

THE **N.A. Way**
M A G A Z I N E[®]

November 1989

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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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THE N.A. Way[®] M A G A Z I N E

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Group conscience: spiritual principle or 'spiritual' tyranny?

For some time, I have been worried about the way many N.A. members use the term "group conscience." Here are some examples of what I mean.

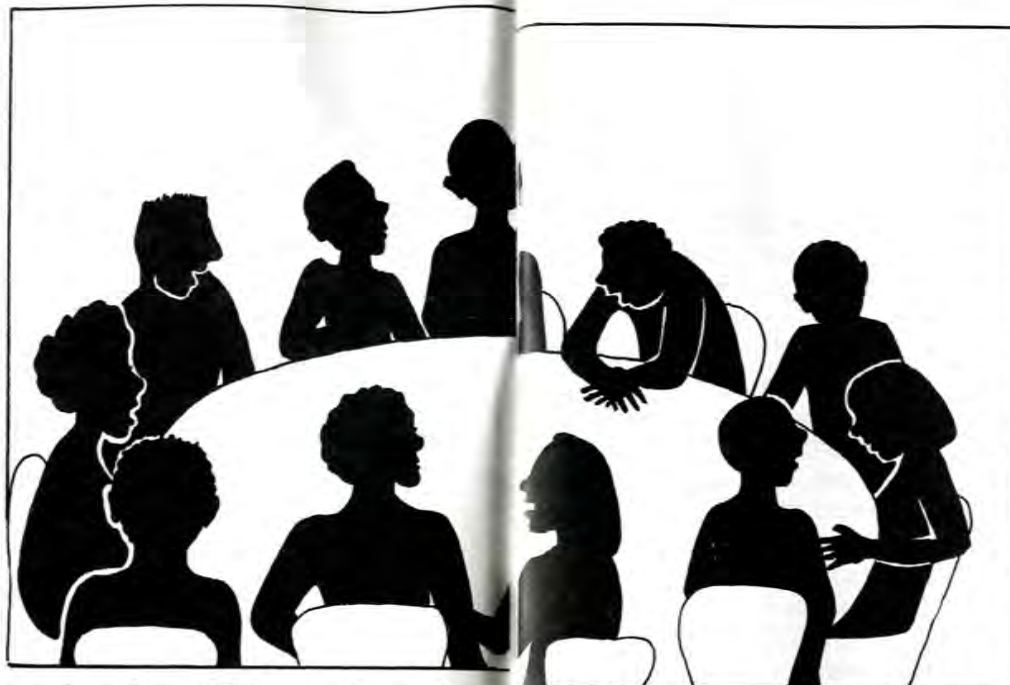
I recently attended an all-day service meeting. I didn't think the subject of the meeting was important, but an outside observer would have assumed that a matter of grave significance was being decided. Emotions at the meeting ran high, and everyone there was out to win.

After arguing all afternoon, the participants had another disagreement. Some people wanted to break for dinner and come back to finish. Others wanted to skip dinner and continue. The chairperson was irresolute, and finally said, "Let's take a group conscience on that." The group voted by a narrow margin to have dinner.

The irony, of course, was that when the thirty people attending the meeting were supposed to return, only five came back.

For eight years, I was a participant at the World Service Conference. I regularly saw regional service representatives come to the conference and claim that their region's opinion on various issues was a holy

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mandate. Some RSRs even bragged about the "size" of their group conscience, claiming "my group conscience is bigger than your group conscience." The message they conveyed was that the bigger the group conscience, the more potent it was. More sadly, I have seen RSRs at the WSC claim that they were unable to vote on even the simplest matters, because "they didn't have a clear group conscience on that."

The purpose of relating these stories is not to make any points about punctuality, dedication to service, or misplaced energy. I would like instead to analyze the attitudes that these members expressed regarding group conscience—attitudes I find disturbing.

The view that the chairperson expressed is common in our fellowship. Many of us believe that *anytime* addicts vote about *anything*, it must be

"spiritual" and therefore must be regarded as a "group conscience." I would like to explain why I disagree with this perception.

Group conscience is so serious and so powerful an expression of the will of a loving God that it should never be regarded lightly. To claim that a vote about whether to go to dinner or not is "group conscience" taxes my patience.

When group conscience really occurs, it *ends* disagreement, it doesn't *perpetuate* it. Group conscience is based in love, and offers us a way to reach decisions in love. To boast about its size implies that group conscience is connected with power: the power of your region, of your area, of your group, of your group faction. To say that a member who carries "a bigger group conscience" is more powerful than another member is repugnant. Power and its pursuit have no place

in N.A. Where they exist, something is spiritually rotten.

I have seen RSRs say they can't express their own views at the WSC, can't enter open discussion, and can't vote on matters unexamined by their region's groups, because they "don't have a clear group conscience." Those RSRs, instead of being trusted by their regions, are being tyrannized by unseen members miles away. These addicts (who invariably say they are "concerned members") use their spiritual twisting of group conscience to manipulate and control their representatives. Some RSRs are driven by fear of reprisals from these "concerned members" and are unable to represent their regions fully, or sometimes even adequately.

So, I get angry when I see group conscience trivialized. I get angry when I see group conscience used to measure an addict's power. I get angry when I see group conscience used to control others.

Group conscience as a concept is found in the Second Tradition of Narcotics Anonymous, which says that, "For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern." But the Second Tradition is misinterpreted by many addicts. They want to ignore the word *ultimate*—which means last or final—and pretend that group conscience is the *only* decision-making apparatus in Narcotics Anonymous.

To these members, group conscience is less of a spiritual process, and more of a method of voting. They see group

conscience as a vote to be taken over even the most minor of issues, often with little regard for the feelings of those with other views.

Group conscience was never meant to be the routine method of decision-making in N.A. Rather, it is the final, the ultimate decision-making process, used when issues are important enough or when all else has failed.

'My group conscience is bigger than yours'

When we call decision on minor matters "group conscience," we make it more difficult to know when group conscience is really necessary.

To waste the time of N.A. members with trivia is irresponsible. A group member's time is best spent carrying the message of N.A. and working to provide an atmosphere of recovery in a home group. The thing that matters in N.A. is carrying the message of recovery.

To seriously argue that it is desirable and even possible in such a large fellowship to poll every member in every group on every issue laid before the World Service Conference, the regional service committee, and the area service committee is ludicrous. To be blunt, I suspect that widespread voting on issues is so logistically impractical that the huge "group consciences" that some RSRs claim are inflated. I disbelieve that all members

of all groups in these regions have participated in an informed, comprehensive balloting. It's more likely that these figures are fabricated to attain power at the World Service Conference. If this is true, then we are dealing with "spiritual" tyranny, not spiritual principle.

Group conscience depends on full involvement at the level it is sought.

A true group conscience at the world level acknowledges that all conference members *must* participate in the process. Even then, to insist that group conscience be applied in all situations in N.A. says more about lack of trust than it does about using spiritual principles. The Second Tradition tells us that we have leaders who are servants and whom we trust to carry out many of the details of administering N.A.

I came to Narcotics Anonymous fifteen years ago, and have been clean since my first meeting. In these fifteen years, I have personally seen many inspiring examples of group conscience. Here are a few that stick in my mind.

Two fledgling N.A. groups in Philadelphia overcame their fears about beginning a phoneline; the line has been running since the early 1970s. The decision never would have worked if N.A. members hadn't wanted it to work.

When the two struggling areas in Pennsylvania supported the first East Coast Convention in 1980, none of us knew what an N.A. convention was going to be like. The people who went to that convention went on faith. Their faith turned the first East Coast Convention into an event that I will always remember as the best

convention I ever attended. It was a spiritual turning point in my recovery.

When the groups in the sprawling Philadelphia Area in 1982 left the Mid-Atlantic Region to form five new area service committees and a new regional service committee, there was much opposition outside Philadelphia. This momentous action, which was feared by many, resulted in vastly improved services to addicts. Many have found recovery because of this decision.

When hundreds of N.A. members contributed to the writing of the Basic Text in the early 1980s, no one took a vote on whether we wanted the book. We knew that the time was right. The group conscience was in our actions, not in a vote.

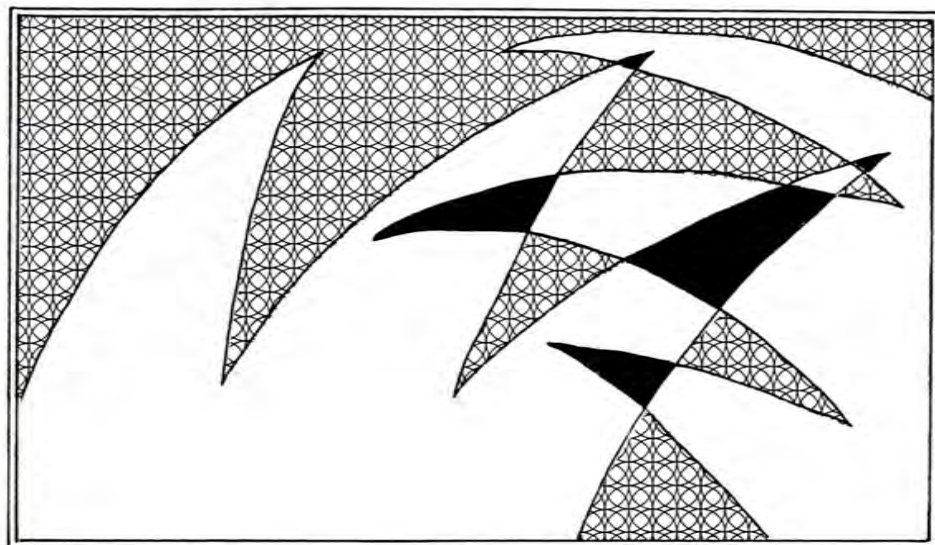
When the first representative from a country outside North America came to the World Service Conference in 1984, the participants didn't pause to consider if accepting him as a voting participant was the most prudent

way of encouraging N.A. growth. Instead, we gave the delegate from the Republic of Ireland a standing ovation and unanimously accepted him as a voting member.

When my home group last year disposed of its treasury reserve, many wanted to have a party. Instead, we decided to buy Basic Texts to give to newcomers. This is now a group tradition and is supported by all group members, even those who joined after the decision was made.

Group conscience is found in the love and strength that God has spread over Narcotics Anonymous. This love is expressed in decisions that allow us to welcome addicts, allow us to expand our membership, allow us to help others find their recovery. Group conscience is something that is not for the small-minded or for the power-seeking. When you have a group conscience, no one will ever ask for a recount.

J.F., Pennsylvania



Getting clean

I was sitting in the back of the room at my first N.A. meeting, never believing that one day I would consider this the most important day of my life. I asked myself what I was doing here at a meeting in Key West, Florida. I

was sure I didn't have a problem with drugs, but my girlfriend, Cindy (not her real name), obviously had a serious problem and needed to go to a meeting. I went there for her sake, but I swear everyone was talking about me. For the first time, I wondered why she went to meetings.

I had met Cindy several months earlier in California. I was an unemployed biker with money and no home. She was self-employed (broke) and loved to travel by motorcycle, making us a great match, except for one thing. I liked to drink, smoke pot, and take whatever else I could find;

but Cindy claimed to be a recovering drug addict who went to N.A. meetings and never took drugs. For a while, she constantly criticized my drinking, but after two months of traveling together she was drinking and smoking with me.

The day before my first N.A. meeting, I stopped and repaired a guy's bike that had broken down on the side of the road. He turned out to be a dealer, and offered me a bag of coke. Hoping to impress Cindy, I told him we didn't do drugs. But to my surprise, *she* said "I want it!" and stuffed the bag in her pocket. I was furious with

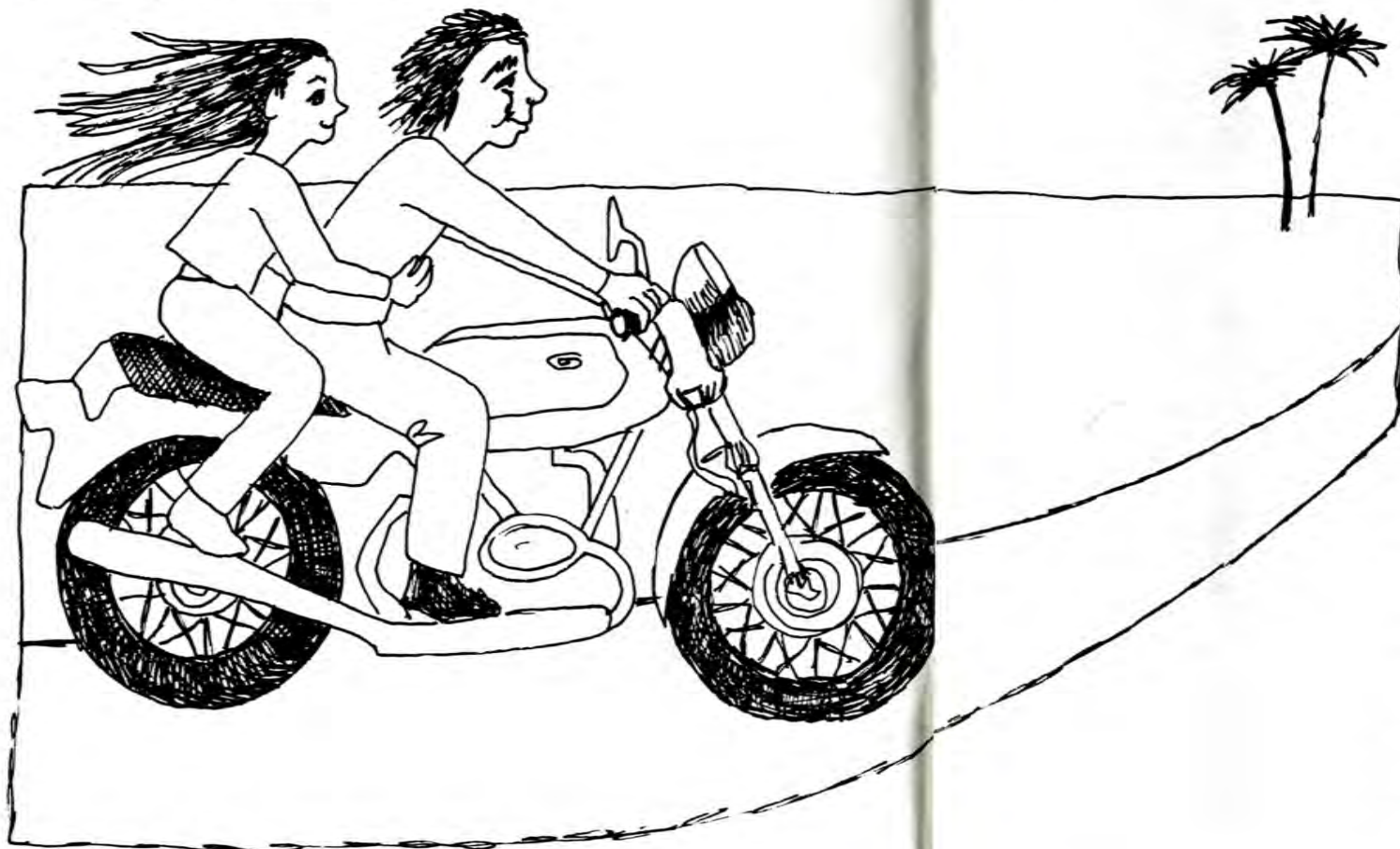
myself for turning down free drugs, and mad at her for not sharing any. We fought all night, and arrived in Key West sore, tired, and cranky.

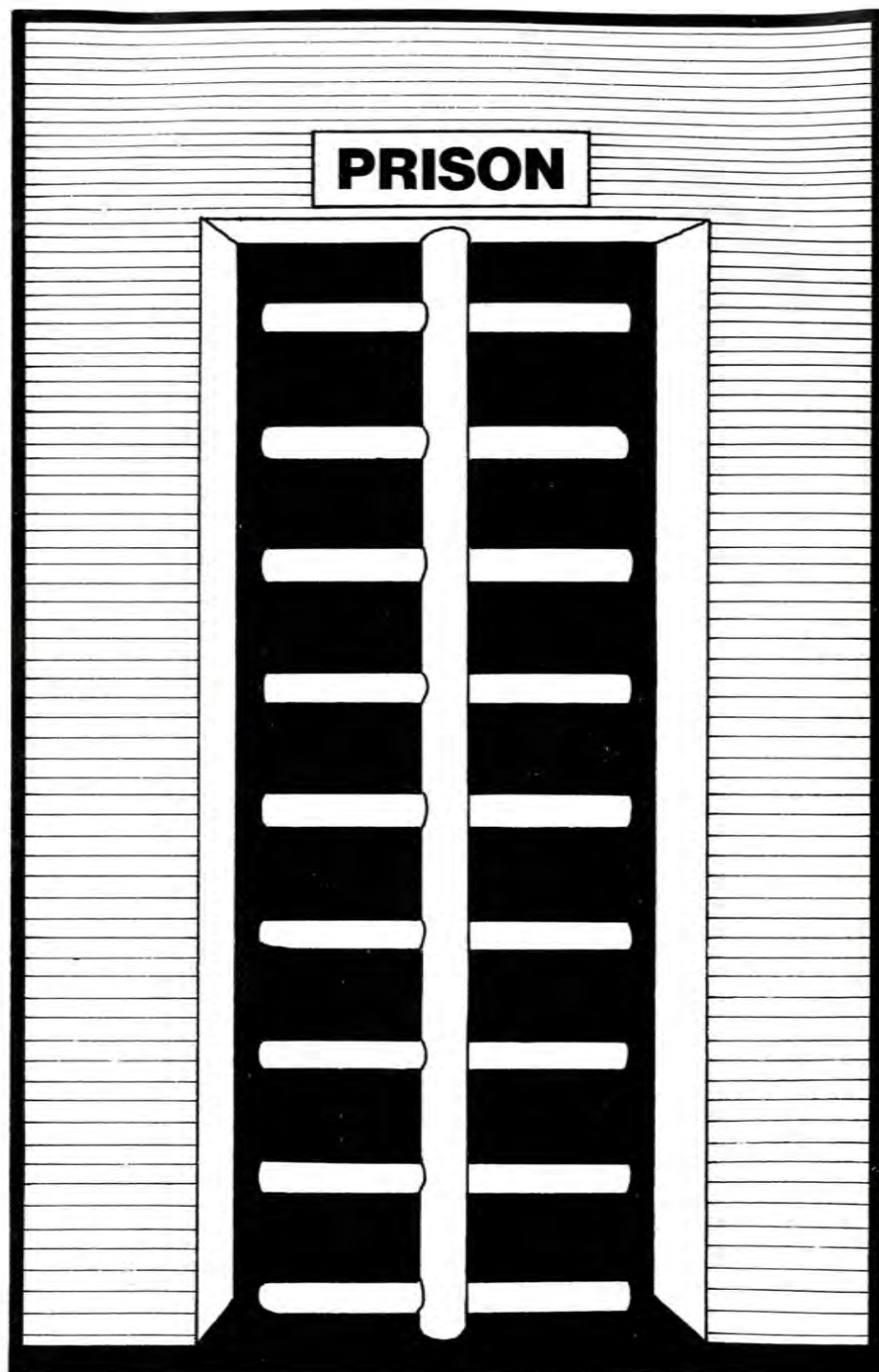
We were there to visit one of Cindy's N.A. friends. I wasn't surprised to hear the next morning that they were going to a meeting at noon. I *was* surprised that they wanted me along, but decided it would be rude to refuse. It never occurred to me that I might fit in or learn something.

I've forgotten most of what was said that day, but I remember the shock of finding out there were other people like me. I thought I was smarter than anyone else, but I was also terrified of people finding out how insecure and inept I really felt. The one line I heard from every speaker was, "If you want what we have to offer, keep coming back." It seemed like everyone who said this had nice clothes, a good job, and a large gold watchband—yes, if that's what they had to offer I wanted it. It kept me coming back until I found out what I really wanted was a place to fit in, a place where I could be at peace with myself.

Cindy and I now both have over two years clean. Today, I still go to meetings, and still want what they have to offer—peace of mind, good friends, a spiritual program, and a new way to deal with life's problems. I learned my most important lesson in life at that first meeting: I am not unique. Today I can admit my feelings to myself and others because I know other people feel the same way. I know now that I don't have to be independent and all-knowing; I can take advice and learn from others. Today, I can love myself.

R.P., Alaska





On the run

I first found Narcotics Anonymous in 1985 in a correctional facility. I went out of curiosity and boredom. It was my first experience with N.A. We read out of the Little White Booklet. I remember not being able to comprehend what I read. I wasn't ready for N.A. yet; my ego and false pride told me I could do it on my own. I knew I had a "problem" with drugs, but I was not an addict—or so I thought.

Needless to say, once released, I used the first day out. Somehow, I got off parole without my P.O. finding out about my steady drug use. But within eighteen months, my disease progressed to the point where I started stealing anything not nailed down. It wasn't long before I was caught and released on an O.R. (own recognition) bond. I was drifting in and out of N.A. (mostly out) at this time, only attending because my wife suggested it.

I fled to avoid prosecution, and was on the run for two years. The fear of being returned to the institution was a minor factor, but the fear of having to slow down my drug use was the major factor. While on the run, I tried to stop using on my own. The result was always the same—a still worse relapse. After a couple of emergency room scares from overdoses, I went into treatment for my drug abuse problem.

Upon my "departure" (early, that is) from the 28-day program, I started going back to N.A. I was having better comprehension of the Basic Text but I was still unable to completely grasp this simple program. After a half-hearted attempt at the first three steps, I relapsed again.

I was to the point (finally) where the pain of using was worse than the pain I was using over. This time, I surrendered totally to my disease—and to the authorities. It was a welcome surrender, even though I got locked up. When the day came to be sentenced back to the institution, I welcomed the thought of getting close to my Higher Power and having time to devote to my recovery.

It's been eight months now, and I haven't let myself down. Today, I work the steps wholeheartedly, go to the weekly institutional N.A. meetings, share, and I help clean up after meetings. Most importantly, I don't use any mind-altering substances. And you know something? It gets better.

My relationships with my loved ones are better than ever. But most of all, my relationship with my Higher Power has become something more than I could ever have comprehended. Sometimes, I don't understand his will for me, but that's okay, because I know it to be the best guidance I've ever known. Don't ask me how, but his will for me has become my own will for myself.

My surrender to this simple program was a gradual one, but I'm grateful my H.P. brought about the events before I died using. At least today I know there is a solution.

C.U., Ohio

A mountain of recovery

In my recovery, I feel that I have grown quite a bit spiritually, mentally, and physically; in fact, I grew quite large physically after I stopped using nicotine, and started using food to change the way I feel. I realized that the time to stop this form of growth had come, and that some physical exercise was needed.

Here in my town, there is a mountain. Many people climb it for a variety of reasons. Mine was to improve my health and the quality of my recovery. When I get out and about, my mind wanders. I begin to see the similarity between climbing the mountain and the uphill journey into recovery.

First, I asked people who had been there how to go about it—what way did they recommend? Some ways look easy at first, but are not as well-developed, and may become impassable at some point; that's why it's better to ask for some guidance.

I started to be concerned with the way I looked for this climb. Some people wore designer jogging suits that looked great; and here I was with an old pair of shorts and beat up boots. Maybe I didn't look good enough.

Well, after several trips up the

mountain, it became clear that it wasn't the people who looked great who made it; it was the people concerned about how they got there who made it to the top. Recovery is an inside job. After awhile I could tell the people that had been up and back a few times. They seemed to have a certain rhythm, and could pace themselves.

On my journeys up this mountain, I set a goal of making it to the top. Sometimes this seemed like an impossible task, so I learned to take it easy. If a goal seemed out of reach, I set an easier goal and, if need be, another. "I'll go to the next turn." Once I reached *that* goal, I set another. "Well, I'll go on to that big rock over there."

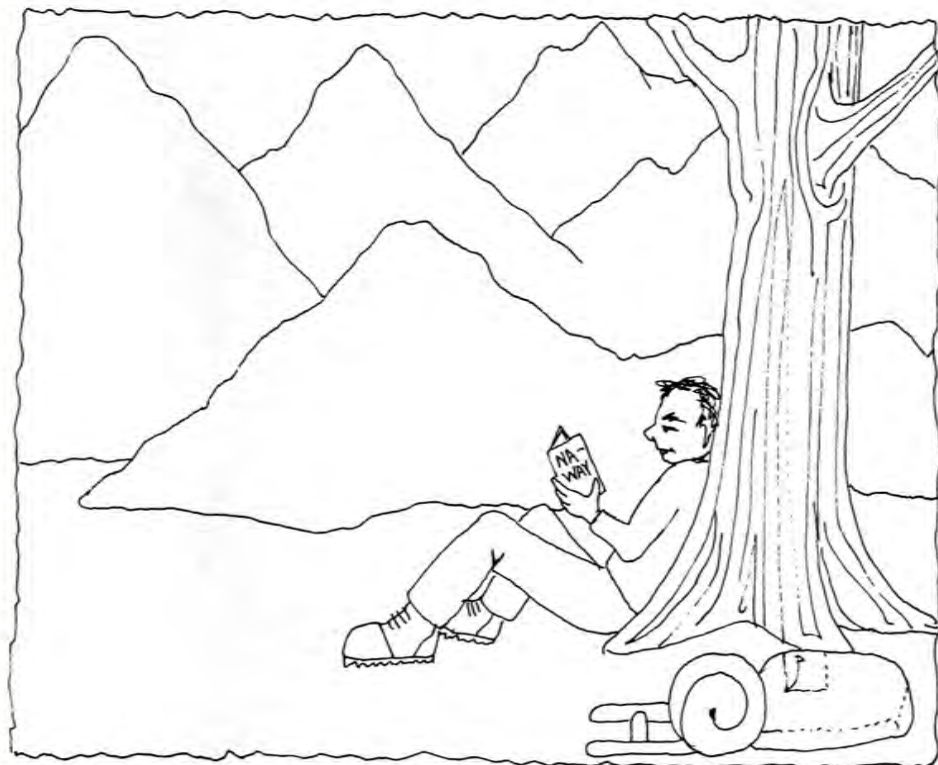
Sometimes, I have to do it one step at a time. But each goal met is a victory, just as each day clean is a miracle. Recovery has no time limits, as long as I am taking action in my recovery.

I met many people on these treks. Some people passed me on the way to

We all travel on this journey at our own rate.

the top, and there were others that I passed. The thing to remember is that we all travel on this journey at our own rate. I cannot judge myself or others by where we are in our recovery; I am exactly where I am supposed to be at any particular time.

Some people greeted me with a big "hello," and others gritted their teeth



when spoken to, not saying anything. That's alright too, for we are all on the same path.

Sometimes I found obstacles in my path. It is best to deal with these as soon as I happen upon them; otherwise I will have to deal with them another time, and it may become more difficult then. If the obstacle seems too large to remove by myself, then I must pray for strength and ask for help. I have found in my own journey that if I reach out, I will find people who will give me a hand, freely and lovingly.

With each step I take up this mountain, I receive a better view and begin to realize that more will be revealed to me for my efforts. There are ups and downs on this path. Some-

times it is not easy, but it is worth the action that I must take.

Once the top has been reached, it is time for the trek down and to prepare to take the next journey up the mountain. It all begins with the first step.

After the trek up this mountain of recovery, it is up to those of us who have taken the path to share with others how we have done it. Some have tried this journey and could not make it the first, second, or third time; some never make it. If someone reaches out, it is our responsibility to try to show them the path and extend a helping hand.

D.B., Arizona

Personal service

Serve, servant, service. These words originally come from the Latin word *servus*, meaning slave. But over the past few years, they have taken on a totally different meaning for me. In fact, they have led me to complete and total spiritual freedom.

During my active addiction, I thought I was free of the laws of society and God, while in actuality I was absolutely enslaved to my addiction to drugs. I now realize that if I am to continue on my journey to absolute freedom, I must serve my higher power, be a servant to the fellowship that restored me to life, and be of service to the society of which I am a member. And it must all be on a personal, anonymous, and humble level if it is to have significant meaning.

I clearly remember the misery, suffering, and degradation I experienced during my using days, when I thought that all that mattered was me, myself, and I. To compare that misery with the love, peace, and dignity that I have experienced through being of service to my fellow man, my fellowship, and my higher power, is akin to comparing the barrenness of the desert with the abun-

dance of the garden of Eden. Unless I wish to return to my former state of bankruptcy, I must share with others what has been given to me. This has been taught to me over and over again by others whom I have respected deeply.

Personal service ranges for me from helping to set up a meeting place, making coffee, and emptying ashtrays to sharing in meetings, actively participating in my home group, and sponsorship. None of these is more important than the others, for each one involves willingness and a selfless love for Narcotics Anonymous. Who is to say that sponsorship is truly more important than setting up and cleaning up a meeting room, so that the miracle of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous can continue to take place? Certainly sponsorship is crucial to ongoing recovery through the steps, but so are meetings which help

carry the message that no one need die of active addiction.

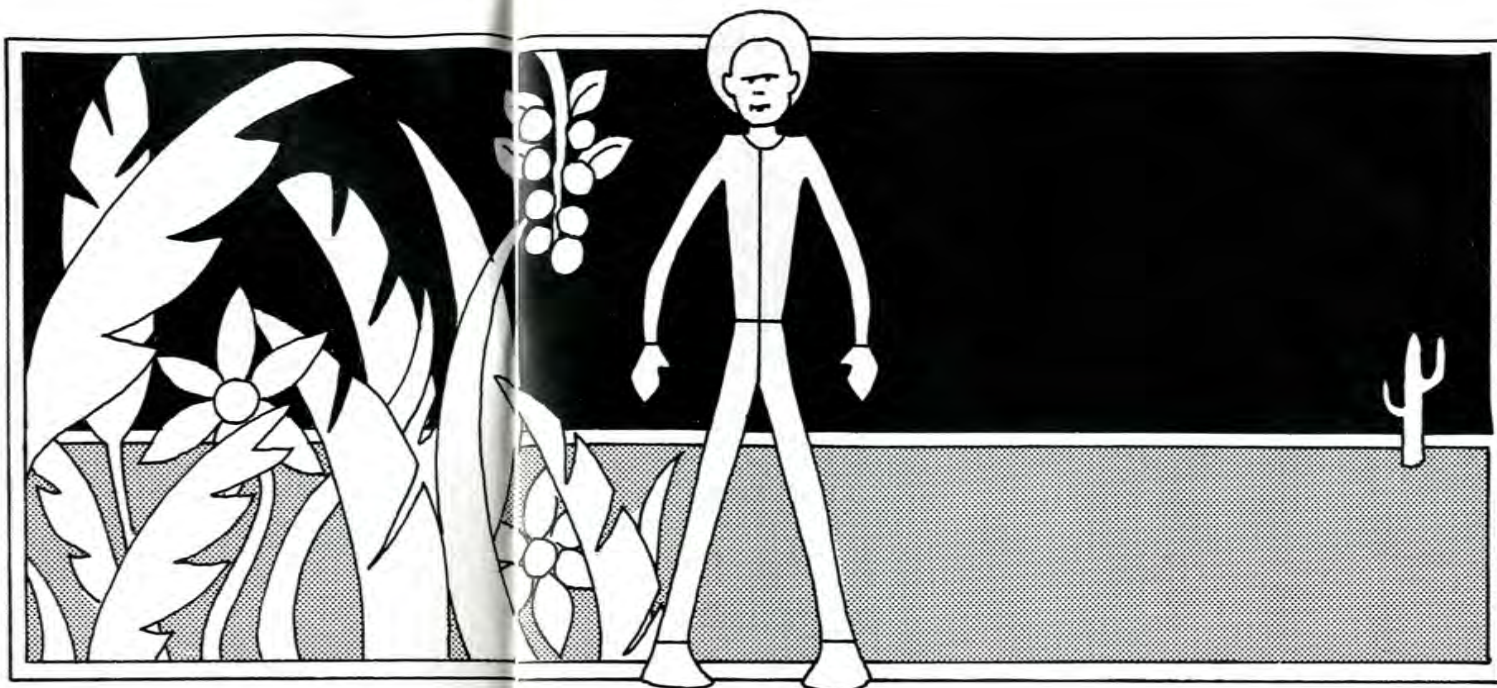
It took me some time to begin to understand the deeper meanings of service. My preliminary observation of service was that the "winners" did service, and if I wanted to be a "winner," I should do it also. I so desperately wanted to be accepted, respected, and looked up to that I jumped at the first opportunity. However, it had to be high-profile service, such as secretary of a large meeting, committee officer, or speaker. I learned all the catchy phrases, and practiced looking and sounding good. In short, I adapted as I have done all my life, ever being the human chameleon, doing whatever it takes to be accepted and loved.

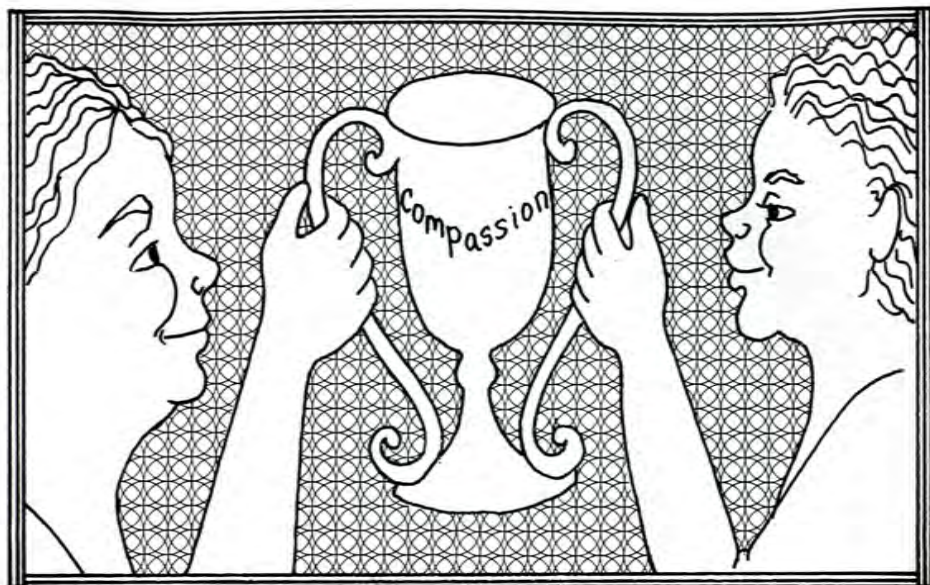
I looked and sounded so good that with twenty months of clean time I was seriously contemplating suicide.

I did not as yet know that recovery through service, with no spiritual foundation, could only lead back to the isolation of active addiction. That lesson I was to continue learning until I finally ended up doing an inventory about my service commitments. Thank God, by that time I had the opportunity to work with a sponsor and had begun to work the steps seriously.

Through that painful inventory, I discovered that my service was based on ego and pride, not the honest desire to be of service. With the help of my sponsor and a loving God, I was able to refocus my efforts. I started to feel the humility necessary to be a trusted servant, and the unconditional love that our fellowship is based on.

I started to take things less personally, and not feel rejected if things did not turn out the way I wanted them to. It became possible to simply present facts and share experiences





instead of constantly attempting to control and manipulate. Most importantly, it became possible to believe that a loving God was in ultimate control, and that all I had to do was pray for the knowledge and strength to carry out His will. As a result, I have been able to experience the love, peace, and dignity I have previously mentioned.

The love I am learning to give and accept has no demands. It allows me

My service was based on ego, not the desire to serve.

to pass no judgment—most of the time—on my fellow man; to be compassionate and supportive toward others; and to strive for a better

understanding of my relationship with my higher power. The peace of mind results from not having to manipulate, knowing that there is a loving God in my life that wants nothing more than to be able to show his compassion, understanding, and love to me. The dignity comes from my knowledge that I strive on a daily basis to be the best human being I am capable of being that day, the willingness to learn from my mistakes and grow, and the certainty that, slowly, I am beginning to repay my longstanding debt to the society that I am a part of.

These principles guide my life and are the foundation of all my service commitments. I know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that through service of a personal nature, it is possible to achieve the freedom I had hitherto only dreamed of.

S.L., California

But I don't need a sponsor

When I went through treatment, I was thirty-eight years old. I was married, had four children, owned my own home, had a college degree, and had survived a year in Viet Nam. I knew I needed help, but I certainly didn't need N.A., let alone a sponsor. How wrong I was.

The first nine months on my own I used twice, went to no N.A. meetings, and "sponsored" myself. The results were predictable. I used none of the things I learned in treatment, and my old behaviors were back.

Then I went to work at a boys' home. Some of the boys were addicts. Through the grace of my Higher Power I was able to make contact with N.A. and we started a local group. Because I wanted to set an example, I got a sponsor; wrong reason, right move. For the next nine months I had a sponsor, but I never used him. I could handle things myself.

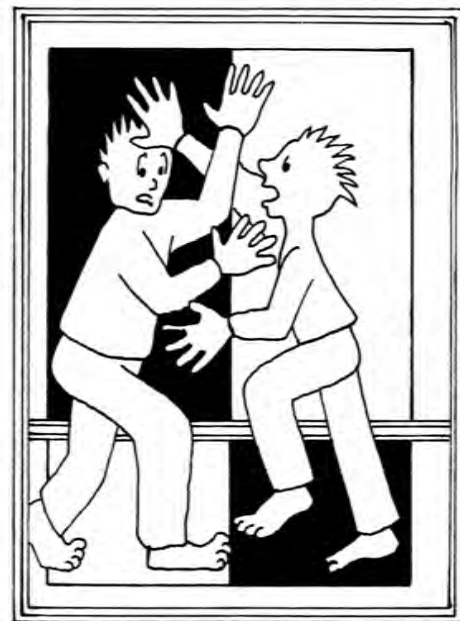
Then my wife left, still using, and I had to leave my job, all in the same week. Because of the support from area groups for our new meeting, I had met other addicts. One who I thought was working a good program agreed to be my sponsor—and this time, I used him.

That was ten months ago, and it has made all the difference in my life and my program. I call him, with much love, Rotten Rick. Why? Because I know this man is more concerned with whether I live or die than whether I like him or what he has to say. He has shown me that the key to my recovery is in going to meetings, working the program, and using his experience, strength, and hope to guide me.

To the newcomer I say, please get a sponsor. The program doesn't work itself, and I couldn't; and, to date, I haven't found anyone who could get all the N.A. program can offer without a sponsor.

I spent a year and a half fighting my ego, and lost. Thanks to my H.P. and the wisdom of other addicts before me, there is sponsorship in the N.A. program. Today, I use it.

M.A., Kansas



BASIC TEXT

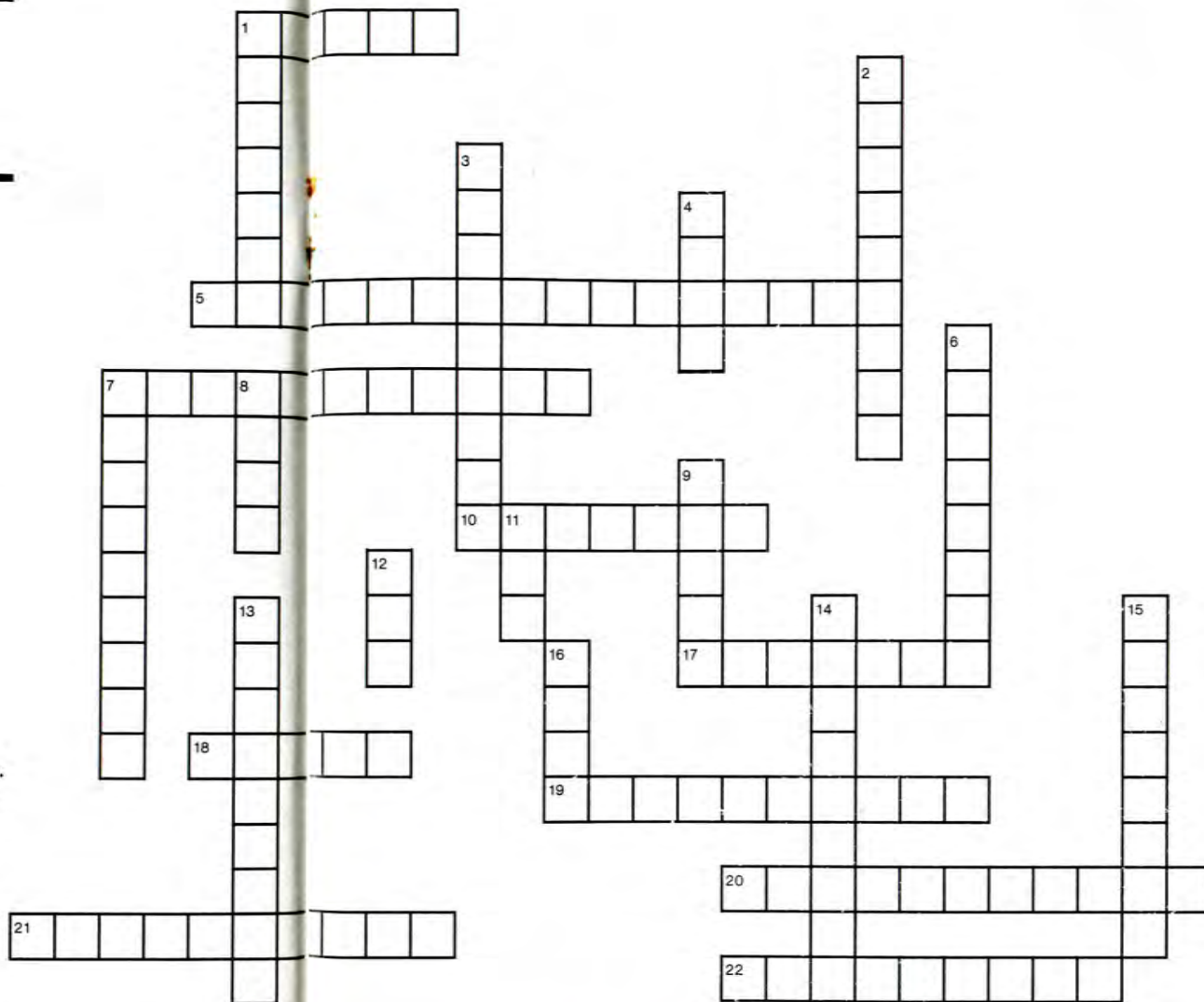
Crossword puzzle

Across:

1. There is no _____ for a recovering addict.
5. The ultimate weapon for recovery is the _____.
7. _____ keeps us from goodwill, love, compassion.
10. Feel time, touch _____.
17. _____ is a basic tool in our program.
18. _____ is a must in Narcotics Anonymous.
19. Our Tenth Tradition specifically helps protect our _____.
20. That wordless language of _____.
21. _____ is reliving past experiences.
22. Narcotics Anonymous is a spiritual, not _____ program.

Down:

1. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the _____ to the addict who still suffers.
2. The best way to express _____ is by carrying the message.
3. Recovery begins with _____.
4. Surviving against all _____, we are addicts who meet regularly.
6. _____ is lack of faith.
7. _____ is a red light indicator.
8. We all have different tolerances for _____.
9. The best guarantee against relapse is working the _____.
11. _____ used to control us in all sorts of subtle ways.
12. One way to practice the principle of _____ is by taking a daily inventory.
13. _____ pervades our traditions.
14. If a solution isn't _____, it isn't spiritual.
15. Many times in our recovery the old _____ will haunt us.
16. No matter how far we ran, we always carried _____ with us.



Clues—Check the following pages of the Fifth Edition of the Basic Text. For answers, see page 33.

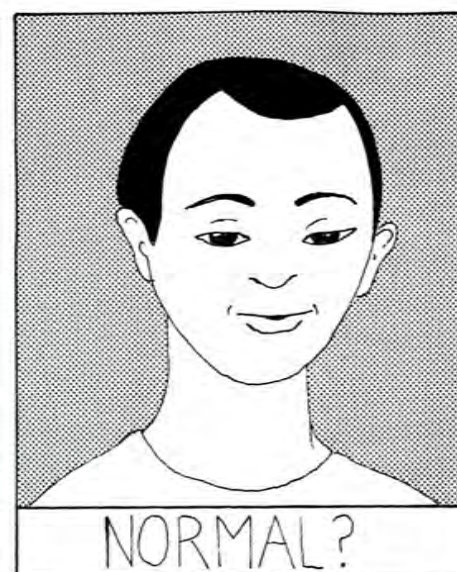
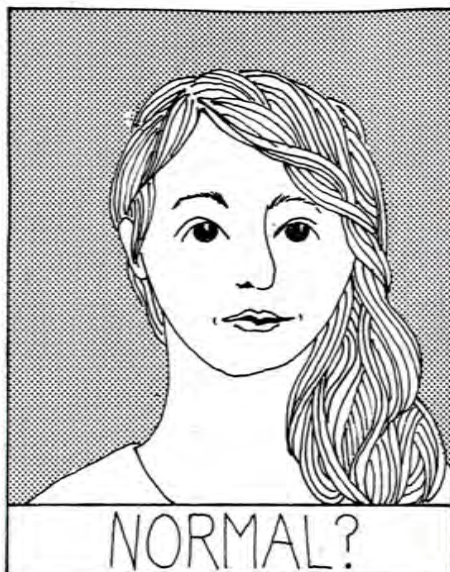
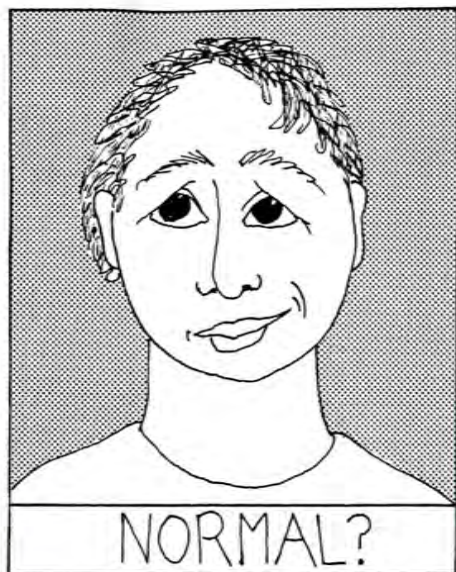
Across:

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| 1. p. 88 | 18. p. 60 |
| 5. p. 15 | 19. p. 71 |
| 7. p. 98 | 20. p. 85 |
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D.B., Nevada



What is normal?

I read recently in a science magazine that ninety-five percent of all families in this country are dysfunctional. The exact figure may not be known, but if we discount a portion of this number as error, we are still left with a large number.

I got to thinking that there are probably not that many people who could define "normal," or who describe characteristics of normal families and normal nurturing. I used to think that a word like "normal"

was similar to a word like "average"—that normal represented a majority cross-section of the population, like average represented the largest category or median category.

Has society finally gotten to the point that "normal" is now representative of only a very small segment of the population? Could it be that "normal" is now a minority instead of a majority? Maybe this country should enact some legislation establishing quotas for the hiring of "normal" people in certain job markets, since it is evident to me that with all this dysfunction in society, most employers are probably not "normal."

Maybe the solution is to change the semantics. The editors of Webster's Dictionary should eliminate the word "typical" from their definition of "normal." "Normal" is for use only by a privileged few. I am a little dismayed at the condition of our society, and shocked to find that events have outpaced the language we used to describe the human condition.

When we were early in our recovery some of us needed some sort of external barometer to compare ourselves to in order to evaluate how well our program was going. We used all sorts of external checkpoints: our therapists, our sponsor, our mothers and fathers, our associates and co-workers. We thought people devoid of addiction could be used as reality checkpoints. Were we ever surprised! There is most certainly a lot of "stinking thinking" prevalent in society today.

Perhaps addiction is a disease of dysfunctional thinking, of which chemical usage is merely a symptom. Many people have addictive thinking but do not exhibit the symptoms because they never learned to use drugs. Consequently, when we got clean, we tried to measure ourselves against a standard that in itself was not healthy. This often led to confusion, and turned good feelings into apprehensions.

There are elements of recovery that

I dare not try to impose on the rest of society. The opposite is also true. There are elements of society that I dare not incorporate into my recovery program. I think it is helpful to talk about some of these ideas at our meetings or with our sponsors.

My favorite one is honesty. I have found that many people use honesty as a tool to manipulate people into doing what they want them to. Honesty can be used to make us feel superior to other family members or group members. Our entire recovery is based on honesty; but this honesty can be hurtful if it is not in tune with the proper motivations.

There is a member of my family who is in denial about a habit he has. Am I being spiritual when I call this denial to his attention in front of other family members? I need to live honestly; I don't need to impose this condition on other people.

Another quality of recovery is humility. I have seen supervisors at my place of employment belittle workers

to increase performance and efficiency. I have found that I can get a lot more out of people I depend on by having a little humility. Am I to emulate my superior because he is "normal" or typical?

Human isolation or privacy is often exhibited to the point of ridiculousness. I have visited businesses where everyone has their own little cubicle or partition separating them from others. Often, company officers have their own offices that are located in their own wings of buildings. Some company officers have their own floors or even own buildings within which they carry out their awesome tasks. Does one conclude that isolation is a "normal" condition for success?

There are also elements of a quote

***"Normal" is for
use only by the
privileged few.***

"normal" society that I must be careful about when trying to live a good recovery program. One of these is the quick fix. The quick fix is everywhere today. We have automated tellers that dispense money quickly, so that we may go out and gratify ourselves in some fashion. Some of us have "plastic money" that we can use to satisfy a buying obsession that may overcome us while at a shopping mall or specialty shop. Fast food restaurants are the epitome of the quick fix—one can have a hamburger in one's mouth in a matter of minutes.

We in recovery must be careful to

notice where convenience ends and gratification starts. One of the sick thinking patterns that I developed from using was the idea that my problems could be easily overcome with drugs. I could change the way I felt by introducing a chemical into my system. I did not have to tolerate a feeling I had, or let it run its natural course—I could intervene, take control, and alter the course of events with chemicals at hand.

I believe that the quick fix, if used consistently, makes it harder to depart from that old pattern of thinking. I am not saying here that people who eat at hamburger stands can't enjoy recovery. I am saying that consistent usage of society's quote "normal" quick fix allows a recovering addict to replace one obsession with another, when it is obsession itself that we are trying to get away from.

As we get further along in our recoveries, we learn to trust our feelings more and more. Just as solutions to our problems must come from within and not from without, so will the report cards on our own recovery come from within. We will get away from needing that external barometer which I talked about before. The example of society that we live with today is not always as healthy as we have thought. We no longer use the "we" of society, but instead the "we" of our spiritual Twelve Step program of N.A.

M.F., Pennsylvania

Not alone

I live on Guam. Sometimes I am painfully aware that I am stuck in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, but I know that I am not alone. There are addicts just like me all over the world "who believe in me and want to help me in my recovery."

Recently, I attended the fourth annual Show-Me Regional Convention. I went "alone." When I got there Friday night I was uneasy, and felt like I didn't belong. Then fear hit. I started "beating myself up," telling myself, "Who do you think you are? You think that you can come here all by yourself and expect to make friends? You must think you are pretty special to come here alone and try to pull this off—fit in and stuff when you don't know anyone!" I felt like everyone knew everyone else, and I was an outcast—an outsider, an intruder.

When I couldn't stand it any longer, I went to my room (which I had to myself), got on my knees, and said, "God, I just don't know what to do. I don't know what I am doing here!" Well, the miracles began, and truly God did for me what I could not do for myself.

I had been thinking that I was the only person who had ever felt alone, like an outsider, like I didn't belong. Then I went to a meeting, and heard someone else sharing these feelings.

I cried, and shared, then found the vegetables and dip in the hospitality room. I went to bed, and the next morning I felt like a new person.

That day, many miracles happened. Much to my surprise, I found myself "hanging out" with people. Soon, I felt at home.

Before I left Guam, our group there had given me \$50 to get some literature. We had been having trouble getting literature from WSO—our orders would get lost in the mail. Saturday morning I went about my business and got some literature.

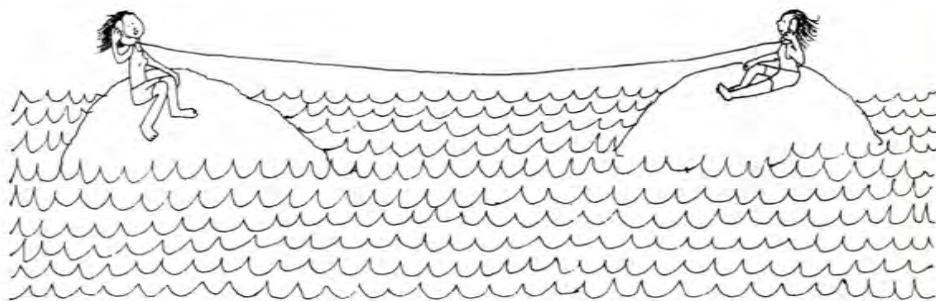
Saturday night I was up late, sharing with the convention chairperson and some others about what it was like on Guam. I told them of our lack of literature, and that at our book

***I'm stuck in
mid-ocean,
but I'm not
alone.***

study I was usually the only person with a book.

Well, the chairperson thought that something could be done about this. Sunday morning, it was announced that Guam was in need of literature. The addicts at this convention took up a collection and put together \$400.

The excitement and energy in the room was phenomenal. What really got me was that I realized, "Hey! These people are addicts. Not so long ago, their only concern was the getting and using of drugs, and finding ways and means to get more. Here



they are today, clean, and getting together \$400 to help people halfway across the world whom they will probably never, ever meet!" The love and outreaching of these people rendered me speechless.

To say that this program works is an understatement. To say that this program changes our lives just scratches the surface.

There were many other things that I learned at this convention. One thing I heard over and over was, "Get an N.A. sponsor and work the steps." On Guam, this was virtually impossible. I did have a sponsor, but she was in another fellowship. When I would ask her for guidance on the steps, she would say, "Go to a step study meeting" (of which there were none) or "read the book."

Well, I needed more, and now I have it. After this convention, I realized the importance of an N.A. sponsor and working the steps. On my return to Guam, I stopped in Hawaii and met a woman who I had been writing to in the N.A. Loner Group (which is an invaluable part of my recovery). After I got back on Guam, I wrote to this woman, asked her to be my sponsor, and to guide me through the steps.

She wrote me back to say yes and

give me instructions on how to work/write the First Step. I cried, and got on my knees, and thanked my Higher Power for putting this woman in my life.

Then I actually began to work my First Step. I wrote for three pages just defining "powerless." I took a dictionary, and looked up all the meanings of the word. I found things like "not having the skills or talents," to me that means that by myself, I do not have the ability to beat this disease. I simply do not have the ways and means to do it alone.

There is a lot more that I learned, but I think the most important thing I received from starting to work the steps is the release from the fear that I felt. Before I started to work this step, I was terrified. I was afraid that I was not working the program the correct way. But shortly after I began to work the First Step, fear and doubt left me, and I knew that all would be well. My Higher Power was with me, guiding me and enabling me to recover.

S.H., Guam

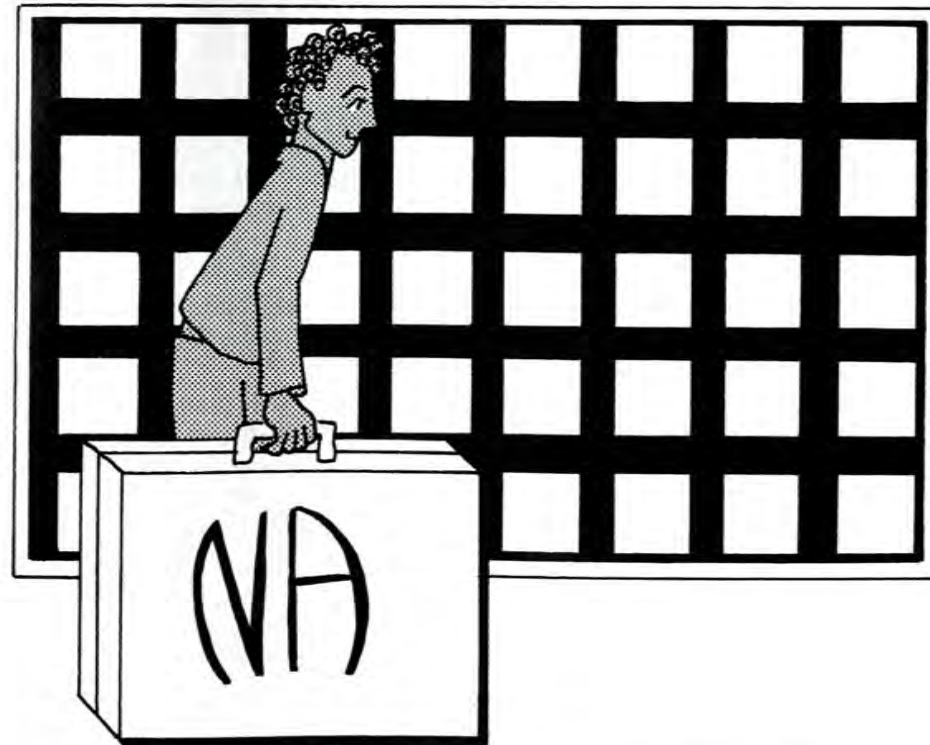
HUMOR

Am I a service junkie?

Only you can answer this question. This may not be an easy thing to do. All through our service, we told ourselves, "I can handle it." Even if this was true in the beginning, it is not so

now. Service handled us. We lived to serve and served to live. Very simply, a service junkie is a person whose life is controlled by service.

Perhaps you admit you have a problem with service, but don't consider yourself a service junkie. All of us have preconceived ideas about what a service junkie is. There is nothing shameful about being a service junkie once you begin to take positive action. If you can identify with our problems, you may be able to identify with our solution. The following questions were written by a recovering service junkie. If you have doubts about whether or not you're a service junkie, please take a few moments to read the questions below and answer them as honestly as you can.



1. Has your job or school performance ever suffered from the effects of serving the fellowship?
2. Does service interfere with your sleeping or eating?
3. Have you ever thought you couldn't fit in or have a good time without being in service?
4. Have you ever felt defensive, guilty or ashamed about being in service?
5. Does the thought of not having a service position terrify you?
6. Do you feel it is impossible for you to live without service?
7. Do you ever serve alone?
8. Have you ever lied about what or how much you serve?
9. Have you ever substituted one subcommittee position for another, thinking that one particular position was the problem?
10. Have you ever volunteered for a commitment without knowing what it was or what it would do to you?
11. Have you ever taken on one service commitment to overcome the effects of another?
12. Have you ever stayed up all night reading the *Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure*?
13. Have you ever been hospitalized as a result of service?
14. Has your spouse left you as a result of service?
15. Do your children address you by your service title?
16. Does your briefcase weigh over 50 pounds?

"Am I a service junkie?" This is a question only you can answer. Addiction to service is an insidious disease that affects all areas of our lives—even those areas which seem at first to have little to do with service. The different positions we served in were not as important as why we kept getting elected to them and what they did to us.

When we first read these questions, it was frightening for us to think we might be service junkies. Some of us tried to dismiss these thoughts by saying, "Oh, those questions don't make sense. I'm different. I know how to be of service. I have real emotional/family/job problems," or "I'm just having a tough time getting it together right now," or "I'll be able to stop serving when I find the right relationship, get the right job, etc."

If you are a service junkie, you must first admit that you have a problem with service before any progress can be made toward recovery. These questions, when honestly approached, may help to show you how addiction to service has made your life unmanageable. Addiction to service is a disease which, without recovery, ends in broken families, unemployment, and in the worst cases, a five-year term as trustee. If you have not yet reached this point in your service career, you don't have to. The message of hope is clear. You never have to serve compulsively if you don't want to.

C.S., California

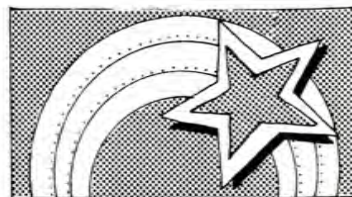
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Home Group

Am I an addict?



Feature



Hitting the lake— practical meditation

The following two articles were taken from talks given at the 1989 World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous in Orlando, Florida.

When I hit that Eleventh Step, I thought I was going to be on it forever. I thought, "Well, my program ends here, because I can't meditate—I don't know how to do this."

I tried everything. I tried chanting, and counting, and just about everything else I'd heard of, but nothing worked. Most of the time it seemed so silly that I just ended up laughing when I was supposed to be meditating. I thought, "I'm not doing this right."

My Higher Power is not God. I'm comfortable with that today. But I was not comfortable with it in the beginning. Everybody seemed to talk about God and be comfortable with it, and I wasn't. I thought that my problem with meditation must stem from that. But it didn't; it didn't have

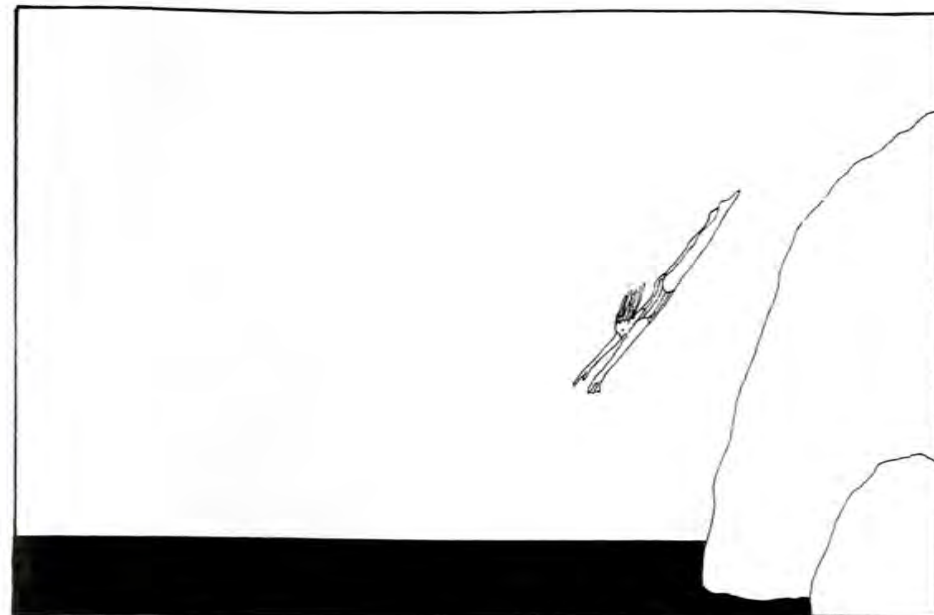
anything to do with that. And once I got okay with that part of it, I was able to meditate.

"Discombobulated"

I'm most comfortable—and I feel my Higher Power strongest—near water. At the time when I first started to think about meditating, I lived in a small apartment with a big picture window. I would come home from work everyday, just sort of collapse on the couch, and watch the sun set over the lake. It was a nice way to unwind—my "quiet time," I called it.

I was telling my sponsor that I couldn't meditate. She said to me, "Well, what do you do during the day?" In the course of telling her about it, I mentioned my quiet time. I told her how I really felt discombobulated if the sun had already set over the lake by the time I got home from work. On those days, I would feel like I just couldn't continue through the evening.

She said, "Don't you realize that you *have* been meditating?!" I said, "No!" I mean, what an idea—the thing I'd been striving to do (and seemingly failing at) for so long was something I already did on my own. But maybe that's what sponsors are for: they tell you what you're doing when you don't even know you're doing it.



Meditation and motherhood

I gave my kids up to their father years ago, when I was actively using. I thought I'd never get them back. But recently, my daughter returned to live with me.

When I first got clean, I kept praying for specific things. I know, I know, we're told not to do that—but I did it anyway. I kept saying, "Is she supposed to come back, or is she not supposed to come back? What am I doing here?"

And my sponsor would say, "Meditate. Just be there to receive your Higher Power's will."

I said, "But I don't hear Him talking. He's not calling me on the phone. I check my mailbox everyday—there's nothing in there from Him. How am I going to know when it's right?"

She said, "Just let it go. In God's time, you'll get it." So I let it go.

I was clean almost three years when this child came home. I got a call one day, out of the blue, to come get her.

I thought, "I can't do this. I don't know how to be a mother." I had never been so terrified of anything in my life. She was not exactly a bouncing baby girl—in fact, she was fifteen years old.

I'd had almost no contact with her since we'd parted eight years earlier, outside of an occasional weekend visit. I really didn't know who she was, and she certainly didn't know me. But there she came.

We lived in that little place with the great view for about a month before we realized that two women cannot possibly share a tiny one bedroom apartment, especially with only one closet between them—it just doesn't work. I took to sitting on the couch, and looking out over the lake, and thinking, "What am I going to do?" I would sit quiet, trying to hear what my Higher Power was trying to tell me.

My Higher Power does not come to me in person, but He does show up.

Sometimes He comes to me in the most unlikely forms, but He comes nonetheless. At that point in my life, He spoke through my mother.

"You girls can't stay in this apartment," she told me. "You need something bigger." So, with my parents' help, we started looking for a bigger apartment.

When we finally narrowed down the search to this one particular complex, it was imperative that my place be near the water. It was almost like the

*If not for
meditation,
I don't know
if I would've
gotten
through it.*

kid in the apartment office was reading my mind. He said, "I've got the perfect one—it's just what you want." Sight unseen, I took it.

This apartment has sliding glass doors that open out onto the lawn; I can walk right out and sit by the lake. When I'm tied up in knots, and I have no idea where I'm going, where I've come from, or what I'm supposed to do, I hit the lake. It's great. And, of course, living with a fifteen-year-old who I hardly know... I sit by the lake a lot.

And you know what? I caught *her* sitting by the lake the other day. Maybe there is hope for us...

"Receiving"

I just went through the most difficult time of my recovery. My most favorite person in the world, my dad, died a week ago today. And I thought, "I'm never going to be able to do this meeting, I'm never going to stay clean, I'm not going to get to this convention, my program is over." I was real upset.

He had been my greatest enabler. He'd been the one I felt most comfortable with. From the time when I was a little girl, he had been there for me. He'd talked to me. He'd listened to me. He'd had faith in me, regardless of how rotten I was—and I was pretty rotten. Thank God he got to see me clean for a goodly number of days before he died.

If it weren't for meditation, I don't know if I would have gotten through the last week. Every time I started to lose it—which I allowed myself to do occasionally, but not too often—I would hit the lake.

I'm really funny about this, you know. I do this in such a way that nobody knows what I'm doing. I go out there with my cigarettes, and my book, and my cup of tea. For all intents and purposes, I'm supposed to be reading. My book's even open in my lap. But I'm not reading—I'm "receiving." And I'm real grateful that I was able to "receive" this week. It got me through, and it continues to get me through. I presume it will always get me through.

Meditation and making decisions

Learning to make decisions was real hard for me to do in the beginning. I didn't have the vaguest idea of

what I was supposed to do. I thought you asked your sponsor, and *she* decided. Then I realized that if I prayed for my Higher Power's will, and became open to receiving it, the understanding I needed would come to me.

Shortly after I got clean, I opened my own business. It's been rough, but the business has done extremely well. I'm real proud of myself.

But a couple of weeks ago my partners approached me. They thought that maybe this isn't working out so good, because I insist upon having different priorities than they do. And they're right, I do. I insist upon putting my recovery first, before the business. My partners don't understand that without my recovery, I don't have doodly squat.

I went to sit out by the lake, asking for understanding of His will. I wasn't in much shape to be very receptive at that point. My mind was going a thousand miles an hour, the questions whirling through it. "What will I do? How will I get there? Oh, my God—work for somebody else? And how can I take this thing that I've built from nothing, this business that's like a child to me, and give it all away?"

And that's when I turned it over. I got quiet, and said, "Well, *okay*. I'm tired of fighting with myself about this. Whatever You want is all right with me."

That was probably the most peaceful day I ever spent at the lake. H.P. saw fit to let me receive that day. I came to know that no matter what I do in this life, no matter where I go, no matter what road I take, I'm going to be okay—as long as I put my recovery first. That's the bottom line here.

F.R., Florida

Triggers to relapse

I went to my first Narcotics Anonymous meeting in 1972, but it wasn't until 1982 that I finally surrendered. I have a little bit of experience in the subject of relapse—or, more specifically, the *triggers* to relapse.

Sometimes these triggers to relapse are real obvious, and sometimes they're subtle. One thing will set off another, and pretty soon somebody will tell me, "You know what pal, you're in relapse." The most difficult part of it is that, at those times, I just can't see it. So when my friends in the fellowship tell me these things, I have to be willing to sit down and take a look at them.

"Cruising"

I have this little game that I play with myself; it's called "cruising." In working the Third Step—turning my will and my life over to the care of God—I decide to sit in the back seat of my car and let God do the driving.

So I'm cruising along. As I progress down the road of recovery, things start to get a little better. I get a job, I get into a relationship, I'm starting to make money, and I'm getting a few material things. Then, all of a sudden, I want to sit in the front seat. And

pretty soon, I'm telling God how to drive.

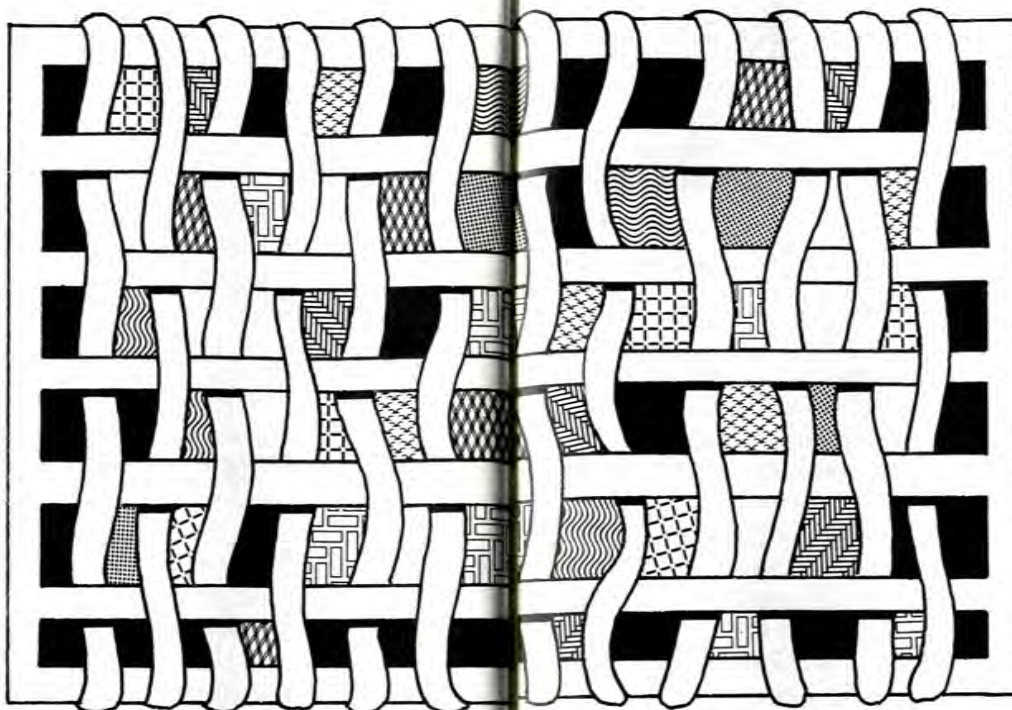
From that point, it's not long before I'm telling God, "Hey, move over. I want to drive the car." I'm back into self-will. And, *bang!*—sooner or later, I crash. Sometimes, the good things in my life give me the illusion of control.

I've used many things in my recovery to "fix" me. Every time, I have to climb into the back seat again—I have to give those things up, and get down to the basics. My priority in Narcotics Anonymous is not in the "things;" it's in staying clean one day at a time.

"I don't need meetings"

In the last year or so, I've gotten to the point every once in a while where I've felt like I didn't need meetings that much. We've got a lot of newcomers showing up, and they're dealing with their obsession with drugs. Me, I'm just trying to deal with normal, everyday living. Sometimes it's real hard for me to identify with the newcomer and remember where I come from.

I want to share about paying the rent, about having (or not having) a new car, about all kinds of stuff going on in my life today that doesn't really pertain to Narcotics Anonymous. I get to the point where I just don't want to go to meetings. For me, that's a trigger to relapse. When I *don't* want to go to meetings, that's when I *should* go to meetings. I have to remember that we're here to deal with our addiction—and, as my experience has demonstrated, that's something that just doesn't go away.



Rewriting the program

At various times, I've tried to rewrite the program to fit my own personal desires. "This step would look better if it were worded this way," I think, "and I don't need to apply this principle right now—I'll just skip over it and come back to it later." For a long time in this program I worked only Step Twelve, even though I didn't have any message of my own to carry. I just parroted a lot of things I'd heard in meetings. Consequently, I paid the price. I relapsed for those ten years.

When I came back the last time I was still playing around, especially with Step Four: "Can't I do Step Five without taking an inventory? I know what my character defects are; I'll just skip the Fourth Step." I didn't want to do that work. I didn't want to sit down and write about all these resentments.

I was real comfortable with a lot of those defects, and a lot of times I wanted to hang on to them. If I let them go, what would my life be like? I'd have to start behaving like a human being, and that kind of scared me.

As I've progressed down the road of recovery, those things have stopped working for me. I've had to get kicked around a little by my own stubbornness in order to become willing to let them go. Each time, a bad feeling in my gut has told me, "If you don't do something about this, you're going to relapse." I'm not willing to pay that price today. And so, as the years have gone by, I've had to make a lot of surrenders.

Daily maintenance

The last three steps are maintenance steps. If I don't practice them on a daily basis, I notice a change in

my attitude—that, "Oh, I don't need a meeting today," or, "I don't need to call that person or use that principle." I just start driving that car again.

I have to take that daily inventory. I have to pray for knowledge of His will, because a lot of times I don't know what His will for me is. And I keep it simple. God's will for me in my life is to keep God first. And that's *real* simple.

Keep coming back

I'm sure everyone in this room has been touched in one way or another by relapse. You've all known someone in the program, maybe someone you've sponsored, or someone who's sponsored you, who's relapsed. When it happens, it kind of shakes you up.

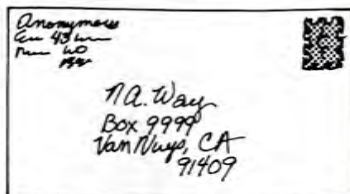
"I saw him about a week ago in a meeting," you say to yourself, "and he sounded so *good*. What happened?" You stop and you think about it, and you realize that he had stopped maintaining his recovery—he'd stopped going to meetings, he'd stopped calling people on the phone, he'd stopped opening up. "But *damn*, he sounded so good!" Sometimes that's the way it happens.

Now, let's say *we* relapse. I know what it feels like. I know about the embarrassment and the sense of guilt that can keep addicts from coming back to the program. I know about the fear that can keep people from even picking up the phone. And I know that once you get past those things, the worst is behind you.

If you relapse, come back. You'll find a love in these rooms that will overcome those fears. I know—I've found it, and I've been there.

T.S., California

From our readers



Behind the walls

I am presently doing a twelve-year prison sentence because of my drug addiction. I've been going to N.A. now for about three years, since my incarceration, and I've learned a few new things about myself which I didn't know before. I'd tried various other programs on the street, but none of them seemed to work. When I went to these programs, I was doing them for other people in my family, and not for myself.

I've worked very hard in the N.A. program because my addiction has beleaguered me for so long. My past is not a very pretty picture, and my prison records don't really say very much for me, either. Today, I only have myself and a very special sponsor who works with me through the program by mail. He has been my "higher power" while I am behind the walls of hell. He has shown me how to work the steps not by talking about my past, but by making me write about my defects so I could look at myself in a better perspective. There have been times when he has put a "boot in my ass" for not helping myself to grow within, and I'm grateful for that.

R.P., Maryland

How about those miracles

Miracles! Have you ever heard of such a thing? I had heard but I sure didn't believe—not until I got to N.A.

That I even lived to get to N.A. was a miracle in itself.

When I was using, I lived in my own little world. That world that didn't include miracles or dreams. It was a world that I had made up. Miracles and dreams were for other people. They might be stupid enough to believe in them, but not me.

My little world resembled that of a turtle. I lived inside my shell. When anyone drew near, I retreated. Fear was my driving power. It controlled me. Today I have little to fear thanks to my Higher Power. That, too, is another miracle.

I yearned for a life without drugs, a life through which I could roam freely. I looked at others and I thought, it must be nice not to be addicted. I saw smiling faces on other people. Today, I am able to smile. I never dreamed I would ever be happy. Happiness didn't exist in my little world. Not me, I thought. I was put here to suffer. No more do I suffer. I have been set free.

Freedom came in believing in something greater than myself. I knew anything was greater than me. I had believed in me, alright: I believed I was going to die.

The drugs no longer brought relief. No longer did they take away the fear, frustration, and loneliness. I wondered what was happening. Why wouldn't they work? They worked be-

fore, why not now?

No more could I run. I knew God was the only thing that could help me. I witnessed other addicts being able to live free. They told me some had to die for others to live. I couldn't believe it. I wanted everyone to live. But I saw people dying from this disease called addiction.

I told myself I could break free. I saw it in other addicts. These other addicts led me to freedom. They loved me, and I learned it was okay. I learned it was okay for them to touch me. I no longer retreated back into my shell.

I have come to believe in miracles because I am one. When dreams become real, miracles appear. I thank God for all the living miracles.

S.T., Tennessee

My experience with Step Two

Step Two: "We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

I do believe there is a power greater than myself that can restore me to sanity (after a lot of hard work on the steps). The word *could* is what is often difficult for me. I know it does not say *would*, so now I need to know how to qualify for the *could* part. Does that mean that *sometimes* I am restored to sanity or that maybe *someday* I will be restored to sanity?

I guess how I perceive this step is that when I am staying clean, going to meetings, calling my sponsor, living the spiritual principles in all my affairs to the best of my ability, working the steps, praying, and being of service to God and Narcotics Anonymous, I am gradually being restored to sanity.

So now, after being clean a few years and having worked the steps many times, I want to know—will I ever be restored to sanity?

When my head starts to tell me I am well and sane, that is when I get into trouble. I start easily forgetting the things that I need to do to keep me clean and gradually restore me to sanity. The end result is that I am more insane than ever.

I am ready to work Step Two again!
D.D., Arizona

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS (see pgs. 16-17)

Across:

1. model
5. recovering addict
7. complacency
10. reality
17. sharing
18. unity
19. reputation
20. recognition
21. resentment
22. religious

Down:

1. message
2. gratitude
3. surrender
4. odds
6. worrying
7. cockiness
8. pain
9. steps
11. ego
12. H.O.W.
13. anonymity
14. practical
15. bugaboos
16. fear

Comin'up



LET US KNOW! We'll be happy to announce your upcoming events. Just let us know at least three months in advance. Include dates, event name and location, N.A. office or phoneline number, and a post office box. (Sorry, but we can't print personal phone numbers or addresses.)

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ALABAMA: Nov. 3-5, 1989; Surrender in the Mountains; Cheaha State Park, Lineville; rsvn.s (205) 488-5115; Surrender '89, P.O. Box 214, Decatur, AL 35602

ALASKA: Mar. 9-11, 1990; 6th Alaska Regional Convention; send speaker tapes; ARC-6, P.O. Box 84946, Fairbanks, AK 99708

ALBERTA: Nov. 3-5, 1989; 3rd Alask Region- al Convention; Polish Veterans Hall, 9203 144th Ave., Edmonton

AUSTRALIA: Nov. 11-12, 1989; 2nd S. Aus- tralian Area Convention; Brighton-Glenelg Community Centre, 20 Tarlton St., Somerton Park, S.A.; Area Convention Committee, P.O. Box 479, Norwood 5067, S.A., Australia

2) Jan. 26-29, 1990; Victoria Area Convention; phoneline 61-3-417-6472; Victoria CAC, GPO Box 2470-V, Melbourne 3001, Victoria, Aus- tralia

CALIFORNIA: Feb. 3, 1990; 5th Annual Napa-Solano Unity Day; Town & Country Fair- grounds, 3rd St., Napa; phonelines (707) 253-0243, Napa, and (707) 428-4120, Fairfield; Napa-Solano ASC, P.O. Box 5086, Napa, CA 94581

2) Mar. 29-Apr. 1, 1990; 12th Northern Califor- nia Regional Convention; Fairmount Hotel, San Jose

COLORADO: Nov. 3-5, 1989; Western States Public Information Learning Days; Radisson Hotel Denver South, 7007 S. Clinton (I-25 & Arapahoe), Englewood CO 80112; rsvn.s (303) 799-6200; phoneline (303) 832-DRUG; Colora- do P.I., P.O. Box 9524, Ft. Collins, CO 80524-9524

FLORIDA: Nov. 2-5, 1989; 8th Palm Coast Area Convention; Palm Hotel, 630 Clearwater Park Rd., W. Palm Beach FL 33401; rsvn.s (407) 833-1234; Recovery 8, Palm Coast ASC, P.O. Box 3151, W. Palm Beach, FL 33402

GEORGIA: Feb. 22-25, 1990; 9th Georgia Regional Convention; Ironworks Convention Center, Columbus; accommodations at Colum- bus Hilton, (800) HIL-TONS, and Sheraton Inn, (404) 327-6868

ILLINOIS: Dec. 31, 1989; New Year's Eve Ex- travaganza; South Shore Country Club, 7000 South Shore Drive, Chicago IL 60649; RSO (312) 848-2211; Chicago RSO, P.O. Box 199327, Chicago, IL 60619-9327

INDIANA: Nov. 18, 1989; Multi-Regional H&I Awareness Day; Local -292 UAW Hall, 1201 Alto Rd. W., Kokomo; H&I Subcommittee, In- diana RSC, P.O. Box 871, Indianapolis, IN 46206

KENTUCKY: Apr. 13-15, 1990; 4th Kentuck- iana Regional Convention; Executive Inn, 1 Ex- ecutive Blvd., Paducah KY 42001

MARYLAND: Mar. 23-25, 1990; 4th Chesapeake & Potomac Regional Convention; Ocean City Convention Center; CPRC-4, P.O. Box 771, Ellicott City, MD 21043

MICHIGAN: Jul. 5-8, 1990; 6th Michigan Regional Convention; RSO (313) 544-2010; MRC-6, P.O. Box 597, Bay City, MI 48707

NEVADA: Jan. 19-20, 1990; 6th High Sierra Blast; Diamond Peak-Ski Incline, Incline Vil- lage; phoneline (916) 546-1116; North Tahoe ASC, P.O. Box 7691, Tahoe City, CA 95730

NEW JERSEY: Nov. 3-5, 1989; 1st Central Jersey Unity Weekend; YMCA Camp Bernie, Port Murray; Central Jersey Weekend, P.O. Box 274, Monmouth Beach, NJ 07750-0274

OHIO: Dec. 29-31, 1989; 1st Central Ohio Area Convention; Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, I-670 and Cassidy Ave., Columbus; rsvn.s (614) 475-7551; phoneline (614) 252-1700; Central Ohio ASC, P.O. Box 14460, Columbus, OH 43214

2) Dec. 31, 1989; New Years Eve Celebration; Rhodes Center, Ohio State Fairgrounds, 17th Ave., Columbus; phoneline (614) 235-9662 or 252-1700; Central Ohio ASC, P.O. Box 14460, Columbus, OH 43214

3) May 25-27, 1990; 8th Ohio State Convention; Seagate Center, Toledo; send speaker tapes; Ohio Convention, P.O. Box 1046, Toledo, OH 43697

OKLAHOMA: Nov. 17-19, 1989; 5th Fall Spiritual Retreat; Camp Takatoka, Ft. Gibson Lake, Choteau

2) Mar. 30-Apr. 1, 1990; 4th Oklahoma Regional Convention; Holiday Hotel, Shawnee; rsvn.s (405) 275-4404; RSO (405) 239-2768; OKRC-4, P.O. Box 5485, Norman, OK 73070

ONTARIO: May 18-20, 1990; 3rd Ontario Regional Convention; ORC-3, University of Toronto New College, Box 7079 Depot A, Toron- to, Ontario M5W 1X7

PENNSYLVANIA: Nov. 3-5, 1989; 7th Tri- State Regional Convention; Hyatt Hotel, Pitts- burgh; rsvn.s (412) 471-1234; Tri-State RSO, P.O. Box 110217, Pittsburgh, PA 15232

2) Nov. 25, 1989; 4th Annual Thanksgiving Day Family Reunion Banquet; Genetti's Motor Lodge, Wilkes-Barre; rsvn.s (717) 823-6152; phoneline (717) 963-0728 or 283-0828; Wyom- ing Valley ASC, P.O. Box 211, Taylor, PA 18517

3) Mar. 23-25, 1990; 8th Greater Philadelphia Regional Convention; Adams Mark Hotel, City Line & Monument Rd., Phila. PA 19131; rsvn.s (800) 231-5858; GPRC-8, P.O. Box 42628, Phi- la., PA 19101-2628

SOUTH CAROLINA: Nov. 9-12; Serenity Festival; Best Western Landmark, Ocean Blvd., Myrtle Beach; rsvn.s (800) 845-0658; phoneline (803) 449-6262; Serenity Festival, P.O. Box 1198, Myrtle Beach, SC 29578

2) Feb. 2-4, 1990; Upper South Carolina Area Anniversary Convention; Ramada Hotel, Church St., Greenville; rsvn.s (800) 228-2828; phoneline (803) 282-0109; Anniversary, P.O. Box 4407, Greenville, SC 29606

3) Feb. 16-18, 1990; 2nd "Just for Today" Con- vention; Hyatt Regency Resort Hotel, P.O. Box 6167, Hilton Head SC 29938; rsvn.s (803) 785-1234; phoneline (803) 681-9595; Just for To- day Committee, P.O. Box 22155, Hilton Head, SC 29925

TENNESSEE: Nov. 22-26, 1989; 7th Volun- teer Regional Convention; Marriott Memphis, 2625 Thousand Oaks Blvd. (I-240 & Perkins), Memphis TN 38118; rsvn.s (800) 228-9290; phoneline (901) 276-LIVE; VRC-7, P.O. Box 172102, Memphis, TN 38117-0102

TEXAS: Mar. 23-25, 1990; 5th Lone Star Regional Convention; Hotel Galvez, Galveston; rsvn.s (800) 392-4285; Lone Star RSO, 10727 Plano Rd., Ste. 200, Dallas, TX 75230

VIRGINIA: Jan. 5-7, 1990; 8th Virginia Con- vention; Radisson Hotel, 601 Main St., Lynch- burg VA 24506; rsvn.s (804) 528-2500; Convention Committee, P.O. Box 11843, Lynch- burg, VA 24506

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9HOL

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.