal recovery. If I hear anything relating to the other fellowship, my brain wants me to check out in the name of the Sixth Tradition.

Fortunately, I am learning not to listen to my own brain when it does that. I was able to hear the message of recovery from the speaker in Albuquerque, and it was good.

I think there is another danger, besides to my personal recovery, in

being a total purist. I remember how it felt when I heard that no one wanted to hear me talk about my experience. It hurt. I used that as an excuse not to belong, to stay different, to feel not accepted and not a part of.

The First Step in Narcotics Anonymous focuses on the disease of addiction, and not on the substance. Those of us who pursue our purist attitude to the point of hounding others, or asking them not to talk, or shaming them, are in danger of turning our fellowship into an exclusive club only for those who think like us. That is not our primary purpose. We exist to carry the message to the addict who still suffers, no matter how they talk or where

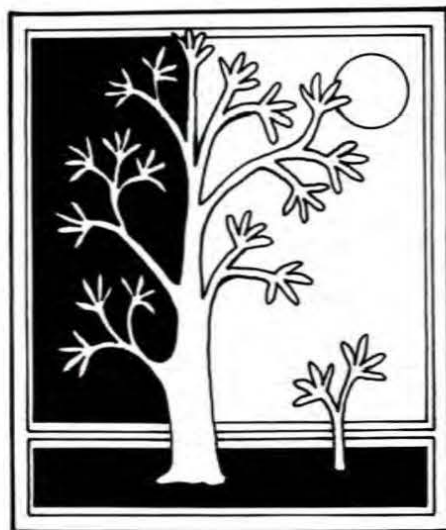
My brain has learned to use the traditions as a weapon against my own recovery.

they come from or what they used.

I am learning to let go with love, to let God be responsible for who hears the message when I talk, and to be more accepting of my fellow addicts who are seeking recovery. I am learning to keep my brain out of the way of my personal recovery, and out of the way of the unity of our fellowship. Personal recovery depends on N.A. unity, and my intolerance and lack of acceptance do nothing to further that unity.

A.R.

*from The Rolling Paper
Phoenix, Arizona
July 1987*



From our readers



Dear Self,

Living "today" with you is a joy. You've been able to see clear through all the happiness and all the pain that life on its own terms has to offer.

Thank you for opening your eyes and your mind to others when they cared, when they shared, and when they gave you love when you couldn't even love yourself.

Thank you for listening when you really didn't want to hear what they were saying. Thank you for giving of yourself when you thought you had nothing to give. Thank you for being "a part of" when at times you felt "apart from." You've learned so much, and you're learning more and more.

Thank you for finding something that teaches you how to live, how to face things, and how to deal with your powerlessness. Thank you for realizing that you are a good person and that you're human. Your feelings are okay, even the "bad" ones.

Thank you for going to meetings when you were too tired. Thank you for talking about your experience, strength and hope instead of whatever sounded good. Thank you for loving fellow addicts unconditionally, without judgement.

Thank you for reaching out when you were hurting, lonely or confused, and for reaching out when someone else was.

Thank you for calling someone, even when you thought you might be a

bother. Thank you for the long talks, the hugs, the laughter, and the tears.

Thank you, Self, for working the program, for living the program, and for having the faith in your God that brought you to the road of recovery.

D.M., Delaware

Yawho!

Hi. My name is Matiu, and I'm an addict. I've read many N.A. magazines and I've always kept saying, "Man, I'm gonna write." Yawho! Finally I've got me ass up head down. Here goes...

For years I've felt loneliness. For years I've felt pain, hate, resentments, anger. I had a problem, but damned if I could figure it out. I always question myself, "Matiu, why do you keep doing the stupid things you do, man?" My answer to myself was always, "Aah, I don't care." But I did care. I wanted answers. What the hell was wrong with me? Why, why, why?

Then, at the bottom of my misery, I found N.A., or N.A. found me. (Still figuring that one out.) I experienced something which no drugs, women, religion, philosophy, jail, fight, circle, job, place, argument, or book could give me.

Yet I had been so ingrained with bitterness that I missed the first N.A. boat, then the second, third, fourth, fifth. Many times I thought, "No bugga ya's? I can face life on my own." Down on my face I would go each time. Finally, after dabbling here and

there, I surrendered—and thank you, God.

I am now near my second birthday, and with the grace of God I hope I never jump this boat again. Many times the sailing gets rough; I freak, I get scared. Thank God for the fellowship and its simple suggestions. Matiu, keep it simple, stupid, one day at a time.

I love people now. In my past, I didn't know what *like* was, let alone love.

I was anti-white, anti-system, a freaked out anti-everything gang member who hated being brown. I hated myself so much I would blame others for the way I was feeling. "Man, them bastards make me how I am—you's did this—I'll kill you's." I would blame whites, the system, my own people, God. I was one screwed up guy.

With the help of N.A. and what the preamble says on being open regardless of age, race, sexual I.D., creed, religion, lack of religion, I am now living and learning to give love honestly. I can now walk the streets without fear that I'm gonna get shot or stabbed. I don't need to carry a blade. I don't need to watch my back, wear shades day and night, or wear colours to prove I'm a man. I don't need to fight for a cause which I feel is going in the opposite direction from where I want to get.

I thought I was proud, and I thought I would die a black power member. Thank God I didn't. I came so close many, many times... the beatings I got, the beatings I gave. Many times I would walk into jail, and by the grace of God I was allowed to walk out months, in one case a year, later. I've stared at a ten-to-twenty-year sen-

tence many times, and how I never went, only God knows. So with that I am grateful.

As the old saying goes, I've been there and back, and hopefully no way I'll ever walk those streets again.

M.K., New Zealand

My service is important to me

When I first read the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous, I was amazed at the attention paid to the individual's role in his or her own recovery. As a practicing addict, I always felt that somebody else was to blame for my problems, though deep inside I knew that I was the problem.

The steps and traditions gave me tools I so desperately needed to begin the process of growth that is necessary for recovery from the disease of addiction. I felt as if God had finally spoken to me in a language I could understand. The principles of N.A. provided me all the guidance needed to redirect my life. The foundation for this new life is the understanding that my recovery cannot be kept unless I give it away, lock, stock and barrel.

When I was using drugs, I was very much concerned with results. It did me no good at all to enjoy the feeling of yesterday's high; a day later I had to again be centered on the now.

Strangely enough, my recovery is somewhat similar. No matter what great thing has occurred in the program, it seems to me it is only good for as long as it lasts.

Let me give you an example. I was once lucky enough to chair a regional convention committee. While I was involved, I dealt with the full circle of emotions—clean! When it was over I

felt empty. I had devoted so much attention to that one event that afterwards I felt a big void.

Feeling lonely and left out, I called another addict in another area who had worked on the previous convention in our region. I asked him what I should do. He said simply, "Get involved in something else." I was shocked! Hadn't I paid my dues? Couldn't I rest for awhile? He explained that as great as what we had done was, it could only carry me to the next commitment.

That brings me to the point of the article. Why is service important to a silly, self-centered addict such as myself? I lean toward the chaotic; disorder is perfectly normal to me without the program. Service brings me out of the illusion of recovery and into reality. Services forces me (which at times is the only way I get things done) to at least work the steps and

apply the traditions to some degree.

When I begin to work the steps and traditions in the reality of the program, I begin to grow; I begin to recover. Left to myself I choose a group of people who co-sign my b.s. and support my illusions of being in the process of change. With service, Higher Power works with others to allow me to confront my most dangerous enemy—me—in an atmosphere of love, tolerance, support and trust.

For me, service takes on many forms—sponsorship, coffee making, committees, etc. I'm beginning to realize that whatever form of service I'm involved in, it is really a gift, an opportunity to grow in the areas where I need growth most. Without service, I'm left with the tools I had before I found N.A., which were of no use to me whatsoever.

A.P., Michigan

Comin' up



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ALABAMA: Sep. 8-11, 1988; Alabama-Northwest Florida Convention; Gulf State Park Resort Hotel, Gulf Shores (800) 544-4853; Regional Convention, P.O. Box 2437, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32549-2437

AUSTRALIA: Sep. 30-Oct. 3, 1988; Australasian Regional Convention; Petersham Town Hall, Sydney, New South Wales; Australasian Convention, P.O. Box B88, Boronia Park, Sydney, NSW AUSTRALIA

CALIFORNIA: 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

2) Sep. 9-11, 1988; Mountain High Campout; Lake Tahoe KOA Kampground, South Lake Tahoe

FLORIDA: Nov. 17-20, 1988; Palm Coast Area Convention; Palm Hotel, 630 Clearwater Park Rd., W. Palm Beach; Palm Coast Convention, P.O. Box 3233, W. Palm Beach, FL 33402

IRELAND: Oct. 28-30, 1988; 3rd Annual Irish

Convention; N.A. Ireland, P.O. Box 1368, Sheriff Street, Dublin 1, Ireland

KANSAS: Feb. 17-19, 1989; Second Mid-America Regional Convention; Holiday Inn Holiday Convention Center, Salina, (913) 823-1739; Mid-America Convention, P.O. Box 383, Salina, KS 67401

MAINE: Sep. 9-11, 1988; We're A Miracle V; ASC of Maine, Convention Committee, P.O. Box 5309, Portland, ME 04101

MISSISSIPPI: Sep. 30 - Oct. 2, 1988; Fellowship Campout; Roosevelt State Park, Morton

NEBRASKA: Oct. 7-9, 1988; 5th Nebraska Regional Convention; Holiday Inn Northeast, 5250 Cornhusker Hwy., Lincoln; NRCNA-5, P.O. Box 80091, Lincoln, NE 68501-0091

NEVADA: Jun. 23-25, 1989; 2nd Sierra Sage Regional Convention; Nugget Hotel, Sparks; phoneline (702) 322-4811; Sierra Sage RSC, P.O. Box 11913, Reno, NV 89510-1191

NORTH DAKOTA: Oct. 22, 1988; 7th Annual Fargo-Morehead Banquet; Oak Manor Hotel, I-94 and US-81, Fargo; Fargo-Morehead ASC, P.O. Box 3243, Fargo, ND 58108

OHIO: Oct. 14-16, 1988; 1st Ohio Regional 12 Step Retreat; Tar Hollow State Park, Four Hills Resident Camp, Laurelville; Ohio Regional Office, 66 E. 15th Avenue, Columbus, OH

PENNSYLVANIA: Oct. 28-30, 1988; 6th Annual Tri-State Regional Convention; Vista International Hotel, Pittsburgh, (412) 281-3700 (specify N.A. convention); Tri-State RSO, P.O. Box 110217, Pittsburgh, PA 15232

QUEBEC: Oct. 7-9, 1988; 1st Quebec Bilingual Convention; Crown Plaza Hotel, 420 Sherbrooke St. West, Montreal (514) 842-6111; Quebec

Convention, P.O. Box 141, Succursale Youville, Montreal, Quebec, H2P 2V4

SOUTH CAROLINA: Nov. 11-13, 1988; Serenity Festival; Landmark Best Western, Myrtle Beach; Serenity Festival, P.O. Box 1198, Myrtle Beach, SC 29578

TENNESSEE: Nov. 23-27, 1988; 6th Volunteer Regional Convention; Garden Plaza Hotel, 211 Mockingbird Ln., Johnson City, (615) 929-2000; VRC-6, P.O. Box 353, Greeneville, TN 37744

TEXAS: Oct. 14-16, 1988; Texas Unity Convention (Whitney), 1612 Second Street, League City, TX 77573

2) Nov. 4-6, 1988; Best Little Region Convention; Koko Palace, 5101 Avenue Q, Lubbock TX 79412; N.A. Helpline 799-3950; BLRCNA-1, P.O. Box 3013, Lubbock, TX 79452-3013

VIRGINIA: Jan. 6-8, 1989; 7th Annual Virginia Convention; Williamsburg Hilton and National Conference Center; Virginia Convention, P.O. Box 1373, Hampton, VA 23661

WASHINGTON: Oct. 7-9, 1988; Eleventh Pacific Northwest Convention; Red Lion Inn at the Quay, Vancouver, (800) 547-8010 (ask for PNWCNA rates); Helpline (206) 573-3066; Pacific-Northwest Conv., P.O. Box 5158, Vancouver, WA 98668

WEST VIRGINIA: Oct. 21-23, 1988; 7th Tradition Convention; Cedar Lakes, Ripley (304) 372-7000; Convention, 2408 9th Avenue, Huntington, WV 25703

WISCONSIN: Oct. 28-30, 1988; 5th Wisconsin State Convention; Ramada Airport Inn, Milwaukee, (800) 272-6232; WSNAC-5, P.O. Box 1637, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1637



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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.

